Into the Void
Text and Image in Nordic Art 1890-1915

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work.

Signed:

Kerstina Mortensen

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Summary

The central objective of this thesis is to evaluate and assess the 'translation' of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self as themes connecting visual and written forms of representation in the context of Nordic Symbolism from 1890 to 1915. Such themes were extensively explored by a wide range of artists, including Edvard Munch (Norwegian, 1863-1944), Vilhelm Hammershøi (Danish, 1864-1916), Ejnar Nielsen (Danish, 1872-1956) and the sculptor Niels Hansen Jacobsen (Danish, 1861-1941). The core of this thesis comprises six individual case studies by the abovementioned artists, which are analysed as sites of text and image interaction, and as representations of these central themes in Nordic Symbolism. Three categories in which text and image elements overlap within a single artwork are examined as part of this research: Titles as Paratexts, Texts by the Artist, and Literary Sources for Artworks.

Titles as Paratexts examines the function of titles in varying contexts, as set up within the framework of Genette's 'paratext'. The physical inscription of *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* (1897) on Nielsen's canvas performs a different function to the titles fixed to Hammershøi's interior paintings of the early 1900s, which seemingly confirm the visual narrative without further elaboration. Titles are a practical necessity for artworks, serving as identification, but they are frequently the first textual layer with which the viewer is confronted, and thus play a significant role. The title has the potential to suggest to the viewer the content of the visual work, and in turn influence reading and interpretation.

The artist's creation of poetic texts with which to accompany specific works points to a significant creative drive to express an idea through both written and visual forms. Texts by the Artist largely deals with the type of textual-visual relation of ekphrasis, and as the text is also written by the artist, the link between the visual and verbal expression is intensified. The focus of this section is Munch's

poetic texts surrounding *The Scream* (1893), which are reproduced alongside the *Scream* motif in notebooks, as well as lithographs, sketches, and contemporary articles. Therefore, it can be considered as central to the *Scream* as the screaming figure itself. The second chapter explores Hansen Jacobsen's use of the poetic text to accompany his sculpture *The Shadow* (1897-98). In this instance, the text is circulated in exhibition catalogues, enriching the narrative suggested by the visual form.

Literary Sources by the Artist places the artist at the greatest remove from the textual component. This section examines two artworks based on literary works as exemplary of their type: the 'inspired' artwork, and the illustration. In the former category, the sculpture *Death and the Mother* (1892) by Niels Hansen Jacobsen is a work 'inspired' by H. C. Andersen's fairytale of a similar title, *Story of a Mother* (1847). In the second part of this section, the qualities of the illustration are evaluated with regard to Ejnar Nielsen's four illustrations for Karl Larsen's short story *The Old Man's Child* (1900), published in *Juleroser.* This research evaluates the extent of correspondence between the narrative of the story, and that conveyed by Nielsen's illustrations.

The primary methodology of this thesis is rooted in close visual and textual analysis of the artworks listed above. These evaluations are further enhanced through the implementation of several interdisciplinary theoretical approaches, encompassing art historical (Mitchell and text and image theory), architectural (Pallasmaa and atmosphere), aesthetic (Merleau-Ponty and perception), and literary theory (Bal's *Narratology*, Genette's *Paratexts*, and Peircean semiotics). The concept of atmosphere is integral to this research; understood as the overarching 'feeling' evoked in a viewer by an artwork, it is intertwined with notions of perception, hapticity and ocularcentricity in the architectural theory of Pallasmaa. Thus, atmosphere provides an insightful framework with which to assess the degree of similarity between atmospheres

transmitted by each visual and textual components of an artwork throughout the thesis.

My original contribution to knowledge is the presentation of new analyses of the case study artworks by Nielsen, Hammershøi, Munch and Hansen Jacobsen with regard to their textual-visual elements, along with the implementation of atmosphere as a concept outside its associations with the landscape genre and mood painting (*stemningsmaleri)*. The methodology employed and conclusions reached have further application both within and beyond the context of Nordic Symbolism 1890-1915.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Introduction I: Into the Void

Illness, Death, and the Psychological Self; fuelled by European pessimism and the perceived degeneration of society at the turn of the 20th Century, Nordic Symbolist artists gravitated to the darker depictions of modernity. A depressive exhaustion of the nerves, diagnosed as neurasthenia, was commonly associated with artists and writers in urban centres.[1] Spurred on by the rise of the individual in fin de siècle society and break from academic conventions,[2] from 1890 to 1915 Nordic artists looked inwardly at the psychological landscape, using potent symbols as motifs of the self and of mortality. Thus, the Psychological Self is both an introspective filter through which artists explored illness and death, and an existential concern as subject matter in its own right.

The aim of this thesis is to evaluate and assess the 'translation' of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self as themes connecting visual and written forms of representation in the context of Nordic art from 1890 to 1915. Artists such as Edvard Munch (Norwegian, 1863-1944), Vilhelm Hammershøi (Danish, 1864-1916), Ejnar Nielsen (Danish, 1872-1956) and the sculptor Niels Hansen Jacobsen (Danish, 1861-1941) explored the themes of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self in their artistic work. However, text and image interact in three significant ways in the respective oeuvres of these artists: artwork titles, texts written by the

[1] The Danish psychiatrist Knud Pontoppidan argued in his text *Neurasthenien: Bidrag til Skildringen af vor Tids Nervøsitet* (*Neurasthenia: Contribution to the Depiction of the Nervosity of our Time,* Copenhagen: Th. Linds Boghandel, 1886) that the transformation of Copenhagen into a modern, teeming metropolis was conducive to the development of nervous ailments among the bourgeois 'nerve nobility' ('nerveadelen').
See Martin Zerlang, "Nerveadelen" in *Drømmetid: Fortællinger fra Det Sjælelige Gennembruds København,* ed., Henrik Wivel, (Copenhagen: Gads Forlag, 2004), 34.
[2] David Jackson, ed., *Nordic Art: The Modern Breakthrough 1860-1920,* (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2012), 15.

artist, and lastly, literary sources for artworks, which collectively form the basis of this thesis. For example, Nielsen appended the title *And in his Eyes I saw Death* (1897, fig. 56) to the surface of the painting itself, while Hammershøi's disinterest in titling his work manifests as 'metatitles' which reflect the pictorial content of his interior scenes of the early 1900s (figs. 67-68, 72-73). Texts written by the artist can be termed ekphrastic: Munch frequently accompanied his visual work with literary sketches such as *Scream* (1893, fig. 74), while Hansen Jacobsen wrote poetic texts for a number of his sculptures, including *The Shadow* (1897-98, fig. 97). Literary sources by writers other than the artist put a degree of distance between the artist and the textual component: Nielsen illustrated Karl Larsen's short story *The Old Man's Child* (1900, figs. 123-130), and Hansen Jacobsen was inspired to create the sculpture *Death and the Mother* (1892, fig. 110) in response to Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale *Story of a Mother* (1847), ensuring the final lines of the story were included in exhibition catalogues. The methodological approach is centred on the relevant artworks and their associated texts as the primary sources of material, which are analysed in the context of Nordic Symbolist art and an array of theoretical texts which fully explore the potentialities of visual and verbal representations of the same idea. Thus, this approach is exclusively concerned with text and image tensions within the artwork-object, granting specific focus to narrative and atmosphere, rather than peripheral material or documentation garnered from archival research.

Thematically, the work of these four artists is entrenched in the fin de siècle themes of illness, death and the psychological self, and the artworks cited above have been selected for this thesis because of the exceptional way in which text and image interact and invade the other's plane. The objective of this thesis is therefore to examine these works as representations of the central themes and as examples of text and image interactions in the Nordic sphere of Symbolist art. These artworks are examined contextually as representations of burgeoning

modernity, associated with the movements of Symbolism and Modernism in an era marked by the shifting dynamics of the urban centre and the countryside, mass production and industrialisation, and the lone urban flâneur.

The timeframe of 1890-1915, a twenty-five year range spanning the breach of two centuries, is significant as it marks the next phase of *det Moderne Gennembrud*, (The Modern Breakthrough, 1870-90) in Denmark, a term coined by writer Georg Brandes in his ground-breaking lectures at the University of Copenhagen in 1871, in which he called for the breaking of tradition in the social, cultural and political spheres.[3] As a proponent of the Naturalist movement alongside Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg, Brandes is a pivotal figure in Scandinavian literature, but was also a close associate of the artists' colony at Skagen,[4] who reflected his Naturalist approach in their collective oeuvre, depicting life in the colony and the natural beauty of northern Jutland. In 1888 Brandes replaces his appeal for Naturalism in a series of University lectures on Nietzsche and sparks the aesthetic tone of cultural production for the following decade; Brandes' fiery dissemination and interpretation of Nietzschean philosophy had wide repercussions across Nordic culture which, with God proclaimed 'dead', placed the individual as the pinnacle of existence, and found reflection in the secular, psychologically introspective artworks analysed in this thesis.[5] In reaction to this aesthetic, the 1890s were retrospectively named *det Sjælelige Gennembrud* (the Soul's Breakthrough) by the poet Helge Rode in 1913.[6]

[3] Henrik Wivel, "Verden er dyb", in *Drømmetid: Fortællinger fra Det Sjælelige Gennembruds København,* ed., Henrik Wivel, (Copenhagen: Gads Forlag, 2004), 12.
[4] Patricia Berman, *In Another Light: Danish Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013), 164-5.
[5] Henrik Wivel, "Verden er dyb", in *Drømmetid: Fortællinger fra Det Sjælelige Gennembruds København,* ed., Henrik Wivel, (Copenhagen: Gads Forlag, 2004), 12-15.
[6] Wivel, 15.

Structure of the Thesis

The objective of this thesis is to interrogate in micro-detail the intricacies and nuances in verbal and visual representation on the same subject. The specific examples are chosen because they display a significant and multi-faceted text-image dynamic which demands closer inspection. The central research motivation is to examine how an artist 'translates' the same idea from one medium to another, and how the medium, either a painting, illustration, sculpture, or artistically-rendered text, affects and moulds the viewer's perception of the work. My original contribution to the field is the uncovering of new perspectives on these artworks, as well as approaches and conclusions on text and image categories in art history that have application beyond the timeframe of this study.

This introduction provides the contextual backdrop for the thesis, collating historical information of turn of the century Scandinavia that bore these artists, as well as the wider European artistic milieu of the era. The six artworks which form the core case studies of this thesis embody the interrelated aspects of illness, death, and the psychological self; these themes were widespread among artists and writers of the 1890s bridging into the twentieth century, and as such these examples form part of the larger body of cultural production on the darker dimension of European Symbolism. The strength of their text-image relation makes these specific works relevant to the objectives of this thesis; however, it is also relevant to provide the reader with a brief survey of similar works by contemporaries of Munch, Nielsen, Hammershøi and Hansen Jacobsen to demonstrate the proliferation of works in this thematic sphere, and contextualise their particular contributions.

The second chapter engages with the concept of 'atmosphere', also termed 'feeling' or 'mood'. Atmosphere is significant in this study's motivation to identify the extent to which a text, be that the title, a poetic sketch, or literary

source, conveys to the viewer the same atmosphere or feeling as the (visual) artwork. Furthermore, mood painting or *stemningsmaleri* has a strong tradition in Nordic landscape painting, and I intend to transfer the concept from the landscape genre to the thematics of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self.

The three textual categories form the core of this thesis, and are presented as three, two-part chapters. Each textual category, i.e., Titles as Paratexts, Texts by the Artist, and Literary Sources for Artworks, is one successive degree of removal from the artwork, beginning with the title as the most essential and common text associated with an artwork, then to poetic texts written by the artist to accompany specific artworks, and finally, the literary text written by an individual other than the artist, who then interprets the text through their own visual idiom. Each of these categories are examined via the methodological framework of narrative, atmosphere and Peircean semiotic analysis. The presence of text in visual art can directly or indirectly affect the narrative and thereby perception of an artwork; atmosphere seeks to assess the textual and visual components each encapsulates and communicates to the viewer; lastly, Peircean semiotic analysis is a method by which the relation between the individual visual and linguistic components can be made clearer and more tangible when investigating how the elements interact with one another.

Texts as Paratexts firstly examines Ejnar Nielsen's *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* (1897). The title of the painting is found in the lower right corner, directly on the picture plane. Its prominence in the visual sphere demands that it be addressed, and is suggestive of a narrative beyond the confines of the pictorial space. From this ensues a discussion of the artwork title and its functions. The immediate interaction of text and image on the same surface is offset in the following chapter; Vilhelm Hammershøi's interior scenes from the 1890s appear impermeable to the viewer's perception, and indeed, to curiosity. Artworks such as *White Doors* or *Open Doors* [Strandgade 30] (1905), and *Sunbeams* or *Sunlight*

[later titled *Dust Motes Dancing in the Sunbeams*] (1900) bear titles that do not appear indexical of any narrative beyond what is represented on the canvas, in stark contrast to Nielsen. Therefore, these self-referential or 'metatitles' in their literalness serve to underscore the visual without further linguistic clarification. The term *paratext*, from Gérard Genette's text of the same name, can be described as a 'threshold', and refers to any text external to the artistic work that makes that work presentable to the viewer.[7] My adaptation of this term to a Nordic art historical context is original to this thesis; its usage provides a nuanced framework for the analysis of the artwork-text intricacies.

Part Two, *Texts by the Artist*, addresses another category of text around the artwork: the poetic text as written by the artist to accompany a specific artwork. The artist's need to create such a text, to express through language the message their artwork embodies, points to the significance of the text in the perception of the work as a whole, both text and image. In the first part, the close relationship between Munch's *Scream* (1893) as a visual and verbal expression is analysed. The *Scream* text exists in a number of subtly varied versions, the first of which is located in Munch's notebook (MM T 2367). The text is widely known and versions of this text were included in exhibition catalogues and reproduced on prints of the motif during the artist's lifetime. This chapter interrogates the versions of the *Scream* motif across Munch's visual and verbal expressions, assessing the narrative and atmosphere conveyed by each the text and the image. The second part of this chapter examines in detail the poetic sketch written by Hansen Jacobsen in conjunction with *The Shadow* (1897-8). The work of H. C. Andersen, including the fairytale also titled *The Shadow*, was a source of inspiration for the sculptor; yet instead of attaching a quote from the fairytale to his sculpture, Hansen Jacobsen composes his own text, printed in his atelier exhibition catalogue in 1914 at

[7] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation,* trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

Skibelund Krat. This chapter evaluates the narrative conveyed by the sculpture, and secondly by the text, the function of the text in relation to the visual, and whether both forms communicate a unified sense of atmosphere. Both Munch and Hansen Jacobsen wrote texts to accompany other works than those specified here, and reference is made to these in this second chapter.

The final section, *Literary Sources for Artworks*, examines artworks with literary texts as their basis and forming the inspiration for a work, like Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother* (1892) which is based on H. C. Andersen's *Story of a Mother* (1847), or in the case of Nielsen's set of four images for Karl Larsen's short story *The Old Man's Child* (1900), as an illustration to be published in a journal. Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture is accompanied in the 1914 atelier exhibition catalogue with the final two lines of the Andersen story in a slightly amended form, anchoring the work to this external narrative. While this sculpture bears some of the qualities of an illustration in that it 'makes visual' a particular piece of writing, Nielsen's four drawings conform to the conventional notion of illustration, as the images which were published in 1900 the seasonal journal *Juleroser* (*Christmas Roses*), alongside Larsen's story. Quotations from the story are included in rectangular cartouches along the lower portion of each drawing, and in this chapter I analyse the innovative visual devices employed by Nielsen to convey the narrative of the story.

Methodology

i. Peirce's Division of Signs

In terms of methodology, the approach to this study finds its roots in a number of diverse sources: architectural theory, philosophy of art, aesthetics, semiotics and morphology. In combination, these serve to address the multi-faceted

nature of word and image studies. Here I outline a number of issues which have direct impact on the text and image dynamic analysed in this thesis, which are explored in greater detail in the relevant chapters.

The French writer, artist and art critic G. Albert Aurier defined Symbolism in 1890 as the expression of the idea in recognisable forms,[8] a theory which bears close resemblance to C. S. Peirce's division of the signs, which was begun in the 1860s. The Symbolist tendency to project the inner world onto the outer strives aims to procure meaning beyond that which it represents. The visual forms these ideas take can be understood as signs, and further categorised in the Peircean tradition as icons, indices and symbols. The application of Peircean theory in the context of Symbolist art enhances the analysis of relational dynamics between the visual artwork and the associated text.

In Peirce's triadic relation of the signs, the representamen is said to 'stand in' for something, without being a "sensory image".[9] It is the Idea before artistic concretisation, before being granted a physical form which addresses and provokes sensorial reaction in the viewer, hence called the interpretant, while the object is the actual object for which the representamen stands.[10] This is to say that a sign (or representamen) and an interpretant can be ideas, mental impressions with different origins. From an observer's perspective, *The Scream* by Munch is a sign, but for Munch his painting is both the interpretant, the sensorial image created by another sign, but also it stands for the object, which was a real-life event the artist experienced when walking outside Oslo. It is the idea translated into a sign that becomes the object. The question is the extent of literalness that the object is expected to convey – on one hand it can be stated that the object, quite directly is

[8] G.-Albert Aurier, "Le Symbolisme en peinture: Paul Gauguin", in *Oeuvres Posthumes*, (Paris, 1893), 215-16.
[9] Gérard Deledalle, *Charles S. Peirce's Philosophy of Signs*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 39.
[10] Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, Vol. 2 Elements of Logic*, eds. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1998), 135.
See this text for a complete definition of Peirce's Division of Signs.

that physical, material thing that is represented by the sign, but on the other hand, it is the invisibly formed but no less real Idea that is the true object.

ii. Narrative in Word and Image

Before we can begin examining the interactive dynamics at play in the overlap of text and image, we must first arrive at a definition of each, so that one is not subsumed by the other in analysis. Text is black and white, it is printed or handwritten but conveys laws, vows, grammatical rules. Language – or text – demands obedience. It has the potential to convey meaning with precision. Implicit in language is a sense of order dictated by grammar and rules. Academic art is structured by classical proportions and rules, and in a literary sense, language is skilfully carved; but is anything ever unequivocally and universally understood as conveying its intended meaning?

Text prompts imaginative visualisation, and images prompt verbal description and ekphrastic reiteration – one inspires the other. A student may learn more of their art by imitating the style of a master, in the didactic and revered sense of *imitatio*. Gombrich states that "images apparently occupy a curious position somewhere between the statements of language, which are intended to convey a meaning, and the things of nature, to which we can only give a meaning."[11] The implication from this statement is that the text we see in the sphere of the visual denotes its intrinsic value to the viewer, which is thus bestowed upon the art object as a 'thing in nature'. A visual image may have any number of clues which allude to its context and thus convey the narrative, i.e., iconographic attributes in history painting, recognisable landmarks in landscapes, or established tropes in genre painting. I argue that such contextual clues extend to any textual elements in the

[11] E. H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, (Oxford and New York: Phaidon Press, 1978), 2.

sphere of the artwork, and if affixed by the artist, their presence should be considered essential to their interpretation. The aim of this thesis is to evaluate the interaction of such texts to the visual work, and their impact on narrative and the viewer's perception.

iii. Meta Qualities

Of the categories of word and image in the scope of this thesis, the notion of the 'meta-' prefix plays a multifaceted role. A painting which references its own 'painted-ness' or content is considered meta. Yet when text is involved in the artwork, the category must be broadened to include referentiality across media. To what extent is a text considered part of an artwork, and if it references an event, which is described pictorially and (by virtue of its medium) verbally, then is this a meta-text? And what do we call an artwork that is so closely bound to a textual source? One such example is Munch's *Scream,* in which the descriptive visual imagery of the text is then visualised in the paintings, which convey with visual exactitude the narrative sequence of the text.

Dualism is subsumed in monism as Maurice Merleau-Ponty expounds the meta aspect of the body as both observer and observed: "The enigma derives from the fact that my body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognise, in what it sees, the "other side" of its power of looking. It sees itself seeing; it touches itself touching; it is visible and sensitive for itself."[12] Furthermore, the mind can also imagine the body under external observation, a self-referential awareness of the body as both subject and object. Self-referentiality is an inherent quality in all works of art. Whether the artistic style is illusory and *trompe l'oeil* or blatantly expressionistic, it is a

[12] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind", in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader; Philosophy and Painting*, ed., Galen A. Johnson, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press 1993), 124.

painting's very existence that accentuates its own 'paintedness', its self-awareness as some*thing* outside reality's plane, as manipulated by the artist. But within this general statement of self-aware objecthood we locate the issue of text accompanying an artwork; as text is not usually inscribed on the painted surface, it is not comprehended as an inherent element of the painted surface and so retains a degree of separation from the artwork. Any art object that on its surface contains text must be categorised as a meta-text, in that each part is self-referential, given that each medium represents a single idea and is therefore one and the same. One such example is Ejnar Nielsen's *And in his Eyes I Saw Death;* the title, by its nature, refers to the artwork and is an extension of it, but as an inscription on the picture plane it is also present as an element in the pictorial space and therefore becomes self-referential.

iv. Perception, Surface and Space

There are a number of text and image issues at play in this study's context. Firstly, the themes of illness, death and the psychological self are common subject matter in Nordic Symbolist art and literature between 1890-1915, and for the purpose of this study will be categorised as 'ideas'. The aesthetic of these 'ideas' must be established, thus a survey of representation of these themes in fin de siècle Nordic art follows in the latter part of this introduction. Secondly is the further issue of translating these ideas between written and visual language. The central focus is this intertextuality, and establishing the correspondences and means by which the same idea is manifested in two different media.

Viktor Shklovsky defines an artwork as that which "has been created by special devices whose purpose is to see to it that these artefacts are interpreted

artistically as much as possible."[13] The texts examined in this thesis are as artistically rendered as the visual work they are associated with, and therefore can be subject to the same type of analysis. The artwork title, text by the artist, and literary source for artworks are all created by Shklovsky's 'special devices', or artistic technique which makes them overtly aesthetic in terms of textual genre. Shklovsky further elucidates the nature of the idea as 'algebraic' and symbolic, in terms of both its conception by the artist and perception by the viewer: "objects are grasped spatially, in the blink of an eye. We do not see them, we merely recognise them by their primary characteristics. […] We know that it exists because of its position in space, but we see only its surface."[14] This concept applies to both visual and written forms of representation, and fits into the notion of peripheral vision and atmosphere. Shklovsky claims that the defamiliarisation or *ostranenie* ('making strange') of objects through artistically contrived devices will "lead us to a knowledge of a thing through the organ of sight instead of recognition"[15], but this precludes the possibility of multi-sensory experience of an art object, as proposed by Merleau-Ponty's haptic approach to perception. The concept of defamiliarisation is equally present in Symbolist art, in which forms are estranged from their primary context in an attempt to create a new, augmented and *symbolic* version of reality. To this end Jean Moréas writes in his manifesto that in the Symbolist novel, "apparently alien elements come together here, and soon a strange figure begins to move in circles which are estranged by his own hallucinations and temperament. Yet in this estrangement lies the sole reality."[16] Word and image studies take many aspects into account, namely how one medium reacts/interacts with the other. However, one of the chief issues concerning this

[13] Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Device", in *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamin Sher, (Champaign and London: Dalkey Archive Press, 2009), 3.
[14] Shklovsky, 5.
[15] Shklovsky, 6.
[16] Jean Moréas, "Le Symbolisme", *Figaro Littéraire*, 18 September 1886; Ingrid Ehrhardt and Simon Reynolds, eds., *Kingdom of the Soul: Symbolist Art in Germany 1870-1920*, (Munich: Prestel, 2000), 9.

project is to establish if the textual and visual components propel the same narrative or aesthetic idea, and if so, how is this achieved? As both written and visual media consist of formal and spatial composition, therefore architectural theories of atmosphere, surface and space can provide some answers to the question of defining the aesthetic of a narrative work.

The significance of defining atmosphere in the context of text and image studies is that the atmosphere is the essential aesthetic presence in both the visual and the textual sources of an artwork. Tonino Griffero suggests that "artistic expressions are atmospheres when they are so self-referential that they induce us to ask what they show (or what their *mise-en-scène* is) rather than what they are."[17] The shortfall between what something is and what it represents calls upon a Peircean analysis of signs and their relations to the object. A contemporary of the Nordic Symbolists, the critic Leigh Hunt derived atmosphere not from artistic technique as object, but from the artist, claiming that atmosphere can only come from "a profound, a deep mind, a poet's mind"[18], linking the notion to the genius of the artist. Georg Simmel defines atmosphere in landscape as suffusing "all details in it without its being possible to ascribe greater importance to one than the other"[19], and this poses a question of hierarchy between text and image.

Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space* provides a phenomenology of inhabited, intimate space - the house, the nest, the corner – and though his analyses may be useful in reading depicted images of such spaces, such as Hammershøi's reticent interiors or the box-hedged grave in Nielsen's illustrations for *The Old Man's Child,* a painting itself can also become an inhabited, intimate space in which the viewer finds refuge through entering the picture plane as a

[17] Tonino Griffero, *Atmospheres: Aesthetics of Emotional Spaces,* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 83.
[18] Leigh Hunt, "Atmosphere", *The Collector and Art Critic*, vol. 2, no. 4 (Dec 15, 1899), 64.
[19] Georg Simmel, *La tragedie de la culture et autres essais*, (Petites Biblioteque Rivages) 239. Translated in Guénola Stork, "P. S. Krøyer's Light as the Poetics of Memory" in *Harmony in Blue*, eds. Annette Johansen and Mette Bøgh Jensen, (Skagens Museum, 2001), 98.

material threshold between the viewer's reality and the perceived reality of the pictorial space; this thesis focuses on the infiltration of text into this perceived reality of the pictorial space.

While an ocularcentric approach is central to the visual arts, it is not exclusively through sight that text and image are grasped; instead, sight functions as a conduit for the other senses. Maurice Merleau-Ponty states "my perception is not a sum of visual, tactile, and audible givens: I perceive in a total way with my whole being: I grasp a unique structure of the thing, a unique way of being, which speaks to all my senses at once."[20] As with perceiving all objects, the body must be placed at the centre of the receptive experience of word and image studies. This haptic approach allows us to understand text and image elements as two interacting surfaces or skins, each working to communicate the same idea. In *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (1996) the architect Juhani Pallasmaa categorises all senses as "specialisations of the skin. They define the interface between the skin and the environment - between the opaque interiority of the body and the exteriority of the world"[21]. Equally, atmosphere is tied to hapticity, and Pallasmaa relates the two concepts to painting, music and literature: "To me [painting] is atmosphere, mostly an atmosphere of colour and light, of course, although in some cases rhythm and texture can become atmospheric as well. […] What else is music than atmospheric auditive spaces?[…] You also *see* these spaces and you particularly *feel* them with your muscles and skin. […] What else carries the continuity of the novel from the first page to the last but a distinct atmosphere? A novel is a universe of its own, characterised by its specific atmosphere, or feeling."[22] Atmosphere lies at the essence of the artwork, it is the defining quality

[20] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Film and the New Psychology", in *Sense and Non-Sense,* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 48.
[21] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin; Architecture of the Senses*, (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2007), 42.
[22] Juhani Pallasmaa, Klaske Havik and Gus Tielens, "Atmosphere, Compassion and Embodied Experience: A Conversation about Atmosphere with Juhani Pallasmaa", *OASE Journal for Architecture*, issue 91, (Dec 2013), 35.

that transcends medium. Distilling the atmosphere from its medium allows for the identification of the central aesthetic, and in the case of this thesis, these 'aesthetics' fall under the themes illness, death and the psychological self. With this project I aim to further develop the interconnected concepts of atmosphere, space and surface as vital tools in understanding the text/image dichotomy.

Furthermore, in this thesis I build on Pallasmaa's notions of hapticity in architecture as a fundamental factor in the study of word-image relations affecting the perception of art. An artwork is a physical object, occupying space. By contrast, architecture *creates* spaces, structures are employed by architects as a framing device around space. An individual can enter these spaces physically and engage with them in an all-encompassing sensory experience. With a work of two-dimensional visual or literary art, the sensory experience for the individual lies primarily in the sense of sight, and secondly, in the imagination; this is less so of volumetric or spatial art, such as installation art. Vision can address and imply the other senses, the results of which are derived from visual prompts in the work, such as flowers signifying fragrance or musical instruments as metonymies of sound. So too is the sense of touch evoked. By virtue of security and conservation reasons, we cannot touch a work of art at a museum, and so the viewer is forbidden from understanding its surface as a series of brushstrokes, pencil lines, or carvings. The viewer must rely on vision to convey the sense of the object's tactility, its texture beneath the skin. The visual representation of non-visual elements, or mental ideas, is one of the most illusionistic qualities of art, and a strong tendency in Nordic Symbolism. As Merleau-Ponty writes, "through [vision], we touch the stars and the sun";[23] vision is what connects 'seen' objects with their sensory equivalent and experiences of the imagination.

[23] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader, Philosophy and Painting*, ed., Galen A. Johnson, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 146.

Perhaps the most tactile of the arts is sculpture, as its volume frequently implies that it exists in our plane – conversely, the viewer must 'enter' the imaginary plane of the pictorial space. Created in the round, sculpture presents multiple viewpoints, and in this sense is also the most mimetic of the arts as it represents a reality that we can orbit, present in our space. While this is typical of the late nineteenth century sculpture in the context of this thesis, there are exceptions such as relief carvings, which present motifs through painterly, illusionistic techniques; site-specific works designed for a niche or alcove with frontal viewpoints; and lastly, works consisting of multiple viewpoints in which no single perspective presents a complete, optimal reading of the work. Erik Koed outlines various theories on sculpture which seek to distinguish it from two-dimensional art; he concludes the defining nature of sculpture as the three-dimensional properties of materials functioning as an artistic medium.[24] Thus, the three-dimensionality of the materials invites tactile perception, the circumnavigation of the object and the perception of the sculpture as 'inhabiting' the viewer's space. Further to this, installation art combines the spatiality of architecture and the illusionism of painting, requiring that the viewer physically 'enters' the installation space in which the idea becomes the artwork, over conventional manifestation as a material object. However, these issues are set aside in the context of Nordic Symbolism and the case studies of this thesis. Theoretically, a haptic experience of sculpture would reveal the object's texture, its volume in space, and scale. A haptic experience of painting comprises of the surface tensions which imply depth as a singular, focused window into a world that opens up across the canvas.

[24] Erik Koed, "Sculpture and the Sculptural", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 63 no. 2 (Spring 2005), 151.

v. Atmosphere

Gernot Böhme theorises atmosphere with wider implications across the arts, beyond architecture. He claims that sensory perception is aligned with Hermann Schmitz's 'corporeal feeling'[25], rather than the haptic/tactile sense, as might be supposed. Corporeal feeling implies a self-awareness of being, defined as the ability to 'affect' the individual, so that they are conscious of both the object they feel, and the impact on their mood.[26] Our perception of art comprises of this corporeal feeling – individuals often claim to be 'moved' by a work – and this demonstrates the two-pronged reaction to art; one which is observational, directly engaging with the work, and secondly, an awareness of emotional reaction, and the causal factors.

Atmosphere plays a pivotal role in the context of this research. If an atmosphere is the overarching effect of an artwork on a viewer, theoretically, it should be transmitted through both the visual and textual elements of an artwork, e.g., the title and the painting. This raises the question of whether media (literature, painting, drawing, sculpture in this context) elicits different responses in the viewer, by virtue of its form. In an article by Mikkel Bille et al, the focus of atmosphere is equated with "the *in-betweenness* of subject and object in which the emotional and sensory experience are central."[27] The in-betweenness is aligned with the liminal area of interpretation left open in Peircean semiotics, the space between the representamen and the interpretant, or as Böhme would have it, in the "intersection of the objective and the subjective".[28] It is projected that atmosphere

[25] Gernot Böhme, "Encountering Atmospheres", *OASE Journal for Architecture*, issue 91 (Dec. 2013), 97.
See also Hermann Schmitz, *Neue Phänomenologie*, Bonn: Bouvier, 1980.
[26] Böhme, 97.
[27] Mikkel Bille, Peter Bjerregaard and Tim Flohr Sørensen, "Staging Atmospheres: Materiality, culture and the texture of the in-between", *Emotion, Space and Society* 15 (2015), 32.
[28] Bille, et al., 32.

does not encompass the meaning or essence of a situation[29], or in our case, artwork, and this highlights for us the difference between the feeling evoked in the viewer (compare Barthes' punctum), and that conveyed by the artwork itself. Therefore, different media may purport to convey the same essence, but the manner of the execution, as well as the perceived effect on the viewer can vary greatly, which is a variable in the perception of atmosphere. Therefore, the transmission of a single idea through multiple media has the capacity to elicit different psychological effects, given atmosphere's interdependency with mood and perception.

vi. Text as Frame

The frame distinguishes the painted surface from reality as the intermediary between the viewer and the pictorial space. A painting, according to Meyer Schapiro, consists of the "closure and smoothness of the prepared picture surface, often with a distinct colour of the reserved background, [through which] the image acquired a definite space of its own."[30] The frame has an intercessional quality that both the viewer and the painted surface must navigate; the frame encapsulates the picture plane for the viewer, while the viewer must establish how the frame structures space within its bounds, that is, its effect on the painted surface. Heller outlines that Munch's *Frieze of Life* (works completed during 1880s and 1890s, including *Scream)* series was exhibited in Berlin and Leipzig 1902-03 without frames,[31] hence the experiential barrier that separates the viewer from the work is lifted, opening up the composition. Additionally, Mieke Bal defines a narrative text as a "finite, structured whole composed of signs",[32] finite referring to

[29] Mikkel Bille, Peter Bjerregaard and Tim Flohr Sørensen, "Staging Atmospheres: Materiality, culture and the texture of the in-between", *Emotion, Space and Society* 15 (2015), 32.
[30] Meyer Schapiro, "Field and Vehicle in Image-Signs", *Semiotics: An Introductory Reader*, ed. Robert E. Innis, (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1986), 209.
[31] Reinhold Heller, "Concerning Symbolism and the Structure of Surface", *Art Journal*: *Symbolist Art and Literature*, vol. 45, no. 2. (Summer 1985), 150.
[32] Mieke Bal, *Narratology*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 5.

its existence within some form of boundary, the painting's frame being one such example. The frame is the liminal space where reality and the picture plane intersect. The denotative codes of a painting are influenced by their frames, which represent the barrier between the illusory world of the picture plane and that of the social formations the viewer brings to the work. These social formations constitute the connotative codes that we use to read a painting, and I maintain that language, or literary sketches such as the *Scream* text, have a similar function to a frame in their relationship to painted surfaces.

vii. Titles

This study encompasses the dialectics of word and image in the Scandinavian Symbolist context, and one such aspect lies in the most immediate and often overlooked aspect of title. The issue of social acceptability of modern subject matter bestowed[33] with historical or allegorical titles is addressed by Michelle Facos. That an artwork possesses a title is not universal, but certainly can be considered as a conventional form of identification, allowing it to be discerned from other similar works. Merleau-Ponty remarks on the nature of words by relation to painting: "Just as the function of words is to name – that is, to grasp the nature of what appears to us in a confused way and to place it before us as a recognizable object – so it is up to the painter, said Gasquet, to "objectify", "project" and "arrest". Words do not *look like* the things they designate; and a picture is not a *trompe-l'oeil*."[34] According to W. J. T. Mitchell, the title begins the discussion on how "words enter pictures"[35], and their situation in relation to the

[33] Michelle Facos, *Symbolist Art in Context*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 3.
[34] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt" in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 68.
[35] W. J .T. Mitchell, "Beyond Comparison: Picture, Text, and Method" in *Picture Theory*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 98.

surface of the artwork itself. More significantly, the title is frequently the first textual source to which the viewer turns, to further furnish observation and initial interpretations in tandem with an artwork. But to term a title as a mere appendage is to devalue its function to concisely express the complex identity of an artwork.

Texts which accompany or are in some manner associated with an artwork can be termed as 'paratexts', as coined by Genette in "Structure and Functions of the Title in Literature" (1988), which explores the title's significance in the literary sphere. The objective of Part One, "Titles as Paratexts" is to formulate a theory of titles specific to the Nordic Symbolists of this study, rooted in the title science of Genette and Leo Hoek.

Genette bases the theory of titles on Hoek's categorisation of titles as title, subtitle, and generic indication, defined as "a series of linguistic signs which can appear at the head of a text to designate it, to indicate its general content and to appeal to the public aimed at."[36] Literature, i.e., artistically rendered linguistic texts, can be reproduced ad infinitum as printed or digital matter without disrupting the integrity of the author's original content, irrespective of material qualities such as edition, quality, or dimensions. With the exception of illustrations and prints, artworks are generally unique objects, single, definitive versions forged by the artist's hand, occupying one location in space because of their material value, rather than the semantic value of literature. In a museum environment, the title may be found on a frame or label adjacent to the artwork; in scholarly literature or reproductions, the title is an annotation to the artwork's image. However, many titles actively avoid being pure descriptors of the visual, and can hold as much symbolism and interpretive potency as the artwork itself, particularly in their juxtaposition with the principal visual object. Text is equally capable of anchoring

[36] Gérard Genette, "Structure and Functions of the Title in Literature", trans. Bernard Crampé, *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 14 no. 4 (Summer 1988), 706; quoted from Hoek, *Marque du titre,* (The Hague: Mouton, 1981), 17.

the visual narrative or displacing it, of clarifying visual ambiguity or causing disparity, and so its function cannot be singularly defined.

Genette furthermore attributes three qualities to the title of a work: "as in the case of any instance of communication, the title at the least is composed of a message (the title itself), a "destinateur," and an intended recipient."[37] He describes the *destinateur* as the individual who appoints the title to a work, but is not necessarily the producer of said work, which may, for example be an editor who appends a title on the author's posthumous behalf.[38] A similar case can be generally argued for titles in the visual arts, as equally, consulting a catalogue of Dutch seventeenth century genre painting proves the same works are granted numerous and various titles, ekphrastic titles chosen by dealers that describe the visual content for auction catalogues and notarial records in basic terms. Thus, the notion of picture-titling did not gain full traction until the eighteenth century, coinciding with the increased mobility of artworks which would require certain identification.[39]

With regard to the 'intended recipient', Genette draws an important distinction between the 'public' and the readers of a text. "The title addresses itself to many more people than does the [literary] text, people who in one way or another receive and transmit it, and thereby contribute to its circulation. For, if the text is an object of reading, the title, like the author's name, is an object of circulation – or if one wishes, the object of communication."[40] One can recognise and identify an author or literary work without having actively engaged with the work; one can also know an artwork or artist by reputation alone, but more often than not, the opposite is true of the visual arts in the context of Nordic Symbolism:

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[37] Gérard Genette, "Structure and Functions of the Title in Literature", trans. Bernard Crampé, *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 14 no. 4 (Summer 1988), 705-6.
[38] Genette, 706.
[39] Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Picture Titles: How and Why Western Paintings Acquired their Names*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015), 20.
[40] Gérard Genette, "Structure and Functions of the Title in Literature", trans. Bernard Crampé, *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 14 no. 4 (Summer 1988), 707.

in the context of nineteenth century art, an artwork as a visual, material object is recognised and may be analysed without knowledge of its title or authoring artist. Thus, the analyses of this thesis pertain to how art was perceived at the time of its conception in the 1890 to 1915 timeframe.

The lack of specificity of the title to the artwork (if they are to be considered as two separate entities) is a cause of many issues when disentangling their knotted relation. In this sense, the title is not consistently synonymous with identification; nor does the identification of the visual work, in this context, find its content wholly described in a textual title. Many times the title merely refers to the subject or genre of the artwork, be that a 'portrait', 'landscape' or 'view'.[41] This type of title establishes the perspective and intended viewership of the work, as per conventions of the time. Genette continues to re-name Hoek's 'subjectal' and 'objectal' titles as 'thematic' (which reflect the content of the text) and 'formal' (indicating the classification or genre of the text).

Introduction II: A Nordic Symbolist Overview

Symbolism manifested itself as an international tendency, encompassing a number of broad themes, namely the anxiety of modern life, urban alienation, interest in the macabre and the evocative potential of nature. Modern scholarship describes Symbolism as anything *but* a movement in later 19th century and early 20th century art; rather, it is a pervasive current to which artists and writers gravitated. There is no single 'direction' for Symbolism, and the aesthetic leadership present in some formal artistic movements, -isms and collectives of the

[41] Gérard Genette, "Structure and Functions of the Title in Literature", trans. Bernard Crampé, *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 14 no. 4 (Summer 1988), 708-9; as referred to by Genette with regard to literary and poetic forms.

Avant-Garde are also absent.[42] Artists described as 'Symbolist' vary widely in style, thus Symbolist tendencies in fin de siècle art are identified by their approach to subject matter, both in the Scandinavian and wider European artistic milieu. This tendency, also described as a "mental attitude",[43] broad as it is, is best defined as the desire to render the invisible in clearly comprehensible terms, to put visual expression to an idea without making it wholly explicit to the viewer, in a triumph of suggestion over explication. Hallucinogenic and trance-like scenes of the fantastic are characteristic of the international Symbolism tendency, and are present in Nordic Symbolism; Munch's *Evening on Karl Johan* (1892, fig. 1) is articulated in the mundane surrounding world, yet imbued with the uncanny sense of something beyond reality. The themes of death, illness, and psychological dimensions feature strongly in art and literature of this era as a consequence of, and antidote to issues faced by the new metropolitan society, namely mass production and the rise of consumerism, high population densities, and as a result, the subsumation of the individual among the masses.[44]

Central to Symbolism is the evocation of an idea, represented by an object or spatial arrangement; this could be achieved through the ambiguously blurred contours which "dematerialise" the form, so that it is implied, not explicitly rendered.[45] Thus introspection is sparked by the defamiliarisation of everyday objects and scenes in the Shklovskian sense, which are imbued with symbolic potential beyond external appearances. Chapter 2 examines the evocation of an idea and its atmosphere or mood, as transmitted by associated visual and verbal representations associated as a key objective of this thesis.

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[42] Sharon Hirsh, "Editor's Statement: Symbolist Art and Literature", *Art Journal: Symbolist Art and Literature*, vol. 45, no. 2, (Summer 1985), 95.
[43] Hans H. Hofstätter, "Symbolism in Germany and Europe", in *Kingdom of the Soul: Symbolist Art in Germany 1870-1920,* eds., Ingrid Ehrhardt and Simon Reynolds, (Munich: Prestel, 2000), 17.
[44] Sharon Hirsh, *Symbolism and Modern Urban Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 43.
[45] Hirsh, 3.

Fin de siècle society was marked by the rise of the individual, and art sought to reflect the anxieties of existence experienced by the ill, consumptive, dying, tortured individual among the masses of the city. The existential crisis of the individual is also evident in literature of the era. Knut Hamsun's psychological novel *Hunger* (*Sult*) was published at the beginning of this study's timeframe in 1890, and centres on a penniless, starving protagonist who while wandering the Norwegian capital, then called Kristiania, grapples with his inner feelings and conscience in an attempt to eke out an existence in society. A decade earlier, *Niels Lyhne* by Jens Peter Jacobsen was published, which also focuses on the psychological and existential turmoil of the protagonist, a poet striving to learn about love as the antidote to religion, leading to his eventual demise. The individual in the state of existential crisis is equated with the Psychological Self theme of this thesis, and finds visual representation in Munch's paintings of introspective figures, such as *Melancholy* (1893, fig. 2). The stillness of the sea, and languid fluidity of the coastline serve as a foil to the individual's torments, as suggested by the raised hand to his head, shielding his vision. His body is furthermore turned entirely from the landscape presented to the viewer in a deliberate gesture of isolation from external reality. Hammershøi's interior scenes also function as interiorised psychological landscapes whose emptiness prompts the viewer's introspection. In a pictorial space that is physically closed off to the outside world by its windows, walls and doors, even those scenes that do not depict the single figure absorbed in a household chore perform as metaphors for the state of mind. Similarly, his abandoned streetscapes painted in London and Copenhagen portray an alien world, devoid of life, with the viewer as the sole witness in a deserted city. Such scenes provide the antithesis to the increasing urban freneticism at the emergence of the twentieth century.

Munch explicitly and outwardly expresses fractured psychological states in colour, facture and in text; Hammershøi's monochrome interiors

antithetically suffocate emotion among the architectural structures and unidentifiable figures, and thus light and space become symbolic of the atmosphere they evoke in the viewer. Nielsen shares Hammershøi's tendency to a monochrome palette and sparsely populated picture planes. However, Nielsen's portrayal of fatal illness and death, as symbolised by the individual in *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* (1897) together with the textual clues of the title, makes explicit reference to mortality: Hammershøi's interior scenes are meanwhile evocative of psychological struggle. Hansen Jacobsen too makes use of text to expand the meaning of his sculptures, using text as a narrative touchstone in the case of his own poetic sketch for *The Shadow* (1897-8), as well as the literary basis from H. C. Andersen.

Defining Symbolism

The interconnectedness of art and literature within the term Symbolism goes back to its origins as a literary movement in French poetry, with Jean Moréas at the helm declaring that Symbolist art thrives in "never conceptually fixing or directly expressing an idea […] but instead should be symbolized through sensitively perceptible traces, through secret affinities with the original ideas."[46] In 1890 Aurier sought to define the characteristics of Symbolism in an essay published in *Mercure de France*, a journal which was at that time closely associated with the Symbolist movement. Aurier describes Symbolism as comprising of the following aspects:

1. Ideist, for its unique ideal will be the expression of the Idea
2. Symbolist, for it will express this Idea by forms

[46] Jean Moréas, "Le Symbolisme", *Figaro Littéraire*, 18 September 1886. Quoted from Ingrid Ehrhardt and Simon Reynolds, eds. *Kingdom of the Soul: Symbolist Art in Germany 1870-1920*, (Munich: Prestel, 2000), 9.

> 3. Synthetist, for it will present these forms, these signs, according to a method which is generally comprehensible
> 4. Subjective, for the object will never be considered as an object, but as the sign of an idea perceived by the subject
> 5. (as a consequence) Decorative – for decorative painting, in its proper sense, as understood by the Egyptians and, very probably, the Greeks and the Primitives, is nothing other than a manifestation of art that is at once subjective, synthetic, symbolist and ideist.[47]

At the core of Aurier's definition is the concept of the Idea, which reflects to a degree Jean Moréas's sentiment outlined four years earlier in *A Literary Manifesto* – Symbolism (1886, *Le Figaro*) that "symbolist poetry endeavours to clothe the Idea in a form perceptible to the senses that nevertheless does not constitute an ultimate goal in itself, but, while helping to convey the Idea, remains subordinate."[48] Reinhold Heller notes that by 1891, Aurier's use of the term 'Symbolism' had reached Scandinavia, and was employed to describe Munch's work.[49] Rather than a stylistic commonality, it would appear the Symbolists should share the same philosophical drive expounded by Aurier, that the idea behind a clear and legible representation is paramount. These definitions of 'the Idea' also find precedence in John Locke's description in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) as "some immediate object of the mind, which it perceives and has before it, distinct from the sound it uses as a sign for it."[50] Ideas can be a philosophically polysemic concept, but by taking the definition

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[47] G.-Albert Aurier, "Le Symbolisme en peinture: Paul Gauguin", *Oeuvres Posthumes*,(Paris 1893), 215-16;
quoted in Shearer West, *Fin de Siècle*, (London: Bloomsbury, 1993), 106.
[48] Jean Moréas, "Le Symbolisme", *Figaro Littéraire*, 18 September 1886; See also Henri Dorra ed., *Symbolist Art Theories*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 151.
[49] Reinhold Heller, "Concerning Symbolism and the Structure of Surface", *Art Journal: Symbolist Art and Literature*, vol. 45, no. 2, (Summer 1985), 146.
[50] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* (London: T. Tegg & Son, 1836), xii.

of an idea as being a subjective, mental impression, granted form and subsequently we reach the central aim of this research, which is the translation of ideas between text and image in Nordic Symbolism between 1890-1915. Within Symbolism, visual and literary art are strands overlapping around the Idea, as professed by Moréas and later, Aurier. As such, the structures of Symbolist art demand excavation with the tools of semiotic analysis.

While Aurier may have, to a degree, penned a Symbolist manifesto applicable to the visual arts, it is not a manifesto openly adhered to by artists; more so, it is closer to a methodology for the analysis of art defined by any number of tendencies, including the pessimism of modern life manifested in images of illness and death, the hallucinogenic or dreamlike images prompted by psychoanalytical research, and the hyperrealistic representation of the everyday world; Heller argues that it is this diversity which makes Symbolism a triumph of individualism over stylistic cohesion.[51] Heller furthermore proposes that artists were only categorised as 'Symbolists' by virtue of their association with Symbolist writers, which he describes in relation to the exhibition *Cinquantenaire du Symbolisme*, organised by the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1936 to honour the fiftieth anniversary of Moréas' Symbolist manifesto.[52] Heller further outlines a history of approaches to Symbolist art, namely the distinction of Symbolists by iconographic terms, espoused by Ulrich Christoffel and Hans Hofstätter, which links artists with 'symbolist' tendencies across centuries. Robert Goldwater, however, draws on Maurice Denis to provide in more concrete terms the differentiation between the allegorical "search for expression by means of the subject" and the Symbolist "search for expression through the work of art".[53]

[51] Reinhold Heller, "Concerning Symbolism and the Structure of Surface", *Art Journal: Symbolist Art and Literature*, vol. 45, no. 2, (Summer 1985), 146.
[52] Heller, 147
[53] Heller, 148.

The reason for such a close alignment of Symbolist art and literature, according to Peter Nørgaard Larsen, is that artists and writers were united in their desire to reach the ultimate truths of the individual's soul, as a direct and oppositional reaction to naturalism and realism.[54] That Symbolist art seeks to make higher ideas perceptible through conventional or readily recognised forms seems at odds with the use of text to substantiate a representation. Evocation should not require clarification or be concretised, yet in many instances, that is the implication of text. However, text does not necessarily elucidate; it can also imitate art, and thus ekphrastic texts serve to underscore the evocative and suggestive visual imagery. The titles of Hammershøi's interior scenes perform in this manner, reflecting the visual content without positioning it in broader narrative than the painting suggests.

European Symbolist Contemporaries

The Symbolist aesthetic in art and literature sought to turn away from Realism and the visual effects of Impressionism. At its heart is the desire to imbue a surface with significant meaning, transcending literal transcription for symbolic representation. Ranging from the decadent, gilded Symbolism of Gustav Klimt (1862-1918, Austrian) and Franz von Stuck (1863-1908, German) to more introspective and atmospheric styles of Ejnar Nielsen and Hammershøi, the themes of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self are intensely explored by Symbolist artists. Clear aesthetic precedents can be found in work of the previous generation of artists, among them Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901, Swiss), James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903, American), Xavier Mellery (1845-1921, Belgian), and

[54] Peter Nørgaard Larsen, *Sjælebilleder*, (Copenhagen: Statens Museum for Kunst, 2000), 11.

Gustave Caillebotte (1848-1894, French), all of whom share a similar stylistic and thematic tendencies to the Nordic Symbolists.

Artistic contemporaries include Eduard Karsen (1860-1941, Dutch), who painted similar deserted architectural scenes to Hammershøi, such as *Beguinage in Amsterdam* (1893, fig. 3). Emil Nolde (1867-1956, German-Danish), whose oeuvre of thick impasto and vibrant colouration differs greatly from the works included in this study, also completed *Canal (Copenhagen)* (1902, fig. 4), using his own vernacular to mimic the soft diffusion of light and deserted Copenhagen of Hammershøi. Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918, Swiss) large scale, multi-figured *The Disappointed Souls* (1892, fig. 5) appears as a precursor to Ejnar Nielsen's *People Listening to Bells Closing in the Day* (1899-1900, fig. 21). Both the compositions, consisting of five, full-scale and deeply introspective foreground figures set against an undulating rural landscape, and their linear, almost photographic treatment appear to echo one another. Amidst an oeuvre of vivid landscapes, Jósef Pankiewicz (1866-1940, Polish) painted several urban nocturnes, including *Warsaw Cab at Night* (1893, fig. 6). The loss of self is most firmly felt in these night scenes, where figures are faceless shadows beneath glowing lamplight. These contemporaries of the Nordic Symbolists demonstrate the pervasiveness of the themes of illness, death and the psychological self across the fin de siècle European artistic milieu, both as subject matter and aesthetic tone.

Degeneration

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, a seeping malaise induced artists across Europe to explore illness, death and the psychological Self through visual means. Though many aspects are embraced within the term of Symbolism (National Romanticism, mythology and folklore, mysticism, dreams and the Unconscious), the disintegrative themes of Illness, Death and the Psychological

Self possess particular resonance for Nordic artists of the period 1890-1915. This does not purport exclusivity of such themes in Scandinavia, nor does it preclude the exploration of other, less pessimistic themes by the artists of this thesis. Rather, the popularity of these themes as subjects for art (and literature) is indicative of fin de siècle pessimism and the widely perceived degeneration of society, both on political, social and cultural levels. Michelle Facos credits industrialisation with the acceleration of society, taking in to account Max Nordau's reports on extensively extended railway tracks, inflation of periodical publishing and increased death rates from disease.[55]

Within the same breath as Symbolism we are confronted with the terms Decadence and Degeneration. The Decadent movement and Symbolism are difficult to extricate from one another, in terms of both the literary and visual arts aspects of the movements; however, themes of extravagance and sexuality feature more prominently in Decadent art, frequently manifested as a seductive, mythological female figure. Days after the publication of Moréas' "Symbolist Manifesto" in 1885, the French writer Gustave Kahn clarifies the path of Symbolism as idea-based, while other tendencies, including Decadence, encompass the artist's highly emotional, personal inflection of a subject as a sort of precursor to the subjective and visceral representation of Expressionism.[56] Kahn states: "The essential aim of our art is to objectify the subjective, (the externalisation of the Idea) instead of subjectifying the objective (nature seen through the eyes of temperament)."[57]

Degeneration is a concept intertwined with the fin de siècle milieu, and as issues of societal and moral decline were absorbed into aesthetic, creative

[55] Michelle Facos, *Symbolist Art in Context*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 65.
[56] Sharon Hirsh, *Symbolism and Modern Urban Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 29.
[57] Hirsh, 29.

output.[58] Through his 1892 text *Degeneration*, the writer Max Nordau became a major proponent of this sentiment, claiming that mental or 'nervous' illness is fostered by an introspective outlook on the world: "Among thoroughly sane individuals the emotions originate almost solely from impressions of the external world; among those whose nervous life is more or less diseased, namely, among the hysterical, neurasthenic, and degenerate subjects, and every kind of lunatic, they originate much more frequently in internal organic processes."[59] The sense of the word degeneration encompasses immorality, alcoholism, depravity, promiscuity and – that is to say, 'social degeneration.' This dichotomy between 'healthy' objectivity and 'degenerate' subjectivity finds reflection in cultural output of the era, in both content and technique. The link between mental illness and new artistic movements lingered well into the twentieth century, and in 1919 the Danish doctor Carl Julius Salomonsen published *De Nyeste Kunstretninger og Smitsomme Sindslidelser* (Recent Art Movements and Contagious Mental Illnesses).[60] His text was met with opposition in the artistic milieu, and the response, *Moderne Kunst of Sindssygdom: Svar til Professor Salomonsen* (Modern Art and Mental Illness: Response to Professor Salomonsen) was published in that same year.[61] The perceived moral, mental and physical degeneracy of modern tendencies in art intensified with the culmination of the Nazi exhibition of modernist works, entitled *Entartete Kunst* in 1937.

Given the death toll of communicable diseases such as cholera, syphilis and tuberculosis rising in the nineteenth century, with 350,000 Europeans

[58] Shearer West, *Fin de Siècle*, (London: Bloomsbury, 1993), 17.
[59] West, 21.
[60] Carl Julius Salomonsen, *De Nyeste Kunstretninger og Smitsomme Sindslidelser,* Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaards Forlag, 1919.
[61] Leo Swane, Oluf Thomsen, Harald Giersing, Johannes C. Bjerg, and Sophus Danneskiold-Samsøe, *Moderne Kunst of Sindssygdom: Svar til Professor Salomonsen*, Copenhagen: N. C. Roms Forlag, 1919.
The text is written by a range of contributors: the art historian Swane, medical doctor Thomsen, the artists Giersing and Danneskiold-Samsøe, and the sculptor Bjerg.

dying of influenza in the year 1889-1890 alone,[62] the subject matter of illness and death is a clear reflection of society. Tuberculosis struck across all demographics indiscriminately: Nielsen's morbid fascination with the dying in the town of Gjern, and Munch's family tragedies are owed to the disease. Symbolists, particularly in the Nordic region, thrived on such proclivities as empty rooms, the illness and death as results of urban living, and psychological effect on the individual, through which these experiences are filtered.

The pessimism that permeated fin de siècle society was borne of a number of factors. The acceleration of society, from population growth, industrialisation, and deaths indicated that such a speed of growth could not be sustained for long, and a sense of disillusionment gripped Europe, prophesising the unprecedented horrors of the First World War in 1914.[63]

Creating a void and empty space allows for the resonance of ideas, mood, atmosphere, of philosophical reflection with deeper implications beyond the frame. Silence is depicted in Hammershøi's reticent rooms, the void-like infinities of Albert Gottschalk's landscapes, or the echoing walls of an enclosed Nielsen composition, but they are felt most strongly in the paradoxical situation of a room full of people around a table, sitting in silence, as though unaware of each other's presence. Goldwater writes of silence "as a means of shutting out appearances in order to concentrate on the essence, and so isolation became the condition through which the artist could ignore the material and thus be able to penetrate the spiritual."[64] He states this as a particular quality of Belgian Symbolism, namely in the writing of Maurice Maeterlinck, but it has equal traction with Symbolist art. He furthermore suggests religious zeal and spirituality as the explicit reference points of such silence, as demonstrated in Niels Bjerre's *A Prayer Meeting. Harboøre*

[62] Michelle Facos, *Symbolist Art in Context*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 71.
[63] Facos, 65.
[64] Robert Goldwater, *Symbolism*, (London: Allen Lane, 1979), 29.

(Children of God), (1897, fig. 7). Under the pseudonym J. G. Pinholt, Bjerre further explored the rural life and the divisive evangelical group *Indremission* (Home Mission), on Jutland's west coast in a short story published in *Illustreret Tidende* in 1892.[65] Other Nordic artists conveyed the secular, psychological aspect of introspection rather than overtly spiritual, such as Vilhelm Hammershøi's *Five Portraits* (1901-1902, fig. 8). The title *Five Portraits* is strictly formal, reflecting the genre of painting, portraiture. This is a fragmentary group portrait in that there is no interaction between sitters heightens the sense of the individual, even among peers: these men were instrumental in the establishment of the Free Exhibition, founded in 1891, and as such are representative of the new, liberated guard in Danish art.[66]

Symbolism in the Nordic Region

The history of Symbolism in Denmark begins with the writer Johannes Jørgensen (1866-1956). The work of French Symbolist writers were presented to Danish audiences through *Taarnet* (*The Tower*, eight issues), a journal edited by Jørgensen between 1893-1894. Artists of his generation were avid readers of *Taarnet*, and through the journal became acquainted with the work of French Symbolists, including the writers Charles Baudelaire, Paul Verlaine and Stéphane Mallarmé and artists Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Gustave Moreau and Odilon Redon.[67] The link to the French cultural sphere was further strengthened in Danish art history in an effort to suppress German influences, a consequence of the

[65] J. G. Pinholt (aka Niels Bjerre), "Fiskere" ("Fishermen"), in *Illustreret Tidende*, no. 42, 17 July 1892, 504-506.
This text is not included in this study of word and image in Nordic Symbolism as thematically it is beyond the scope of this thesis, dealing with socio-religious issues rather than Illness, Death or the Psychological Self.
[66] Patricia Berman, *In Another Light: Danish Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013), 222.
[67] Ulla Sjöström, *Maleren Ejnar Nielsen 1872-1956*, (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers Forlag, 2000), 12.

recent loss of territory to Germany in 1864.[68] The brewer and art patron Carl Jacobsen had organised *Den franske Udstilling* (The Exhibition of French Art) in Copenhagen in 1888, an enormous exhibition comprised of painting, sculpture, architecture and prints. Jacobsen's personal taste is betrayed by the excessive outnumbering of Impressionists by Realist and Naturalist artists; among the 301 paintings exhibited were works by Puvis de Chavannes, Jules Bastien-Lepage, and Léon Bonnat.[69] From the 1870s Germany had been eclipsed by the modernist movements in France, and thus Paris became the new European centre of art. The atelier of Bonnat attracted an array of Nordic artists, among them P. S. Krøyer, Prince Eugen, Edvard Munch, Laurits Tuxen and Erik Werenskiold. The influx of Nordic artists flocking to Paris to study art began in the 1870s, and with exhibitions such as Jacobsen's, the tenets of the French avant-garde began to hold aesthetic influence in the North.

Swedish artists such as Richard Bergh, Prince Eugen and Karl Nordström had studied in Paris during the 1880s,[70] returning home to then apply the subjective responses of Symbolism to the Swedish landscape. In addition to painting, Bergh wrote extensively on the subject of art and the role of the artist in society. He sought to confer order on a painting through harmonious colour and form, heightening some elements and reducing others to convey the essence of the subject; [71] this suggests the creation of atmosphere as an artistically engineered effect on the viewer. Symbolist tendencies in Swedish art can be identified in Prince Eugen's *The Forest* (1892, fig. 9) a work prompted by an intense, almost mystical experience in the forest of Fjällskäfte, west of Stockholm in

[68] Peter Nørgaard Larsen, *Sjælebilleder*, (Copenhagen: Statens Museum for Kunst, 2000), 10.
[69] Kasper Monrad, ed. *Hammershøi and Europe*, (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2014), 52; for full catalogue see "Illustrated Catalogue of the Exhibition of French Artworks in Copenhagen 1888" Accessed on Danmarks Kunstbibliotek, inventory no. D2407 D 5915 11/04/18 http://kunstbib.dk/samlinger/udstillingskataloger/samlingen/000084446
[70] Michelle Facos, *Nationalism and the Nordic Imagination: Swedish Art of the 1890s,* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 11.
[71] Facos, 106

Södermanland. The dense placement of trees, suggesting both depth and impenetrability, is also a hallmark of Böcklin's work, notably in *Island of the Dead* (1880, fig. 10).[72] Glimmers of orange light beckon the viewer through the forest from the shallow foreground into the far reaches of the pictorial space; a narrow path can be discerned, yet the vertiginous monotony of trees is disorientating. National Romanticism and Symbolism are in many respects fused in Nordic painting of the 1890s by depicting a subjective response to the native landscape, and utilising the effects of light for introspective effect. This effect is found not only in landscape painting of this era, but in the scenes of illness, death and the psychological self explored in this thesis. This tendency is characterised in Munch's *Night in Saint-Cloud* (1893, fig. 11), in which the dreaminess of the blue twilight, which is concurrently romanticised by Krøyer throughout the 1890s, such as the idyllic *Boys Bathing at Skagen. Summer Evening* (1899, fig. 12), turns to loneliness and despair as the solitary, faceless figure sits in contemplation amidst the shadows. The existential concerns of modern society provided dark subject matter for Symbolist artists, who adopted a philosophical approach to illness, death and psychological concerns;[73] thus, this outlook underpins much cultural output of this era.

The historic interconnectedness of the Nordic countries undergoes a period of political flux during the nineteenth century, yet Nordic camaraderie and co-operation was maintained among artists, both at home and abroad.[74] Denmark was recovering from the devastating loss of Schleswig-Holstein to Germany in 1864, but retained its territories Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland. Norway

[72] Michelle Facos, *Nationalism and the Nordic Imagination: Swedish Art of the 1890s,* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 97.
[73] Marja Lahelma, "Symbolism in Norway and Finland" in *The Magic North: Finnish and Norwegian Art around 1900*, ed. Timo Huusko, (Oslo and Helsinki: Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design, Finnish National Gallery, and Ateneum Art Museum, 2015), 16.
[74] Karina Lykke Grand, "Et Nordisk Maleri?" in *Fra Dahl til Munch: Nordisk Maleri fra Canica Kunstsamling*, eds. Knut Ljøgodt and Andrea Elia Kragerud, (Stamsund and Tromsø: Nord Norsk Kunstmuseum and Orkana Forlag, 2015), 66.

was transferred from a four hundred year union with Denmark to Sweden in 1814, until its dissolution in 1905. Similarly, Finland had been under Swedish rule since the medieval era to become a Grand Duchy of Russia in 1809, from which it gained independence in 1917.[75] Simultaneously, the concepts of the 'North' and a unified Nordic region began to rouse international interest, not least due to Richard Wagner's motifs from Nordic mythology, with the art of the new generation from Europe's periphery espousing the "ideal combination of modernity and primitiveness".[76] Elements of National Romanticism which was prevalent during the mid-1800s (and referred to in the Danish context as the Golden Age of Painting) retained a degree of influence between 1890-1915, and can be claimed to have been absorbed in Symbolism, representing the native Nordic landscapes according to the new techniques of the French avant-garde. That the visual and literary art of this period is so closely associated makes the visual output an exceptionally rich seam for semiotic analysis, and prompts the question of defining the relationship between the idea and its manifestation as an artwork.

Symbolism is characterised by a tension between idea and surface, and the desire to unify both style and substance into one cohesive, expressive form using non-conventional and deeply evocative motifs. This is achieved through a rhythmical structuring of forms in both art and literary writing which are designed to suggest and imply, rather than make explicit.[77] Goldwater outlines that Symbolist artists set themselves apart from their contemporaries by fostering allegorical significance, not through conventional iconography and academic allegory, but through subjectivised imagery with philosophical references.[78] The 'idea' is thus positioned as an all-encompassing presence, a separate entity that has

[75] For a comprehensive study of modern Nordic political history see: Patrick Salmon, *Scandinavia and the Great Powers 1890-1940,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
[76] Marja Lahelma, "Symbolism in Norway and Finland" in *The Magic North: Finnish and Norwegian Art around 1900*, ed. Timo Huusko, (Oslo and Helsinki: Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design, Finnish National Gallery, and Ateneum Art Museum, 2015), 15.
[77] Peter Nørgaard Larsen, *Sjælebilleder*, (Copenhagen: Statens Museum for Kunst, 2000), 259.
[78] Robert Goldwater, *Symbolism*, (London: Allen Lane, 1979), 5.

reference points beyond the borders of the artwork itself. Text can be employed to suggest a narrative separate and external to the visual work, to reinforce the visual representation or to 'fix' a set narrative in place. In any case, the influence of the text affixed by the artist as an additional medium of communication must be considered as integral to interpretation. This thesis concerns itself primarily with the translation of the idea from one medium to another, and the subsequent effect on perception and communication of the idea.

A Note on the Themes

Illness, Death and the Psychological Self can be defined as the overriding aesthetic tendencies in Nordic, and to a great extent, European, art of this era. European trends, and social circumstances challenge the artists of this project to represent these universal human themes. While sanitation had improved from the mid-nineteenth century,[79] tuberculosis continued to ravage Europe during the 1870s,[80] and mental illness began to be analysed according to new psychoanalytical methods.[81] The Psychological Self has a dual function in relation to the thematic approach to this thesis. It is the prism through which individuals make sense of the physical conditions of illness and death, and because of its subjective quality, the Psychological is also the most intangible of the three aspects. However, the Psychological Self also functions as subject matter in its own right without reference to either illness or death; this is demonstrated most clearly in Hammershøi's oeuvre, in which depopulated spaces suggest contemplation as symbols of the psyche.

[79] Neil Kent, *The Soul of the North: A Social, Architectural and Cultural History of the Nordic Countries 1700-1940*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 136.
[80] Kent, 141.
[81] Kent, 129.

The link to the Psychological Self is derived through the subject matter, but also through the artist's style and technique. Aspects such as form, composition, colour and facture reveal the psychological dimension as imprints of the artist's eye. Art which prompts introspection can be said to have a 'psychological' quality. I equate that prompt with atmosphere, the mood that is exuded by the work and combined with the viewer's emotional response; the link between atmosphere and fin de siècle Nordic art is explored in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

The attitude to death ranges from fear to fascination, and many artists sought to make sense of death as a foil to life. Ejnar Nielsen's words "death serves life, and life serves death"[82] describe the inextricability of one concept from another. Living and dying are both physical processes, but the concepts of 'being alive', or of 'being dead' are abstract ideas, one can only be experienced in relation to the other. This existential dichotomy occupied Nordic aesthetic sensibilities, and Nielsen appears to revel in the idea: "I do not understand that people cannot look at Death with the same majestic beauty as life."[83] Edvard Munch stated that the motivation behind the *Frieze of Life* series (1893) is 'the human', but from this we can extract the desire to paint the Psychological, "with its sufferings and emotions, rather than [to] paint external nature".[84] The internal flux and turmoil of the psyche receives external form through Munch's subjective, proto-Expressionist interpretation.

Øystein Sjåstad aligns the *tache* (a blot, stain or mark) with illness, quoting from Nordau's *Degeneration*, in which artists working in Impressionism (and its associated movements) are described as suffering from a "trembling of the

[82] "Døden betjener Livet, og livet betjener Døden", translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen; quoted from Henrik Wivel, *Den Store Stil: Dansk symbolisme og impressionisme omkring år 1900,* (Copenhagen: Fogtdal, 1994), 116.
[83] "Jeg forstaar ikke, at Mennesker ikke kan se paa Døden med dens majestætiske Skønhed som paa Livet", translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen; quoted from Wivel, 117.
[84] Reinhold Heller, *Edvard Munch: The Scream,* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1973), 23.

eyeball" or nystagnus.[85] Thus in both medical and aesthetic discourse of the later nineteenth century, the meaning of the *tache* is explored as a marker of disease and degeneration. Sjåstad claims that for its contemporary audience, Munch's *The Sick Child* (1885, fig. 13) was then also a "sick painting."[86] The link between subject matter and form is central to understanding how the aesthetic of the work relates to the content. A contemporary of Munch, the art critic Adolf Rosenberg highlighted the perceived link between the broken, fragmented brushstroke and illness or degeneration, describing Munch's style as having "nothing to do with art" and as no more than a "smearing of paint" and "a grotesque sin".[87] This thesis analyses the aesthetic rendering of these themes in Nordic Symbolism, using specific examples which demonstrate the interaction of word and image within the same artwork, conveying the same conceptual idea.

Representation of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self in Nordic Symbolism: A Brief Survey

The purpose of this brief survey is to shed further light on the thematic concerns and aesthetic tendencies of Nordic Symbolism between 1890 and 1915, forming a contextual backdrop for the individual artworks by Nielsen, Hammershøi, Munch and Hansen Jacobsen analysed in this thesis. The presence of Death permeates fin de siècle Nordic art as both allegorical figurations of the Grim Reaper or abstractions thereof, frequently depicted in secular, realist settings to demonstrate the quotidian and indiscriminate nature of death. In this sense, death is both a physical presence, or is suggested by its absence in the pictorial space.

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[85] Øystein Sjåstad, *A Theory of the* Tache *in Nineteenth-Century Painting*, (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 17.
[86] Sjåstad, 18.
[87] Sjåstad, 17. Also quoted in Jay A. Clarke, *Becoming Edvard Munch: Influence, Anxiety and Myth,* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago/ London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 65.

However, distinguishing representations of death from those of illness, which is often depicted as the final moments of life, is an ambiguous process. In cases where death is imminent, death is specified in the title and illness is assumed. In other instances, it is implied by the visual content. With Illness and Death comes the third thematic component of this thesis, the Psychological Self. While psychological issues can be regarded as forms of mental illness or distress and thus an extension of illness, they also function as the individual's inner emotions of alienation, anxiety, and the intense awareness of their position in society. Therefore, the Psychological Self functions on two levels; firstly, as a state of mind through which the themes of Illness and Death are contemplated, and secondly, as subject matter in its own right. This section examines the thematic representation of this study's artworks, with reference to works within Nordic Symbolism that are not necessarily bound by an explicit text/image relation. Therefore, this section provides visual comparison and context to the artworks singled out as case studies in this research, created in the period 1890-1915.

Figurative Depictions (Personification)

When personified in Nordic Symbolism, Death is an actively engaging figure. This image is deeply rooted in medieval pictorial representation of Death in physical activity, either dancing, as in the Dance of Death, or stalking as a predator might, embodying the surprise and unexpectedness explicitly referenced in Hansen Jacobsen's poetic text to *The Shadow*.[88] The oscillation between literal and metaphorical representations of Death in Nordic Symbolism displays at once the opposition between pictorialisation and imagination in naturalistic and expressionistic terms.

[88] Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation,* (London: British Museum Press, 2001), 158.

The personification of Death as a Grim Reaper-type figure appears in *Evening. The Old Woman and Death* (1887, fig. 14) by Laurits Andersen Ring (1854-1933, Danish) as a barely perceptible vision of death, skeletal with outstretched wings hovering above an elderly peasant woman. Evening, or the close of the day, is a metaphor for life coming to an end, and while the landscape is serene, the sky clear but for some wisps of cloud, the impending darkness of night brings with it the shadow of death. Death's scythe swings low in his hands following a trajectory to the woman's neck, hence Ring depicts the potential threat. This imminent action is clear in the visual narrative, yet the woman, with a sorrowful and resigned expression, appears unaware of her fate. The title highlights the dual focus of the painting; that of the nocturnal landscape, the hazy quality of light associated with *stemningsmaleri* and the hopeful yellow gash above the horizon, and secondly, the foreground narrative of Death about to claim another life. As in Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother*, Ring's Death is also sheathed in diaphanous, web-like cloth, though his form is entirely skeletal. Naturally, the skull lacks facial expression, and while the absence of flesh (and humanity) is horrific in itself, its ability to convey emotion becomes less emphatic and 'readable' than one that is roughly modelled and clad with flesh. The trees form black, fingerprint-like smudges along the horizon, just beyond the hill; however, the single smudge above the woman's head is the greatest protrusion into the clear sunset, and appears as a demarcation of her doom. The shadow to the left side of her head is also intensified, similar to the double shadow surrounding the sitter of Ejnar Nielsen's *And in his Eyes I Saw Death.*[89] Ring made studies from a skeleton at Krøyer's academy, which formed the basis for the winged form of Death in this painting.[90] This representation recalls Hansen Jacobsen's *The Night* (1895, fig.

[89] Ulla Sjöström, *Maleren Ejnar Nielsen*, (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers' Forlag, 2000), 19; see Part One: Titles as Paratexts for further discussion on the double shadow in Nielsen's *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* (1897).
[90] Peter Nørgaard Larsen, *Sjælebilleder,* (Copenhagen: Statens Museum for Kunst, 2000), 286.

107), exhibited at the Charlottenborg exhibition in 1896.[91] *The Night*, which was later exhibited as *Darkness* in 1901, depicts Night as a winged ghoulish figure, with pointed ears and a bat-like posture. Despite his wings he crawls along the earth. Night and darkness are metaphors for death, and this theme is implied in the text the sculptor wrote for the work, further discussed in Part Two, Texts by the Artist. The elongated composition Hansen Jacobsen used in *Night* is seen in the diagonal axis of his later work *The Shadow*, and is also present in *Death and the Mother*, in which the scythe is used to extend the kinaesthetic dynamic of the sculpture.

Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother* (1892) finds an interesting counterpoint in *Death* (1897, fig. 15) by the Latvian artist Janis Rozentāls (1866-1916) which also depicts Death in the immediate and intimate sphere of a mother and child. Here, the dark folkloric and mythological associations of the forest are evoked by the woodland setting. The mother's reaction is one of disgust and horror as her child is inspected by the figure of Death, who in a most disturbing pose, bends rigidly at the hip to examine the child, and potentially bestow upon it the kiss of death. The arrangement suggests a narrative directly preceding the child's abduction, while the mother's expression is one of determination and resistance, in contrast to the resignation Hansen Jacobsen's collapsed mother. Death is unusually clothed all in white, but is similarly shrouded, as in Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother* and *The Shadow*, with the iconographic attribute of the scythe gripped firmly at the knee. The child, also draped in white cloth with its head covered, mimics the appearance of Death and so seems demarcated, its fate predestined. This startling image demonstrates the international, fin de siècle tendency to represent Death as trespassing the mundanity of everyday life.

[91] Vejen Kunstmuseum, "Niels Hansen Jacobsen: Natten", http://www.vejenkunstmuseum.dk

Ring's title of *After Sunset. "Now Day is Slipping Away and Night is Pouring Out"* (1899, fig. 16) is derived from a psalm by the Norwegian priest Wilhelm Andreas Wexels, written in 1840[92], and again employs the twilight motif as a poeticisation of death. Ring does not quote the second part of Wexel's psalm, which reads "Leave our sin for Christ's wounds, O gentle God!" The psalm is attached to the title as a quotational subtitle, highlighting the duality of the painting as a depiction of a peaceful landscape, and secondly, a symbol of mortality. The grey shadow of night sweeps across the pictorial space until the pale and washed out sky is almost entirely subsumed. Without sunlight, the profiles of the church and the trees take on a dark, sombre character. Compositionally, the work consists of the large hill to the left foreground that approaches to the edge of the picture plane, with the cave-like tombs exposed to the viewer. To the right of this hill, Ring employs the road which disappears beyond the brow of the hill, as a motif of the unknown. Death is not explicitly mentioned in the title, as in *Evening. The Old Woman and Death*, but metaphorically evoked. In both of Ring's paintings, the sky is brightly illuminated, with the rest of the earth, and certainly foreground elements cast in deeply symbolic shadow. The invisibility and ambiguity of what dwells in shadows is again worked into the composition, as upon closer inspection, the paler foreground area beneath the rocks is a cluster of skulls, outside the church walls, forging a poetic bond between nocturnality and mortality. The four central motifs of the work, the landscape, the trees, the church and the skulls are a composite of separate studies Ring made, combined here in a new composition. The skulls are based on Ring's study *Three Skeletons in the Capuchin Monastery near Palermo* (1894, fig. 17), the church is based on his work *Melby Churc*h (1899) and *Evening* (1899).[93]

[92] "Nu skrider Dagen under, og Natten vælder ud; forlad for Jesu Vunder vor Synd, o milde Gud!" Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen; quoted from Peter Nørgaard Larsen, *Sjælebilleder,* (Copenhagen: Statens Museum for Kunst, 2000), 287.
[93] Peter Nørgaard Larsen, *Sjælebilleder,* (Copenhagen: Statens Museum for Kunst, 2000), 287.

The text that accompanies the painting, "now day is slipping away, and night is spilling out", is religious in tone, but the seclusion of the church behind high walls, an unattainable redemption for the dead below, is somewhat clearer when regarded from Ring's atheistic perspective.[94] Ring furthermore secularises the psalm quotation by omitting the second phrase which references God, underscoring the visual concept of death without redemption. The obfuscation of forms in the tomb invites the imagination to participate; there is uncertainty about what is seen in the dark, and this questioning of vision, of what is seen and what lies concealed, as well as mythological, folkloric notions of spirits emerging after dark is brought into play by these skulls. Death is not personified in Ring's painting; rather, in a form of pathetic fallacy, as darkness spills across the land, the cycle of life and death becomes embroiled in the duality of night and day.

Magnus Enckell (1870-1925, Finnish) also depicted Death figuratively, this time as a lone, wandering individual, but the lack of conventional iconographies imbues the scene with greater introspective symbolism that is startlingly realist. *Death's Walk* (1896, fig. 18) personifies Death as a skeletal form draped in a long black cloak. Trudging through a snow-covered landscape, a scattering of settlements and trees are visible by the horizon. The black figure set against the white landscape is a striking visual arrangement, with the overcast sky heavy with snow. Death wanders, the hands clasped tightly, moving forward with a hunch. The moment depicted is one of expectation; Death is en route between villages to claim the next victim,[95] as a hunter in the snow. However, the skulking posture and clenched hands betray an agonised existence; he does not stride athletically, as in Hansen Jacobsen's depiction. The absence of life in the harsh Finnish winter renders Death both a sinister and pitiful figure, and endows this personification as a lonely, restless individual. Thus, the figure embodies both the

[94] Peter Nørgaard Larsen, *Sjælebilleder,* (Copenhagen: Statens Museum for Kunst, 2000), 287
[95] Nørgaard Larsen, 41-42.

cause and effect of death, functioning as the perpetrator and the victim in Enckell's vision. The title, *Death's Walk* furthermore suggests a ceaseless journey, rather than a destination. Ironically, Death is not static; the commonality between *Death and the Mother* and *Death's Walk* is one of flight, while in *The Shadow* and *Night*, the figure is in a state of flux and movement.

Illness, Death and Ejnar Nielsen

Ejnar Nielsen's oeuvre contains examples of both figurative and symbolic death. *Death and the Cripple* (1899, fig. 19) depicts Erik Kjærsgaard, the sitter from *And in his Eyes I Saw Death*, on his deathbed,[96] the voracity of tuberculosis evident in his emaciated body, reposing in the lush rolling hills of Gjern. Keeping solemn vigil at his side is the crippled man. Death, named in the title, is embodied through the deceased man, whose skeletal remains echo the depiction of Death utilised by Hansen Jacobsen, Enckell and Ring. Thus, Death becomes symbolised not through the Grim Reaper folklore, but as it is manifested in reality: the absence of life in the physical body. The cruelty and indiscriminate nature of death is furthermore underlined in the fact that the elderly crippled man still lives, while the young perish. The dead man is not referred to in the title, he is stripped of identity and subsumed within his present state of existence.

Nielsen's illustration *Dance of Death* (1900, fig. 20) combines a number of elements from his other compositions. The rectangular scene consists of a row of mourners against the wall, most likely within the walls of a tomb. The mourners, some of whom bear coffins, appear in various stages of decay, rendering some more skeletal than others. Above the wall is an intricately wrought gate of disembodied skeletons, and skulls atop c-scrolls. These c-scrolls form contorted

[96] Ulla Sjöström, *Maleren Ejnar Nielsen 1872-1956*, (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers Forlag, 2000), 21

spines, with flat bands suggesting abstracted rib-cages. Pelvic bones sprout from these spines, and bones interlocking with jaws mimic the interwoven, zoomorphic creatures in medieval manuscript design, in reference to the medieval origins of the Dance of Death. The motif gained traction to symbolise the indiscriminate nature of pestilence and death during the medieval era, frequently depicted in murals on graveyard walls, hence all levels of society are portrayed in Nielsen's composition, from the king in the extreme left, and to the peasant, a suited man, a pregnant woman, parents carrying a child's coffin and a crippled man,[97] in addition to sitters from earlier Gjern paintings *And in his Eyes I Saw Death,* and *The Sick Girl*.

The central emblem contains the title, *Dødedansen*. The depiction of the Dance of Death demonstrates Death's status as an equaliser across all levels of society, but the rhythmic bodily movements of dancing, and by association, music, were by medieval standards considered alluring, erotically charged and therefore immoral. Rather than functioning as an admonition of appetites of the flesh, the image of the death is thus associated with immorality, while the living attempt to sidestep the 'sinfulness' of death.[98] Beyond the wall is the flat expanse of landscape, bound on either side by five tall trees and box hedges of a graveyard. This combination of low box hedges and tall trees is typical of Danish graveyard design, and is also used as a structural device in Nielsen's illustrations of Vestre Kirkegaard in *The Old Man's Child*. Before the passageway in the tomb is a corpse, laid out on a deathbed. The corpse bears the likeness of Anna Dorthea, the model for Nielsen's painting *The Sick Girl* (1896), though here flowers are placed in her hands as she is prepared for burial. The sitter from *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* is directly transposed to the right of the passageway in *Dance of Death*. The compositional type of a number of figures along one plane is reminiscent of

[97] Ulla Sjöström, *Maleren Ejnar Nielsen*, (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers Forlag, 2000), 32.
[98] For further representational conventions regarding the Dance of Death, as established in the fifteenth century, see Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation,* (London: British Museum Press, 2001), 155-56.

depictions of the Last Supper, but instead of Christ at the centre, Nielsen depicts the entrance opening, through which another coffin is borne through into the fictive tomb. The illustration is bound by a decorative border, containing funereal wreaths linked by ribbons; the lower portion of the border is illusory, belonging to the narrative plane of the tomb scene, while also containing decorative, miniature landscapes. Nielsen portrays death as a return to the soil, as well as the inextricable link between life, death and the landscape.

In many of his works, Nielsen creates a tension of mortality between the living and impending death, without explicit or iconographical representations of Death as the Grim Reaper. This major difference sets his work apart from Hansen Jacobsen's sculptural representations of Death. The textual basis for the latter's *Death and the Mother* follows the prescript of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale and the description of Death as an old man in ragged clothes. Other works which allude to Death, such as *The Shadow* or *Night*, also depict Death by presence - Nielsen, by absence. This is perhaps partly due to the inherent difference in representation between pictorial space, and the sculptural volume. The analysis of positive and negative volumes can be deepened using the framework of the virtual cube, which contains the sculpture within a regular, virtual mass in order "to define and render explicit the internal energetic structure of the object."[99] The virtual cube functions as a focusing device, through which the perception of sculptural aspects can be read clearly by relating and comparing the varying proportions of the sculptural volumes.[100] The boundary of the pictorial space is the two-dimensional equivalent of the virtual cube - the frame of a painting contains and condenses the space, so that the positive and negative dialectics of space unfold within this structure. Yet a painting can exist with little or no positive space, as evident in

[99] Fernande Saint-Martin, *Semiotics of Visual Language*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990, 177.
[100] Saint-Martin, 178.

twentieth century Abstract art. The nature of sculpture is an additive process of creating positive volume (the artwork), in the negative space of its environment; the virtual cube theory highlights the perception of kinaesthetic energy in sculpture. However, in figurative sculpture such as Hansen Jacobsen, it can be argued that absence can only be created through presence because sculpture inhabits both the 'real' space of the viewer and its own illusionistic volume. The nature of text and image dynamic in Nielsen is based on titles (*And in his Eyes I Saw Death)* and illustration (*The Old Man's Child)*. But Hansen Jacobsen places strong emphasis on the linguistic power of visual imagery, adding poetic texts almost as supplementary material for interpretation.

Psychological Sounds

Nielsen painted a large scale canvas entitled *People Listening to the Bells Closing in the Day* (1899-1900, fig. 21). This tableau of five elderly figures set against lush green waves as the hills of Gjern recede horizontally; the luminescent stream that runs through *The Blind Girl* (1896-98, fig. 22) winds in the valley below. The landscape engulfs the pictorial space with an extraordinarily high horizon. The distinction between these individuals and their environment is erased, with clothing coloured in the lush green of the landscape, while the standing woman is slightly differentiated in earthy-blue tones. This indicates their inevitable return to the earth. As in Ring (fig. 16), the end of the day symbolically heralds both night and death.

The figures are divided into three groupings, from left to right; a couple seated on the grassy knoll, the standing pair forming at the centre, lending verticality to the composition, and a lone seated man, whose legs disappear over the edge of the hill. The compositional arrangement of a group portrait, in which all individuals are self-absorbed and seemingly unaware of each other's presence is

found elsewhere in contemporary Nordic painting, such as *A Prayer Meeting. Harboøre (Children of God)* (1897, fig. 7) by Niels Bjerre (1864-1942, Danish). The presence of so many figures in the pictorial space creates a site of psychological tension, with the lack of interaction instead amplifying the presence of the individual. In Bjerre's composition, the prayer meeting participants make no eye contact, and are isolated in their spiritual contemplation. Death is not a thematic concern, but the fact that three of the fishermen present in Bjerre's painting died before the work's completion creates a memorialising function.[101] The line of their respective gazes thus leads the viewer's eye to a void in the pictorial space without appealing directly to the viewer, as in the case of Hammershøi's *Five Portraits* (fig. 8). Echoing the linear arrangement of figures also found in Nielsen's *Dance of Death*, the Leonardo da Vinci *Last Supper* (1494-8) style composition depicts major figures in the Danish arts scene, including the artist's brother Svend seated in front of the narrow table, his face obscured in shadow. Three of the figures directly engage with the viewer; from right to left, the artists Carl Vilhelm Holsøe and Jens Ferdinand Willumsen, and art historian Karl Madsen all stare at the viewer from within the pictorial space. Their perception of being observed is at once unnerving, as though the viewer has become a complicit player in the scene. While the figures in *Five Portraits* address the viewer, with the exception of the artist Svend Hammershøi, and on the far left, the architect Thorvald Bindesbøll, their positions do not acknowledge the presence of each other within the space; the same isolation of the individual occurs in *A Prayer Meeting. Harboøre (Children of God)* and *People Listening to the Bells Closing in the Day*. This introspection means that each portrait becomes a psychological study, revealing the interior landscape of the sitter.

[101] Katharina Alsen and Annika Landmann, *Nordic Painting: The Rise of Modernity,* (Munich: Prestel, 2016), 260.

The figures in *People Listening to the Bells Closing in the Day* are depicted in Nielsen's characteristic linear style which carefully renders the minute details of expression and appearance. Fatigue is evident in their drawn expressions, they are gaunt and worn from a lifetime. They are at rest, the seated figures visibly exhausted, while the standing man bears his entire weight down on the support of a cane. Their still demeanours suggest waiting, while the abstracted gazes imply concentration; however, the purpose of the figures' preoccupation within the narrative of this painting is unclear without knowledge of the title. There is no church in sight, or other signs of human habitation within the composition; the source of the bell ringing is beyond the pictorial narrative, yet specified in the textual narrative. The time of day is also specified in the title, and that the day is drawing to a close brings into play the metaphor of mortality and night, as does the funereal association of bell-ringing. The textual aspect elucidates their activity, and so their abstracted gaze becomes indexical of the bells mentioned in the title. The title may be alternatively translated as '...bells ringing in the day', rather than 'closing'; the variances of linguistic translation bring subtly differing connotations to the title. The act of listening is in itself invisible, but for a few bodily clues - the cocked head, and downward gaze of concentration. Such bodily clues are also present in *The Scream*, through the gaping mouth of the foreground figure. The representation of sound on a canvas requires a pictorialisation of the aural sense, sound accessed through sight. It is paradoxical that in a painting which the title suggests is filled with the sound of bells, the composition conveys stillness: the five figures are present together, yet are silent; flowers spring silently at their feet, the glassy stream snakes stealthily, and hill recedes into hill, without animal or human interruption in the infinite solitude of the rural landscape. They patiently await the approach of death, as signalled by the bells. There are indeed many parallels between Bjerre's *Children of God* and Nielsen's *People Listening to the Bells Closing in the Day.* Bjerre explicitly conveys the religiousity of the gathering

by including a painting of the Crucifixion on the back wall of the room; the open books on the table, Bibles or psalm books, further bolster the spiritual aspect of the scene. The Indremission was an evangelical group that gained popularity in rural Denmark, to which Bjerre's own family had connections.[102] The illumination from the window receding to the right bathes the standing figure in a white light, and he returns the light with the power of his gaze, as though some revelation has not yet reached his colleagues. He stands as a preacher might, and is differentiated from the dark clad figures by his white clothing.

The listening motif is reversed in *Death Listens* (1897, fig. 23) by Hugo Simberg (1873-1917, Finnish), when Death appears in the home, listening to the gentle violin of a young boy; the motif of Death and music is again associated with the medieval depiction of the Dance of Death. Death's hand is clasped to the ear, with the other hand resting on the back of a chair, holding three white flowers. The wooden interior of the cabin is rustic yet comfortable, and in the background an older woman raises her head from her sickbed in apparent concern. Death is perhaps her guest, yet he does not interact with the figures in the scene, nor does the boy acknowledge his presence. This renders the purpose of Death's visit ambiguous, and raises the question of what may happen once the music stops, as implied by the narrative presented. This painting could be the subsequent scene to Enckell's *Death's Walk*, for Death is dressed in similar black attire, as though he has travelled the countryside to reach these individuals. The swinging pendulum of the clock is, as the hourglass, iconographical of death and the passage of time. In this case, the title draws attention to the action of Death, with bowed head as the violin played by the boy is iconic of musical notes. The chair is furthermore symbolic, left empty in anticipation of the visitor. *Death Listens* betrays a sensitivity that Hansen Jacobsen also accentuates in *Death and the Mother*, a

[102] Patricia Berman, *In Another Light: Danish Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013), 188-89.

touching and poignant moment of empathy, between victim and perpetrator. Death listening, finding pleasure in music and beauty in flowers, embeds the notion of Death being a natural part of the life cycle.[103] Simberg also painted a number of versions of *The Garden of Death* (1896, fig. 24), including as a fresco at Tampere Cathedral, in which Death is seen tending to plants, symbolic of the souls of the deceased en route to their final destination, heaven.[104] Thus the dichotomy of the dead nurturing life, birth and decay is an unsettling juxtaposition. The concept of plants as symbols of the soul is also found in Hans Christian Andersen's *Story of a Mother* (1847), the basis of Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother*, and is discussed in Part Three of this thesis, Literary Sources for Artworks.

The misery and ruthlessness of Death is brought to the fore conversely in *Pesta on the Stairs* (1894-96, fig. 25) by Theodor Kittelsen (1857-1914, Norwegian) which illustrates Death as a female personification of the plague, and is part of his illustrations for *The Black Death (Svartedauen,* 1900). Pesta lurks in the shadow that Hansen Jacobsen's forms as Death, in wait for a misstep or the opportunity to strike. This is a predatory representation of death, again with a black hood and gruesome appearance which is neither entirely fleshly or cranial. Kittelsen's series is deeply evocative of Odilon Redon's *noirs* of the 1870s and 1880s, both in monochrome tonality and nightmarish, Symbolist subject matter.

Existential Symbolism

The distinction between death as an actual, present figure, and death as anticipatory absence is highlighted by the artworks analysed in this survey.

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[103] Marja Lahelma, "Symbolism in Norway and Finland" in *The Magic North: Finnish and Norwegian Art around 1900*, ed. Timo Huusko, (Oslo and Helsinki: Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design, Finnish National Gallery, and Ateneum Art Museum, 2015), 19.
[104] "The Other World of Hugo Simberg": Finnish National Gallery, Ateneum Art Museum Helsinki and Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland, accessed 22/05/18 http://www.simbergintoinenmaailma.fi/en/works/the-garden-of-death/

Absence as a symbol of death is clearly rendered in *The Poor: The Waiting Room of Death* (1888, fig. 26) by Harald Slott-Møller (1864-1937, Danish). The poverty-stricken of Copenhagen await their moment, as players waiting backstage, with a cross-section of ages confined in this liminal space. The boy in the centre of the composition moves toward the open, blackened doorway, staring into a void. Slott-Møller had originally included a skeleton in the doorway, beckoning to the child,[105] but the absence of a figure beyond the threshold engages a psychological imagining of what could exist in the darkness, on 'the other side'. Thus it also evokes the 'unknown land' of Andersen's fairytale, quoted by Hansen Jacobsen in *Death and the Mother*; in this instance, absence and implication has more visual 'presence' than any literal depiction, inviting the viewer's mental participation in the scene and intensifying the psychological dimension.

Edvard Munch's representation of death is also deeply symbolic, and is represented in similar naturalistic mode to Nielsen, insofar as Death is manifested not as a Grim Reaper, but as a bodily or spiritual absence. But depictions of death while the 'victims' are still living are therefore often depictions of illness, unless the corpse is physically present. This is the case in Nielsen, and also in many of Munch's scenes from the *Frieze of Life* series. Munch's representation of death is frequently one from the perspective of the mourners left behind, in the aftermath of death. This is a decidedly naturalistic and humane perspective, and differs to several representations discussed by Ring, Simberg, Enckell and Hansen Jacobsen. It can be argued that Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother* depicts a mother's grief of losing her child, yet the Grim Reaper removes this from realist depiction and into the world of fantasy and fairytale, as per the original narrative. By contrast, Munch's death scenes are often those of his own family, and so are paintings from personal memory. Like Nielsen, Munch

[105] Patricia Berman, *In Another Light: Danish Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013), 189.

paints the living traversing the edge of death. Munch paints a number of deathbed scenes, which are categorically between illness and death, but the inclusion of death in the title cements the eventual outcome; such titles are prescriptive, directing the viewer to pursue a particular interpretation.

The concept of the shadow can also be a symbolic allusion to the perceived separation of the body and soul that occurs at death. Hansen Jacobsen's *The Shadow,* which lurks in the dust, 'impossible to escape', is established in the artist's poem as a representation of Death. The shadow comes to life, as it were, and stalks its prey. Shadows as a symbol of death can also be identified in Munch's *Moonlight* (1893, fig. 27), which presents to the viewer a woman, standing before a white picket fence around yellow, wood-clad house and white-framed window. The woman is positioned slightly off-centre to the left. Her dark clothes camouflage her presence against the blackness of her environment, forming a high contrast to her ghostly pallor. The title *Moonlight* suggests a nocturnal setting, and the moon's reflection can be seen the upper right pane of the window. Most significantly, however, is her shadow against the yellow house, a doubling of the self that suggests the dematerialisation of the spirit from the body, evoking in the viewer a psychological and existential uncertainty.

Munch and Nielsen: Psychological Portraits

Visually related to Nielsen's *And in his Eyes I saw Death* is Munch's *Self Portrait with a Skeleton Arm* (1895, fig. 28). Munch represents his head and neck in a linear style, with finely rendered features against a stark black background. The skeleton arm along the base of the lithograph serves as an illusionistic memento mori that may or may not belong to the sitter (Munch). His expression is abstracted, at rest and pensively staring beyond the range of the viewer. Munch's self portraiture allowed for his self-mythologisation, creating an

attractive public ego as the mad, neurotic artist as revealed through such psychologically-charged images.[106] 'Death' is not included in the title, but is alluded to by the inclusion of a skeletal arm. That this is a self portrait enhances the self reflexivity. Nielsen sees death in the sitter's eyes, but Munch presents himself as a deathly form. This is not Death the figurative Grim Reaper, but a symbol of his future state - or lack - of existence. The perspective of these images also differs; Nielsen perceives death in the expression of a man who is ill, while Munch presents a self portrait of a disembodied head, indicative and symbolic of the artist's psychological state. The skeleton arm is indexical of the entire corpse laid out at the base of the pictorial space, as though entombed, similar to Nielsen's *Dance of Death.* The black background provides a stark contrast between areas, and heightens the tension between the body parts. Munch's shoulders and torso are not delineated, yet the eye perceives their form in the darkness.

The focus on hands is similar in both images. Nielsen enlarges the sitter's hands, clasped on his lap perhaps to suggest the former strength and power of the sitter before his illness (fig. 60). Kjærsgaard was from the rural town of Gjern, and possibly working on the land or other such physical occupation. His sickly pallor and slouched, almost shrunken appearance beneath his blazer suggests a figure that is wasting away. His hands, idly clasped and vacant stare are atypical for a man in the vigour of youth, and are further testament to his impending death. However it is through the title that is also inscribed as an epitaph on the lower right corner of the picture plane that cements the theme of death in Nielsen's composition. The skeletal arm in Munch and the coffin-like chest in Nielsen function on the same level as icons of death. The faces of both portraits are executed with remarkable similarity. Munch does not place the same emphasis on the eyes as Nielsen, but the sketchiness of the facial features blurs the lines of

[106] Elizabeth Prelinger, *After the Scream: The Late Paintings of Edvard Munch*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, with the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 2001), 39.

existence. Nielsen's sitter is in black from the neck down, but the main visual difference lies in the background; I maintain that the background, i.e., the negative space, is a site of tension and atmosphere in an artwork because it is through the negative space that the dynamic of the positive forms is most clearly moulded.

These images are furthermore linked by a symbolic, monochromatic colour palette and uniform background. The yellow undertones in the crumbling damp plaster walls in Nielsen are also used to render Kjærsgaard's flesh; the monochrome lithograph, white areas depict flesh and bone. The format of Munch's self portrait is similar to that of a photographic portrait. Munch experimented with self portraiture in photography, so it can be read as a mode of self-memorialisation. A further visual counterpart for both Munch's *Self Portrait with a Skeleton Arm* and Nielsen's *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* is located in Munch's photographic diptych *Self Portrait*, consisting of the original photograph and its reverse, dated to 1906 (figs. 29-30). The artist poses in profile close to the photographic plane, his hand resting upon his leg; compositionally it is cropped just below his knee. Details of the bedroom are visible in the background, including a bed, candle and pitcher on a washstand. The first decade of the 20th century was a psychologically troubled one for Munch; in 1902 he lost part of his middle finger on the left hand in a shooting incident with his lover Tulla Larsen, culminating in a nervous breakdown in 1908. He spent a period of seven months in treatment for paranoia, hallucination, alcoholism and paralysis at Dr Daniel Jacobsen's nerve clinic in Copenhagen until May 1909.[107] The significance of the hands, specifically Munch's left hand is centrally placed in the composition, almost as close to the picture plane as is possible, with his right, 'undamaged' hand entirely obscured from view. Munch retrospectively called photographs he had taken during the period 1902-1909 his *skæbnefotografier* ('photographs of fate'),

[107] Dieter Buchhart, Anne-Birgitte Fonsmark and Gry Hedin, eds., *Edvard Munch og Danmark,* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2009), 22.

and the deformed hand his *skæbnehånd* ('hand of fate').[108] The initial visual correspondence of the photograph is with James Abbott McNeill Whistler's *Arrangement in Grey and White No. 1* (1871, fig. 31). The hands of the sitter, the artist's mother, are equally emphasised, clutching a white lace handkerchief, its diaphanous quality reflected in the frond-like bonnet. The verticality of the curtain is illusionistically positioned directly beside the artist in Munch's photograph as a mediator between the viewer and the pictorial space, as though the scene is revealed like a theatrical stage set. In addition to verticality, the curtain in Whistler's composition provides tonal balance and texture on the left side of the picture plane. The visual correspondence between Nielsen's painting and Munch's photographic self portrait demonstrate the use of composition to convey a sense of illness, despondency, and in the former case, death. The frontal perspective in Nielsen is rotated 90 degrees in Munch to provide the viewer with an imaginary panorama of Nielsen's pictorial space; the crumbling plaster wall is replicated, with Munch's bed providing a visual equivalent for coffin-like chest. The original and negative of the photograph can be identified due to the disfigurement of Munch's left hand. In both instances, the artists highlight the significance of particular body parts as possessing somewhat mystical qualities that resonate beyond the immediate pictorial narrative. The mysticism of Kjærsgaard's gaze is highlighted as visually remarkable in the painting's title through its inscription on the corner of the canvas; Munch positions himself in full body profile, and while his gaze avoids the viewer, the hand is not concealed in this self portrait[109] but openly displayed, piquing curiosity and suggesting an external narrative schema. The type of mysticism Nielsen displays is replicated in this obvious placement of

[108] Dieter Buchhart, Anne-Birgitte Fonsmark and Gry Hedin, eds., *Edvard Munch og Danmark,* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2009), 23.
[109] Sue Prideaux, *Edvard Munch: Behind the Scream*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 227.
Contrary to Prideaux's claim that Munch actively concealed his left hand in self-portraits and photographs.

the disfigured hand. Munch symbolises his own traumatic past through the hand, alluding to the incident by means of a psychologically intimate composition.

The erosion of Munch's sense of self, and perhaps the beginning of a new one through therapy are poignantly expressed in the photograph, in which the chair as an unmoving 'constant' is exposed for a longer period than Munch himself, and thus results in the overlaying of body and chair in a double exposure, slightly clearer in the reverse photograph due to difference in exposure length. Ghost images such as this challenge the viewer's perception of photography as realist and documentary, and accidental blotches such as those around Munch's head in the positive image, and the blemishes on the wall are visual counterparts to the painted double shadow surrounding the sitter's head in Nielsen's painting.

Illness and Death in Munch

Munch painted many scenes of illness bordering on death throughout his career, painting two versions of *By the Deathbed (Fever)* (1895, fig. 32) and *Death Struggle* (1915, fig. 33-39) twenty years apart. The difference in titles instils a different perspective on the unfolding narrative. *By the Deathbed* suggests a mourner's perspective, *Fever* that of the individual's illness (in this instance Munch's sister Sophie) and *Death Struggle,* the existential transition from life to lifelessness. These are naturalistic depictions of the process of dying, and without the Grim Reaper figure, death is symbolised by the ghostly faces of the mourners; they assume the function of the Grim Reaper, and their presence becomes indexical of the impending death. They listen and pray silently as Nielsen's elderly figures in *People Listening to the Bells Closing in the Day.* Neither do they interact with one another, yet the focus of their attention is pictorialised as the dying individual. The shadow is present once more looming behind the five figures, as in *Moonlight*, the double shadow around the sitter's head in Nielsen's *And in his Eyes I Saw Death,*

and in Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture *The Shadow.* In *By the Deathbed,* the shadow has a unifying function, embracing all five figures as a single black form, so that the body and shadow cannot be differentiated, similar to Munch's *Self Portrait with a Skeleton Arm* from the same year. In the later version, the shadow is separated from the five figures, taking on an independent significance. But here the toxic green glow that hovered on the bedclothes of Nielsen's *The Sick Girl* (1896, fig. 40) is transferred as a mystical aura around the mourning figures.

At the Deathbed presents the viewer with another viewpoint on Nielsen's *The Sick Girl.* The model, Anna Dorthea Kristensen occupies the lower horizontal portion of the canvas, countered only by her raised legs which appear to merge with the large commode against the wall. Painted the one year preceding *And in his Eyes I Saw Death,* Nielsen employs a similar palette and schematic to create the image of a girl clinging to life. Gone is the fight to remain alive, captured poignantly in Christian Krohg's *Sick Girl* (1881, fig. 41) or Munch's *The Sick Child* (1885-6, fig. 13)*;* both of these figures appeal tenderly, either to the viewer in the case of the former, or to her companion, in Munch. Nielsen excludes similar empathetic elements, there is no mediator between the viewer and the sick girl, as one is forced to confront death in the room's toxic green glow. Nielsen paints the barren stillness of being present in the sickroom. The space of *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* is stripped almost entirely bare but is countered by the frontal pose of the sitter. Neither appear aware of the viewer's presence, and no emotion is conveyed in Niesen's treatment, just a factual presentation of death present in the rooms of the living. The ceiling beams, as well as the dark brown door frame and the cubic volume of the chest become stark against the plaster wall, a foreboding verticality against her horizontality. But the girl's recumbency is both iconic of deathbed, and indexical of the fatal outcome of her illness. The artist's treatment of the subject matter retains a degree of objectivity, yet the detail reveals his regard for the 'majesty' of death. The lack of communication in Nielsen's sitters, unlike

those of Munch or indeed Krohg, suggests clinical detachment, a documentation that is underpinned by a cool and linear aesthetic style.

Thematic Context

Painting the ill in fin de siècle Europe is an almost certain precursor to painting the dead, a distinction which is often specified in the artwork title. The final stages of illness are widely documented in Nordic Symbolism, though illness is not purely a physical manifestation; psychological illness and by extension, existential concerns must also be included, which are perhaps less evident. Illness, death and the psychological self are inextricably bound, but separate to that is the psychological element which features in many Symbolist works. This is a sensation rather than an illness, a feeling of melancholia. The void of this thesis title therefore refers not only to the void of death, but to that associated with the modern urban citizen, faced with the declining 'myth' of rural togetherness and rise of the anonymous individual in the industrial, bustling city.[110] Therefore, the immediate and physical occurrences of death and illness run parallel with the emotional and psychological responses to modern metropolitan life. The concept of urban absence and alienation of the individual are projected in artworks pertaining to illness and death, but it also serves as subject matter in its own right, as in Hammershøi. It is in such pictures of absence that text, particularly the title of a work, plays a more significant role in mediating the content to the viewer. The inextricability of death and sexuality as a Decadent motif finds form in Munch's oeuvre through the representation of the seductive, 'dangerous' female figure, notably in *Vampire II* (1902, fig. 42); in the broader context of Nordic Symbolism, such eroticisation of

[110] Neil Kent, *The Soul of the North: A Social, Architectural and Cultural History of the Nordic Countries, 1700-1940*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 171.

death is largely superseded by intense realism, as demonstrated in the work of Nielsen and Hansen Jacobsen, as well as those discussed in this this chapter.

The latter part of the nineteenth century saw a surge in the number of institutions and clinics for the mentally ill constructed in the Nordic countries.[111] The increase can be somewhat justified by the lowering of mortality rates for many diseases, thus a larger portion of the population was aging, requiring treatment for senility or other diseases, but at the same time, incarceration in a mental hospital was seen as the solution for suicidal or mentally unstable patients, many of which had at their root alcoholism. The private 'nerve clinic' flourished at this time to deal with perceived psychological issues, as in the case of Munch and Dr. Jacobsen in Copenhagen.[112]

Many paintings of illness or death in this study represent those afflicted with tuberculosis, a rampant bacterial disease that affected all was prevalent across Europe at the turn of the twentieth century, and instigated the construction of sanatoria. Death as depicted in Munch and Nielsen stemmed from tuberculosis, with Munch's compositions drawn from the loss of his mother and sisters to the disease. Munch's portrayal of death blends the naturalistic representation evident in Nielsen with highly subjectivised personal response, both in his artistic treatment of the subject, and the emotional response of figures within the pictorial space. With all versions of *At the Deathbed,* the viewer is presented with a tableau, in which the dying individual is never alone, but surrounded by other family members. The difference is naturally due in part to the identity of the individuals involved; Munch paints the death of his sister, and includes around the bed his family members and the image of himself. Nielsen by contrast, was a visitor to Gjern and painted the local inhabitants, in the case of Anna Dorthea, with

[111] Neil Kent, *The Soul of the North: A Social, Architectural and Cultural History of the Nordic Countries, 1700-1940*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 127-130.
[112] Kent, 129.

permission from her family.[113] Therefore the personal connection is absent, Nielsen does not paint from memory, as Munch did, but from life, or what thereof remains. Following on from this, Munch adopts a proto-expressionist treatment in which every surface vibrates with a fury, a trembling brushstroke that cannot contain its emotion: grief, distress, sorrow. Nielsen's characteristic linear style is unembellished by emotion. Forms are precisely delineated in muted tonal colour schemes, the composition uncluttered and it retains a clinical distance, the perspective is that of an external observer, rather than one directly involved in the narrative scene. Cold as it is, that is not to claim that Nielsen's representation of death is brutish or explicit. Nielsen bears witness, Munch presents memory. By contrast, Hansen Jacobsen's representation of Death is fantastical, removed from reality and placed firmly in the realm of imagination, as derived from literary sources. Hammershøi's interior scenes present the viewer not with explicit imagery of Illness or Death, but with austere spatial arrangements which prompt contemplation; as such, under Hammershøi's direction, the Psychological Self evolves as separate subject matter highlighting the link between spatial relations and existential introspection.

[113] Ulla Sjöström, *Maleren Ejnar Nielsen*, (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers' Forlag, 2000), 16.

Chapter 2. Atmosphere

Introduction

This chapter seeks to discern between the type of atmosphere visually transmitted by an artwork, and verbally, by its associated text in order to assess how language and image relate to one another, and whether they convey a common or diverse message. Atmosphere in this context is not bound by any environmental association, nor is it exclusive to the genre of landscape painting, but instead can be equated to the mood or feeling of any work of art. Atmosphere positions itself in this thesis as the conduit of the idea, which in the Symbolist sense, lies at the core of artistic endeavour. Assessing the mood or atmosphere communicated by visual or verbal representation of the same idea, pertaining to the same artwork is the core concept of this chapter. Atmosphere occupies the grey, mixed area between the artistically-produced object and the subjective response of the viewer's perception. It is useful in the context of this thesis as examining for atmosphere highlights the the perceptual effects of verbal and visual media regarding the same artwork or idea, as well as the influence exerted on text by the visual, and vice versa. Thus in the three textual categories of this thesis which follow this chapter, Titles as Paratexts, Texts by the Artist, and Literary Sources for Artworks, I assess cohesion and unity between text and image in the case studies. The degree of relation between textual and visual aspects in each of these categories varies in intensity, starting with the artist-instilled title, the artist-written poetic text for a specific work, and lastly, the artist's impression (illustration) of an externally written literary text. While an artist can design their work to produce a certain effect in the viewer, atmosphere, however, is also perceived through the filter of individual subjectivity, and this logic allows for potentially infinite permutations of an

artwork's mood. Definitions of atmosphere, negative space and unfocused/peripheral vision will be explored as part of the interaction between text, image and atmosphere. By introducing a range of theories on the subject of atmosphere, this chapter will produce a new synthesis of text, image and atmosphere within the thematic framework of this research, centred on representations of illness, death and the psychological dimension in Nordic symbolism.

As well as its function in the perception of art, this chapter also provides an overview of the nature of atmosphere in Nordic art; the theoretical conclusions reached here are further explored with reference to the following works in the respective categories and chapters: Ejnar Nielsen's *And in his Eyes I Saw Death,* (1897) and Vilhelm Hammershøi's *White Doors (Open Doors), Strandgade 30* (1905) (Titles as Paratexts); Edvard Munch's *Scream* (1893) and Niels Hansen Jacobsen *The Shadow* (1897-98) (Texts by the Artist); Ejnar Nielsen's illustrations of Karl Larsen's novella *The Old Man's Child* (1900) and Niels Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother* (1892), based on the fairytale *Story of a Mother* (1847) by Hans Christian Andersen (Literary Sources for Artworks).

Defining Atmosphere

Defining atmosphere as a concept is the first task, before analysing the modes of atmospheric transmission from the media of visual art and textual/literary art. Assessing whether one medium is a better conduit of atmosphere than another is not the objective; rather, it addresses what text and image separately or in combination contribute to what we define as atmosphere, drawing on the examples from Nordic Symbolism listed above. The question of origin is significant in relation to atmosphere - is the atmospheric feeling imbued by the artist from the first to last brush strokes, or is it purely a construct in the mind of the viewer,

supplied by the individual's memory and emotional state? Pallasmaa claims "the work [of art] projects its aura, and we project our own emotions and percepts on the work."[114] Benjamin's aura is called to the fore here, that aspect which grants an original work of art its status as such; uniqueness over reproductions. Benjamin further equates aura with ocularcentricity, describing how following the contour of a mountain or branch with the eye "is to breathe the aura of those mountains, of that branch."[115] Aura departs from the points of authenticity and uniqueness, but evaluating such issues is not the question here, as reproductions of artworks can elicit feelings to rival but not quite equal the original, depending on the sensitivity of the viewer, and literary texts retain their authenticity despite the reproducibility of language and potential for translation. However, it must be mentioned that originals and translations are not always aligned, and thus a fractured narrative can emerge, as is possible between visual and verbal expression of the same idea.

Atmosphere is a spatially bound phenomenon. It suggests enclosure, not necessarily paralysis or confinement within a space, but rather an immersion in a certain feeling produced by the spatial boundaries of its art. Just as three- or two-dimensional visual art can occupy space or create illusory, pictorial space, text can also induce the reader into feeling a particular atmosphere; as in visual art and architecture, this is achieved through aesthetic choices. Linguistic blocks, comprising verbs, adjectives, nouns etc., are moulded by both the rigours of grammar and the author's creativity. The imagination and the perception of atmosphere are entwined processes. Dario Gamboni discusses the span of 'potential images' in art, those which find indeterminate form and recognition in the individual's imagination.[116] Such images suggest a formlessness that lends

[114] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005), 68.
[115] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility" in eds. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty and Thomas Y. Levin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, (Cambridge and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 23.
[116] Dario Gamboni, *Potential Images: Ambiguity and Indeterminacy in Modern Art,* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), 18.

itself to the open-ended flexibility of interpretation. But atmosphere is not about the mind's reading of forms, but evoking a feeling derived on the aesthetic choices of the artist. Potential images may be those forms one recognises as signs beyond the context of the wider artwork, forms which bear resemblance and connotations of something other than their representation. The perception of such images may contribute to an individual's overall sense of the artwork, calling into play the imagination and the viewer's role in the perception of atmosphere.

Atmosphere can be a concretely defined construct, yet the feeling it produces by the intersection of artistic representation and individual memory is entirely subjective, to the extent that any one artwork generates potentially infinite atmospheres. The question that different media poses is one of intensity, of clarity, and of direction. When regarded in tandem with another medium, be that the artwork and its title, or the artwork and its literary source, the evaluation of the atmosphere put forward by one will be compared to that emanating from the other. This analysis of text and image in the framework of atmosphere will be provide conclusions on the effects of text and image in the communication of the same idea, and its effects on the viewer.

The notion of the formless and the suggestive is linked to the concept of atmosphere as a feeling that is attached to an artwork yet not 'visible' as an entity unto itself. Atmosphere, though present in an artwork and perceived individually, is by its nature elusive. A sensation cannot be made visible, but the components which contribute to its feeling can be plausibly identified. Atmosphere is therefore the intangible product of tangible elements in an artwork, a result that cannot be seen, only *felt* in conjunction as the emotional response of the viewer. Formlessness and suggestiveness are characteristics of atmosphere, and Semir Zeki's linking of the former with imagination plays into the realm of atmospheric perception.

Before any detailed analysis of atmosphere in textual-visual relations can begin, the conditions of this ambiguous term must be firmly established. The word atmosphere has different implications depending on which synonym or indeed, which language one employs, a point which Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht discusses when translating *Stimmung* from German into English; he equates *Stimmung* with either 'climate' or 'mood', the latter being "an inner feeling so private it cannot be precisely circumscribed."[117] *Stimmung* is related to the noun *die Stimme* (voice) and the verb *stimmen*, meaning to tune an instrument, to be of correct meaning or to vote.[118] The noun *Stimmung* finds its Danish and Norwegian translations as *stemning, (*verb, *at stemme,* Dan.*; å stemme,* Nor.) and in Swedish, *stämning,*(verb, *att stämma)* and is linked in Scandinavian painting to *stemningsmaleri* or mood painting*,* often associated with nineteenth century National Romanticism in landscape painting. On the subject of *stemningsmaleri*, Neil Kent suggests it is a mixture of mood and atmosphere designed to "express such abstract concepts as loneliness, isolation, the ephemeral and death."[119] Therefore there are two modes of reading atmosphere; as a vagueness or haziness of form that implies rather than states, as in Symbolist art to suggest an idea without delineating its details with specificity, and secondly, as the objective of this chapter, the mood as emanated from the artwork, and perceived by the viewer. In *stemningsmaleri*, light and spatiality are used to create deeply evocative scenes, often linked to the landscape and national identity. Atmosphere in its broader sense plays a major role in the Symbolist movement as the haze through which objects are represented, and as such are tied to the Symbolist themes of nostalgia and memory[120] – Fernand Khnopff's *Abandoned City* (1904, fig. 43) embodies the

[117] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Atmosphere, Mood, Stimmung*, trans. Erik Butler, (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2012), 3-4.
[118] Gumbrecht, 4.
[119] Neil Kent, *The Triumph of Light and Nature: Nordic Art 1740-1940,* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 153.
[120] Sharon Hirsh, *Symbolism and Modern Urban Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 8-12.

delicacy of representation through a dematerialising veil of mist, the intermingling of form and formlessness in the atmospheric conditions of the scene, and the atmosphere or mood this evokes in the viewer. Khnopff's dark and derelict scene is comparable to Hammershøi's many deserted street scenes, painted in Copenhagen and London, as in *View of Christiansborg Castle. Late Autumn.* (1890-02, fig. 44), in which dark, grey light softly diffuses the monumental structure, the seat of the Danish Parliament. However, it is not only the visual that conveys a sense of atmosphere to the viewer, but rather, the title, *Abandoned City,* that generates further associations of abandonment: emptiness, dissatisfaction, isolation, loneliness, to name but a few. Hammershøi's title, as discussed in Chapter 3 Titles as Paratexts, does little to convey any sense of narrative, other than specifying the season as a link to *environmental* atmospheric conditions. It is therefore possible to claim that textual components of an artwork, such as the title, play a crucial role in determining and directing the viewer's feelings. Illness, death and psychological dimensions are all abstract concepts, they are physically and emotionally *felt* by the individual involved, yet difficult to fathom from the outside, and so are conveyed in symbolic forms to resonate with the viewer - symbolism being achieved through artistic means of form, colour treatment, and composition. These are expressions of subjective experiences; to represent these themes as symbolic suggestions, rather than iconic resemblances aims to engage with the viewer through their own subjective filter, built on memory (encompassing past experience), and perception. When text is added to the visual symbolic atmosphere equation, how does it react?

Atmosphere and Nordic Art

Stemningsmaleri is most closely associated with Nordic landscape artists of the late nineteenth century, and the predilection for depicting the day's most dramatic light effects, namely sunset and the so-called 'blue hour' of twilight

during the short Scandinavian summer nights. The interconnectedness of nature and atmosphere in nineteenth century Nordic art reveals the significance of art as a reflection of the individual's soul. Vibeke Waallann Hansen writes that Harald Sohlberg's *Winter Night in the Mountains* (1914, fig. 45) is a "visualisation of a state of mind or an emotion that can surface when encountering nature."[121] That an artwork should convey some essential quality or feeling is to equate it with atmosphere in its purest form, which has application beyond landscape painting. The artwork as a locus of rumination is precisely fitting with the themes of illness, death and the psychological self. Such aspects of life are mystical, traumatic and centred on deeply personal, individual experience. While landscape may provide less explicit and more metaphoric symbolism for the conveyance of such themes, the narrative stasis of Hammershøi's interiors is comparable to landscape painting (not to mention the examples of actual landscapes found in Hammershøi's oeuvre).

The return to nature in the late nineteenth century is bound up with fin de siècle disillusionment with urban living,[122] the surge in nationalism and push for independence felt in Norway and Finland around 1900, and turning away from political and social issues of the time. Denmark had lost the territory of Schleswig during in the 1864 Prussian-Danish War, but during the period 1890-1915 Danish artists such as Ejnar Nielsen and Vilhelm Hammershøi focused on the psychological interaction between the individual and their environs, rather than overtly nationalistic themes. The influence of French Symbolism in the Nordic region was felt with greatest magnitude in Denmark, with the exception of Munch.[123] The Skagen colony of artists took nature and light, as well as festive gatherings and local fishermen as their main subjects from the 1870s and into the

[121] Vibeke Waallann Hansen, "Landscape as a Mental State" in *The Magic North: Finnish and Norwegian Art around 1900*, ed. Timo Huusko, (Helsinki and Oslo: Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum and National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, 2015), 167.
[122] Waallann Hansen, 163.
[123] Torsten Gunnarsson, *Nordic Landscape Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Nancy Adler, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 204.

early years of the twentieth century. While mainly working in the style of Naturalism than Symbolism, artists such as P. S. Krøyer (1851-1909, Norwegian-Danish), Michael Ancher (1849-1927, Danish) and Eilif Peterssen (Norwegian) imbue their works with atmosphere which prompts introspection. Krøyer's *Fishermen at Skagen Beach. Late Summer Evening* (1883, fig. 46) depicts the Realist subject of fishermen at rest, but their occupation is incidental to the central motif, the blue twilight that permeates the entire pictorial space like a thick fog. The dreaminess of the scene is conducive to romantic reverie, and Krøyer advances this feeling in *From the South Beach, Skagen* (1883, fig. 47), a sidelong view along the beach. The footsteps in the sand lead the eye to a distant figure, walking out toward what is likely Grenen, the northernmost tip of the Jutland coastline by Skagen.[124] With an exceedingly high horizon, less than a fifth of the entire canvas is devoted to the sky, turbulent and dark as the sea; this extreme proportioning, suffocating and vertiginous in effect, is inherently Symbolist in character. The domination of mood of nature over figurative narrative is central to *stemningsmaleri*.[125] Peterssen's *Summer Night* (1886, fig. 48) employs a similar high horizon, yet here the pink of the evening sky and crescent moon are reflected in the still lake, encircled by a lush forest. The idyll and silence of nature is meditative, and these paintings almost become devotional objects of contemplation, inducing the viewer into deep introspection. Artists such as the Norwegian Harald Sohlberg, and Finns Pekka Halonen (*Rock Covered in Ice and Snow*, 1911, fig. 49) and Akseli Gallen-Kallela (*Lake View*, 1901, fig. 50) rendered the natural beauty of their native lands snow-laden forests, expansive lakelands and dramatic twilit hues at the close of day embodying the essence of *stemningsmaleri*. In Sweden too, there was a desire to strip away modernity to the wholesomeness of

[124] Marianne Saabye, ed., *Krøyer: An International Perspective,* (Copenhagen: The Hirschsprung Collection and Skagens Museum, 2011), 219.
[125] Saabye, 219.

the rural landscape to locate the roots of the nation. Richard Bergh presents a juxtaposition of modern Swedish society set against the natural landscape from which it originates in *Nordic Summer Evening* (1899-1900, fig. 51). The peach-tinged sunset bathes the canvas in glorious light, and though the ornate balustrade of the veranda, the finely dressed couple and rowing boat on the lake indicate bourgeois society, their presence does not threaten the beauty of nature; rather they appear to be in adoration of the scene, and it remains intact. Furthermore, the concept of *stemningsmaleri* is fully demonstrated with the daydreaming couple in this painting, as Bergh effectively represents the viewers in the act of contemplating the landscape, as framed in a separate pictorial space by the vertical axial columns of the veranda, echoing the triptych, altarpiece format. Eugène Jansson, however, presents the evocative urban landscape in *Riddarfjärden in Stockholm* (1898, fig. 52) with clear debt to both Munch's feathered shadows in *Night in St. Cloud* (1890, fig. 11) and the starlit swirls of Van Gogh's *The Starry Night* (1889, fig. 53). The orange light dissipates at the horizon, which, as in Krøyer and Peterssen, is quite high in pictorial space, allowing for nature to dominate the plane. Jansson replaces the forest encircling a lake with the city, yet the evocative potency is not diminished. The shift from rural to urban landscape alters the viewer's perception from rural idyll to that of metropolitan living, and the relentless psychological strains. The mood evoked by Jansson is one of extraordinary beauty, of city lights reflected on the water of a blue twilight, but it is also one of tension: a chasm has opened between the viewer's perspective and the city itself, while the brushstrokes are rendered with a nervous energy. Though stylistically differing to Hammershøi, this is a city depopulated in the same vein. Jansson was self-trained, and stayed in Stockholm for most of his life; the pictorial

insularity reflects his psychological self, imbuing the canvas with an atmosphere from within.[126]

The artistic representation of a nation is often symbolised by its landscape, the natural formations located within its political/cultural borders, and such, seemingly innocuous subject matter can be politicised via a nationalist gaze. Such tendencies are Romanticism evolved, and characteristic of late nineteenth century European art during which time interest in national mythology and folklore blossomed.[127] Icelandic nationalism is embodied in the landscapes of Þórarinn B. Þorlákssson (Icelandic, 1867-1924) in paintings such as *Þingvellir* (1900, fig. 54), in which the significance of Þingvellir, as the location of the first Icelandic parliament or Alþingi (Althing) from 930 AD, is deeply symbolic of Icelandic identity.[128] The combination of Romanticism, Symbolism and Nationalism evident in Þorlákssson is particularly relevant around 1900, with Iceland's struggle for full independence from Denmark continuing until 1944. Furthermore, disenchantment with modern industrialised society, the chaos of which repelled many artists and writers of fin de siècle Europe, lured them to the 'pure' unspoiled beauty of a nation's landscape.[129] Yet such themes of nationalism and mythology can be also interpreted as tenets of Symbolism ironically, a result of cross-pollination between artists who flocked to centres of Paris, Berlin and Rome, among other cities on the Continent, during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The academic, social, and literal tendencies of Realism were rejected by the younger generation of European artists from the late 1880s onwards, in favour of the imagination, liberated from reality. Many Nordic artists experienced nostalgia for their homelands while abroad, and upon their

[126] Torsten Gunnarsson, *Nordic Landscape Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Nancy Adler, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 240.
[127] Marja Lahelma, "Symbolism in Norway and Finland", in *The Magic North: Finnish and Norwegian Art around 1900*, ed. Timo Huusko, (Helsinki and Oslo: Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum and National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design 2015), 11.
[128] Katharina Alsen and Annika Landmann, *Nordic Painting: The Rise of Modernity,* (Munich: Prestel, 2016), 35
[129] Torsten Gunnarsson, *Nordic Landscape Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Nancy Adler, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 229.

return, looked to the subject of their longing: the native landscape. Together with greater competition for work in Paris from French artists, and the increasingly welcome reception their work was receiving in the North, artists began to return home.[130]

The discussion of atmosphere in Nordic art ultimately revolves around the concepts of diurnal and nocturnal light, seasonality and expansive beauty of nature as a manifestation of national identity, hereby forging a spiritual link between humanity and the natural world. Atmosphere, also referring to air, is a core component of any landscape, present in any, even vaguely naturalistic rendering of everyday life. It is through atmospheric gases that light travels, and from which it takes its varied moods at the junctures of day and night. Therefore, the elements that simultaneously influence and comprise atmosphere are light and space, and are by no means limited in the visual arts to the genre of landscape painting. Expansiveness, the fall of light, the topography and atmosphere of the wilderness becomes emblematic of an entire nation, but a link can be claimed between atmosphere and representation in a broader context. The types of atmosphere must be differentiated, so in the premise of this thesis, *stemningsmaleri* refers to the evocative feeling of light and space within the picture plane; as an urban scene, the delicate fall of light and spatial emptiness in Hammershøi's *Sunbeams* or *Dust Motes Dancing in the Sunlight* [Strandgade 30] (1900, fig. 55) sits alongside the qualities of *stemningsmaleri,* emitting the same introspective aesthetic as any of the above mentioned landscape paintings of the era by Sohlberg, Peterssen or Krøyer. Atmosphere in this thesis is a term therefore used to describe the feeling emanating from an artwork, as perceived by the viewer, and specifically, the difference or discrepancy that may exist between the atmosphere

[130] Torsten Gunnarsson, *Nordic Landscape Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Nancy Adler, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 206.

emanating from a text associated with that same artwork, and how both aspects collaborate to convey the essential message of the idea.

Atmosphere Beyond Landscape

The term *stemningsmaleri* was used by Swedish artist Richard Bergh, in his 1896 article entitled *Karl Nordström och det moderna stämingslandskapet* (*Karl Nordström and the Modern Mood Landscape*). Bergh wrote that landscape painting and music were in possession of "that vague intangible expression they need to become alive and perceptible to our consciousness. The means of expression in all the other arts are too particular; they specify their content with too much precision."[131] The distinction made by Bergh raises the issue of atmosphere in the context of language and art, beyond the genre of landscape. That text fixes and specifies meaning is largely correct; while allowing for semantic variance and subtlety of expression, language is explicit. Correct usage of grammar appears to remove doubt and ensures clarity. Language is furthermore based on the conventions of grammar, and unless they are discarded for artistic purposes, language retains a certain level of comprehensibility and unambiguity over other forms of expression, as Bergh purports. Vagueness and intangibility are further hallmarks of atmosphere; it cannot be specified, or precisely stated, just as the linguistic noun cannot do justice to the nuances of emotion. However, this "vague intangible expression" is rendered visually to imply and suggest forms, emotions and ideas without excess definition, which is a characteristic of the Symbolist aesthetic.

[131] Richard Bergh, "Karl Nordström och det moderna stämningslandskapet" in *Om Konst och Annat*, (Stockholm: A. Bonnier, 1908) as translated in Torsten Gunnarsson, *Nordic Landscape Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Nancy Adler, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 204.

Bergh continues in his article to discuss the atmosphere of nature: "Instinctively, the individual places an inner life, similar to their own, behind the flexible contours of nature's exterior. The mood painter instinctively seeks an illumination, a natural atmosphere, an area behind which he can place a spirit, one which possesses his soul's anguish and delight, its dreams and nightmares."[132] Atmosphere is that 'inner life' that an artist instils in their work. An artwork is the embodiment of an idea and is not limited to landscape painting, with the atmospheric perspective of blue distant hills, the airiness of the outdoors; atmosphere is found across genres, for atmosphere is what is generates the viewer's emotional reaction to artistic works and is therefore a subjectively rendered phenomenon.

As is clear from Bergh and *stemningsmaleri,* landscape painting has a particular resonance with atmosphere and the psychological landscape of the mind. Georg Simmel's essay *The Philosophy of Landscape* (1913) explores the concept of mood and landscape painting, and his description also sets parameters for the general concept of atmosphere in art: "the mood of a landscape permeates all its separate components, frequently without it being attributable to any one of them. In a way that is difficult to specify, each component partakes in it, but a mood prevails which is neither external to these constituents, nor is it composed of them."[133] Irrespective of circumstance or genre, atmosphere possesses a degree of unattainability, as though full comprehension is just beyond grasp, not because it comprises of assembled constituent parts, but rather, is the physical/psychological experience of such parts as a whole. Simmel's definition of nature contains the elements also required by atmosphere, defining the former as "the infinite interconnectedness of objects, the uninterrupted creation and destruction of forms,

[132] Richard Bergh, "Karl Nordström och det moderna stämningslandskapet" in *Om Konst och Annat*, (Stockholm: A. Bonnier, 1908), 126. Translated from Swedish by Kerstina Mortensen
[133] Georg Simmel, "The Philosophy of Landscape" trans. Josef Bleicher, *Theory, Culture & Society,* SAGE, vol. 24(7-8, 2007), 26

the flowing unity of an event that finds expression in the continuity of temporal and spatial existence."[134] In discussing the atmosphere of an artwork, irrespective of genre, the components of the composition can be substituted for the flux of nature, bound within the temporal and spatial confines of the picture plane or three-dimensional sculptural space.

Simmel suggests that atmosphere and the creation of the landscape are the same act, and that a given atmosphere cannot be applied in a general sense to other landscapes, but instead remains 'site specific'. Full comprehension and creation of the landscape is the privilege of the artist, who, in Simmel's words, "carries out the formative act of contemplative perception and feeling in such a pure form and with such vigour, that the given material gets completely absorbed and then, seemingly out of its own, comes to be created anew."[135] Simmel also claims that it is through "perception *and* feeling" we comprehend landscape, in nature or in art.[136] This combination of perception and feeling can be utilised in the definition of atmosphere as a concept, and thereby applied to artistic works beyond the landscape genre. It implies a level of input on the part of the viewer to read the visual and respond subjectively. Atmosphere is thus a fresh creation, a reaction to an artwork, moulded by the individual's memory and perception.

While atmosphere is perceived as a visceral reaction, it is in fact bound by linguistic rules, as it primarily through a linguistic label that we assign an 'atmosphere' to a thing.[137] There are potentially as many atmospheres as adjectives that we can assign to them. Böhme highlights that "aesthetic work consists in the production of atmospheres",[138] that is to say, that an artwork is a tangled construct of mood by design. Atmosphere is therefore inherent in the compositional

[134] Georg Simmel, "The Philosophy of Landscape" trans. Josef Bleicher, *Theory, Culture & Society,* SAGE, vol. 24(7-8, 2007), 21
[135] Simmel, 29.
[136] Simmel, 29.
[137] Gernot Böhme, *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres,* ed. Jean-Paul Thibaud, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 20.
[138] Böhme, 21.

arrangement of an artwork, representing a scene, but it also triggers the depicted atmosphere in the viewer: "the particular quality of a story, whether read or heard, lies in the fact that it not only communicates to us that a certain atmosphere prevailed somewhere else, but that it conjures up this atmosphere itself. Similarly, paintings which depict a melancholy scene are not just signs for this scene but produce this scene itself."[139] However, the atmosphere of the scene and the atmosphere experienced by the viewer are not mutually exclusive. The mood of a scene has the ability to evoke personal memory in the viewer, one which is separate to the artwork itself, yet originating from it in some form. Some aspect of a work's formal quality may bear resemblance to an individual's memory, of another artwork or a personal experience, and because the atmosphere of the artwork must pass through each individual's filter the ultimate mood that they glean from a work will differ between viewers. I suggest therefore that a duality of atmosphere exists, in the form of a subjective atmosphere, and objective atmosphere. The objective atmosphere is that found within the confines of the artwork itself, the scene's mood as contrived by the artist; the subjective atmosphere is the one experienced by each viewer when mixed with the individual's memory, emotional state, or experiences, and this bridges the gap between the reality of the viewer and that of the pictorial space.

Translation

The issue of translation is raised in the discussion of atmosphere in visual and verbal representation involving the same artwork. The artwork based on a literary source will seek to encapsulate something of its originating text, while the artwork which has a textual element subsequently attached to it, be that a title

[139] Gernot Böhme, *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres,* ed. Jean-Paul Thibaud, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 22.

or literary sketch, may attempt to convey the same message as derived from the visual. The artist is also a translator moving between media, materialising an idea from the mental image into word or image, or both. Benjamin's essay *The Task of the Translator* (1923) outlines the processes at play in translation, indicating that "the task of the translator consists in finding the particular intention toward the target language which produces in that language the echo of the original."[140] This 'echo of the original' is a further link to sound and acoustics, which Gumbrecht associates with atmosphere. It is something which cannot be held, but is intensely sensed. It alludes to the subtlety of difference between resemblance and reflection; to echo an original means more than mere resemblance, it must be carry within it the same spirit. A good translation should not merely communicate meaning, but must also regard form and the inherent feeling of the original. The 'original' here should be understood as the preceding element in an artwork, and can therefore be either the visual work as rendered by the artist, or a literary source which serves as a starting point for further works. One does not call a title an imitation of an artwork, or an illustration an imitation of a literary work, yet one painting can imitate another, as one poem can. Is translation not the imitation of an original in another language? Imitation is typically named as an occurrence within the same medium, but when imitation crosses the barrier that divides art and writing, it becomes a translation. The success of a translation is based less on the medium or form the translation takes, either visual art or language, but rather, on the degree to which the original atmosphere is rendered. The concept of translating one idea between media will be further explored in relation to the artworks in the categories Titles as Paratexts, Texts by the Artist and Literary Sources for Works.

[140] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-1926*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 258.

The Linguistic Atmosphere

The theories I put forward in this thesis are in line with those of the architect and theorist Juhani Pallasmaa, who writes extensively on atmosphere, and the view that atmosphere is derived from the visual effect rather than narrative or representation: "even the imagery of a painting is integrated by an overall atmosphere or feeling; the most important unifying factor in paintings is usually their specific feel of illumination and colour, more than their conceptual or narrative content."[141] Atmosphere is therefore reliant on the viewer's perception of the artwork's formal aspects and their relational positions, rather than semantic meaning. Therefore, atmosphere must be the result of pure sensory perception, one in which narrative meaning is subsumed by the formal qualities of colour and light. While narrative content can substantiate the feeling derived from the formal aspects, it is such qualities of light and colour that provoked initial, visceral reaction in the viewer. It is such visceral reaction, rather than description, that is reminiscent of Barthes' punctum; if the visual arts address the senses rather than confining it with a textual description, how does the punctum/atmosphere function in relation to linguistic phrases? It is abstract qualities that betray atmosphere to the viewer; how is a reader supposed to perceive atmosphere in text? Text generally specifies a narrative with greater precision than the visual, so semantic value depends on context and tone, as well as additional associations. The translation of a text must also be sensitive to the variance of tone in the original.

It can be argued that the primary function of the image is visual persuasion.[142] Irrespective of intention or genre, verbal communication is more

[141] Juhani Pallasmaa, "Space, Place and Atmosphere. Emotion and Peripheral Perception in Architectural Experience", *Lebenswelt*, 4.1 (2014), 234.
[142] For more on the subject of visual persuasion, see Paul Messaris, *Visual Persuasion: The Role of Images in Advertising,* (Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1997). Messaris claims there is an absence of a "set of explicit devices for indicating causality, analogy, or any relationships other than space and time" (xviii) in visual representation, and it lacks the explicitness of argument that is only capable through verbal expression.

focused and explicit in argument. The visual has the capacity to bypass reason and logic to directly address sensorial perception, through sight, smell, sound, touch, taste.[143] Though sight may appear to be the primary sense called upon in our perception of art, visual images have the latency to evoke responses from other senses, to appeal to them through the ocular dimension. Therefore, the sense of sight provides a pathway to the other senses, allowing an artwork to be experienced on multiple levels. While Pallasmaa states that "all the senses, including vision, can be regarded as extensions of the sense of touch - as specialisations of the skin",[144] in the visual arts it is sight that acts as the sensorial stimulus. Visuality is a very immediate form of communication, one which does not require verbalisation (and therefore logical thinking, explanation, and comprehension) but direct feeling. A combination of some form of the senses produces feeling in the viewer, which we describe as atmosphere. Atmosphere is inextricably bound with memory, and as such, is a highly subjective phenomenon. I propose that the ability of visual communication to trigger haptic, olfactory, auditory or gustatory reactions is the consequence of an individual's archive of personal memories. An individual may not be able to pinpoint with exactitude the source of the memory, but the feeling or atmosphere it awakens will be based in some sense on their own past experiences. Atmosphere is thus a subjective, experiential construct built from fragments of memories.

Text is a precisely rendered art, and, while it can be as suggestive as images, text is informative, and often looked to as a source of reference and clarification. In the context of art history, this is evident in museum labels beside artworks, or the weight of written scholarship on the visual arts. Neither text nor image is immune to the push and pull of subjectivity and objectivity, but if text is

[143] Juhani Pallasmaa discusses hapticity and atmosphere in *The Eyes of the Skin*, (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005) and *The Embodied Image,* (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2011)
[144] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005), 42.

lacking the latter, it has the potential to impose a particular set of attitudes or feelings by unambiguously stating them. Likewise, individual words or phrases, as isolated fragments of a whole, can have the same effect as images on the viewer. Furthermore, the linguistic reiteration of visually-perceived imagery can result in a negation of its enlightening function (when providing a literal description of the visual) and dilution of its emotional intensity on the viewer.[145] Then, the function of language in relation to the visual is potentially one of repetition, of translation into the clearly rendered and ordered format of language, by contrast to the perceived disorder and indeterminacy of visual representation. Despite the vast capacity for linguistic indeterminacy and ambiguity, as a creative pursuit or otherwise, intelligible language is bound by the structures of grammar, as analogised in Wittgenstein's 'language games', in which "words, like chess pieces, are used according to rules."[146] Language in the realm of the visual imposes upon it the lingusitical order and rule: to put something 'into words' confronts the viewer with its specified reality.

If vision is the primary sense in the perception of textual and visual material, how do the other senses relate to it? One can touch an artwork, run fingers over the ink-printed surface of text; one could hypothetically smell or taste the material objects and comprehend them as objects in space, listen closely to spoken word or the thunderous silence that encases artworks, but that does not bring one any closer to understanding the significance of the artwork's fictive space. Pallasmaa outlines Zeki's research on the imagination, with the idea that the partially formed, incomplete, or enigmatically suggestive provokes the imagination with greater intensity than the overtly explicit, using the work of Vermeer and Michelangelo's *Awakening Slave* (1525-30) partially emerging from stone as

[145] Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation,* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 25.
[146] G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity, Volume 2 of An Analytical Commentary on* Philosophical Investigations, (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 136.

examples.[147] This incompleteness requires the viewer to engage with the narrative, and in a passive or active move, 'solve' the riddle of the narrative with their own imagination. While it can be a conscious or unconscious decision to interpret a work, filling in the gaps in this manner means that the viewer's ideas become for them inextricably linked to the narrative of the artwork they seek to interpret. Textual appendages can aid in such circumstances, such as titles, notes written by the artist, or the literary source for a visual work. Some texts will direct the imagination, while some visual images attempt to represent a certain narrative with absolute and unambiguous clarity. The titles of Hammershøi's interiors do not direct the imagination beyond the confines of the canvas - in fact, they lead the eye further into the pictorial space for answers. In this sense they are reflective of the subject matter they title, like a mirror's parallel portrayal. They do not suggest an externality to the viewer; the viewer must locate such sources within themselves, in the recollection of memories, through implications made by the visual.

Further to the above investigations on the imagination, the German philosopher Theodor Lipps (1851-1914), whose work on the aesthetics of empathy (*Einfühlung*) in art also bears significance to the discussion on atmosphere. The experience of *Einfühlung* with an element in an artwork means the deep sense of oneness and unity felt by the viewer, but also the ability to impose the feelings of the subject onto the artwork-object; he characterises the twin aspects experienced in *Einfühlung* as *Kraft* (energy) and *Stimmung* (mood).[148] Using colour as an example, its energy reaches out to the individual from the work, and is mixed with moods, which are ascribed to colours by the individual through empathy, as perceived and reacted to by the viewer.[149] This theory provides another dimension

[147] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Embodied Image*, (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 30; Semir Zeki, *Inner Vision: An Exploration of Art and the Brain,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 22-36.
[148] Theodor Lipps, *Ästhetik: Psychologie des Schönen und der Kunst,* two vols., (Hamburg: Leopold Voss, 1923, 1920), first published 1903 and 1906; quoted in Dee Reynolds, *Symbolist Aesthetics and Early Abstract Art*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 20.
[149] Dee Reynolds, *Symbolist Aesthetics and Early Abstract Art*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 20-21.

to this analysis of atmosphere as a crucial component of perception, which is borne equally of the visual qualities of the artwork in question, and the subjectivities of the individual. Thus *Stimmung* is attributed to the viewer, rather than the artwork itself, and demonstrates the influence of atmosphere on perception beyond the landscape-oriented *stemningsmaleri*. The same principle of *Einfühlung* can be applied to poetic texts, in which certain terms or phrases may transmit an energy to the reader, which is subjectivised by their own internal mood and experience. In relation to the text and image concerns of this thesis, aside from colour, aspects such as narrative, aesthetic treatment/stylisation can influence the perceived *Kraft* in either medium. Thus the evaluation of representation in each medium, e.g., in Munch's poetic text and the visual iterations of *The Scream*, the potential difference in effect of writing or visual expression on perception can be ascertained.

Imaginary Atmosphere

The interconnectedness of atmosphere and imagination finds footing in the writing of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Walter Benjamin and Roland Barthes, each of whom alludes to the idea that some essential aspect of an (art) object remains with the individual long after viewing. I argue that this aspect of an artwork is atmospheric feeling. This thesis examines the translation of this atmospheric feeling when a textual component enters the realm of the artwork, be that title, poetic text or literary basis for the work.

Wittgenstein wrote that "when I am looking at an object, I cannot imagine it."[150] Looking at an object is a consuming process, one which involves gauging the semiotic relation between the representamen (in this case, the pictorial

[150] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Embodied Image*, (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 34; Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel,* section 621.

representation) and the object (the artwork as a material object). If an object is absorbed by the viewer and then removed from sight, the mind's eye will retain an impression, capturing the mental image. The mental image is not photographic or documentary in detail but rather, suggested and partially formed, as suggested in Zeki's study. The eye cannot reproduce the original object with exactitude, but instead, retains in its memory the impression it makes upon it, a sensation deriving from certain aspects of the object. As this mental image no longer reflects its originating object, it can now be termed the interpretant, formed in the mind of the viewer. But this sense of thirdness relates to the firstness of emotional experience, which is atmosphere. Atmosphere is a representamen, when the artwork has been evaporated to leave behind the core feeling. As the "thing that represents another thing",[151] atmosphere becomes dissociated with its artwork-object and remains as a lingering sensation in the viewer, formless, incomplete, boundless. The interpretant is the intellectual processing of the artwork-object, occupying the liminal space between viewer and artwork, which eventually distils the artwork into pure atmosphere.

Atmosphere exists in a number of modes with regard to the artwork, textual aspects, and the viewer. Firstly, the atmosphere is located within the confines of the pictorial space, and is derived from the relations between objects on the picture plane. Namely negative space forms the basis for atmospheric feeling in the viewer. The internal, compositional arrangement of represented objects in the picture plane - disordered, symmetrical, or empty etc., - informs the viewer's response. The feeling generated from this arrangement of objects is Peircean firstness, the qualisign which is linked to emotional response, without "boundaries or parts, and no cause or effect. A quality is a pure, latent potentiality."[152] So the

[151] Nicole Everaert-Desmedt, "Peirce's Semiotics", *Signo*, Louis Hébert, ed., (Rimouski, Quebec 2011), http://www.signosemio.com/peirce/semiotics.asp.
[152] Everaert-Desmedt, http://www.signosemio.com/peirce/semiotics.asp.

feeling, derived from the complete unity of the artwork, is iconic of it as it resembles the artwork, and rhematic, as it further relates to.[153] Atmosphere is a rhematic iconic qualisign, according to Peirce's classification of signs, and in terms of classifying "sensuous qualities, and indeed, feelings generally, icons are the sole possible ultimate signs."[154]

Peirce defines a qualisign as "a quality which is a sign. It cannot actually act as a sign until it is embodied; but the embodiment has nothing to do with its character as a sign."[155] Atmosphere, as the feeling which unites the whole appears to find similarity with this definition of the qualisign, and if atmosphere separates itself from the artwork, i.e. becomes independent of the artwork as a feeling perceived by the viewer, then it can be said that atmosphere is that quality which is disembodied from its origin. An artwork can project infinite atmospheres on any number of individuals with equal validity. The artwork presents the viewer with a series of qualisigns, which comprise of various formal qualities of shape, form, colour, light, line, etc, arranged in compositional syntax. This series of qualisigns are interpreted by the viewer as the atmosphere of the work - the terms climate, mood, and feeling convey this with similarity. They are embodied as components of the artwork-object, but equally, they are embodied by the viewer as atmosphere. The relation then between the object and the qualisign must be iconic, as "a quality can only denote an object by virtue of some common ingredient or similarity."[156] Furthermore, in completing the triadic relation of signs, the interpretant must be a rheme, or "sign of essence."[157] Atmosphere connects the viewer and the artwork, and can be described as "the common reality of the

[153] C. S. Peirce, *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings Vol. 2, The Peirce Edition Project*, ed., Nathan Houser, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 291.
[154] Peirce, 461.
[155] Peirce, 291.
[156] Peirce, 294.
[157] Peirce, 294.

perceiver and the perceived",[158] so that the atmosphere which surrounds the object influences the mood of the viewer.[159]

Optic versus Haptic in Atmosphere

Atmosphere exists in both the verbal and visual art as the feeling evoked in the viewer by the content of the artwork. The feeling that lies between the lines of text lends a literary work its atmosphere; it is the overall effect of the narrative, rather than individual semantic value. In visual art, it is not the forms themselves from which atmosphere is derived, but the relationship between forms which generates a particular mood. Such space is negative space. It is the site of tension between positive objects on a picture plane, determining how these objects interact with one another, and therefore negative space contributes to the atmosphere transmitted by the work. In his writing on signs and marks, Benjamin points to the background as being the unifying factor in a drawing through which the graphic lines are related, while also stating that a painting does not possess either background or a graphic line.[160] The dynamic between imprinted line and surface background has strong resonance with positive and negative space. The surface grounds may not be exposed, as in graphic drawing, and while it may be impossible to ascertain the application sequence of paint layers with the unaided eye, I argue that paintings possess a pictorial background, one which the eye recognises as part of the illusory pictorial space. This pictorial background indicates the existence of positive and negative space, and provides a point of contrast, just like Benjamin's graphic line, in which "two lines can be related to

[158] Gernot Böhme, "Atmosphere as the Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetics", *Thesis Eleven* no. 36, (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1993), 122.
[159] Böhme, 122.
[160] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-1926*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 83-86.

each other only through the background."[161] Yi-Fu Tuan makes a distinction between the security of place as a locked location, and the freedom of space, which encourages movement.[162] Space becomes "the area defined by a network of places"[163], it is the relative, 'negative' space between places, as points plotted on a map. In the place/space dichotomy, space then adopts the function of negative space, and object-places the positive. Paintings contain both places (objects represented) and the spatial relation between these objects, bound by such formal aspects as three-dimensionality and perspective. Negative space in paintings is a site of tension between object-places, and is related to peripheral vision, while focused vision relates to the object-places. However, if atmosphere is the feeling exuded from the artwork as a whole, not the parts, it must be that it is from space, the total area defined, rather than place, that such a feeling originates. Therefore, visual arrangement has the potential to impact a viewer's mood or atmosphere.

A push-and-pull dynamic is evident in Benjamin's sign and mark: "the first basic difference is that the sign is printed on something, whereas the mark emerges from it."[164] The sign, which he categorizes as the graphic line, also includes in this group the written line of language. Benjamin cites physical marks on living beings, such as blushing or stigmata, to demonstrate the process of emergence from within as essential rather than external. Recalling the inside-outside dialectic, the sign and mark proves useful in this analysis of atmosphere in text. If atmosphere emerges from the artwork as a result of the relation between its constituent parts, then the sign appears to be that knowledge possessed by the individual which they imprint onto a work of art. If atmosphere is aligned with

[161] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-1926*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 83.
[162] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 3.
[163] Tuan, 12.
[164] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-1926*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 84.

Benjamin's mark, which "resembles nothing else in its manifestation",[165] it supports the definition of atmosphere as a unifying ambience; the mark, like atmosphere, can be described in terms of character, but it does not resemble anything beyond itself, much like the qualisign. Atmosphere does not have a recognisable form, it is intangible to the eye, yet it is triggered by sensory perception. The graphic line is imprinted, and the very act of imprinting implies a level of interaction on the part of the viewer, one in which they contribute something of their own experience and memory in their connotative reading of an atmosphere. Benjamin further claims that the title of an artwork is that which gives meaning to the marks of a painting: "This relation to what the picture is named after, to what transcends the marks, is what is created by the composition."[166] The title is the external pathway leading away from the marks of the picture toward linguistic clarification and narrative.

While an atmosphere or ambience can be multi-sensory, it is through vision that atmosphere is perceived in visual art and writing. Riegl differentiates between two modes of looking, the optic and the haptic. While the optic gaze perceives outer form and linearity, the haptic gaze comprehends surface and depth. Studies in optic and haptic vision have been carried out to reveal the extent and significance of distinguishing modes of vision. These areas of interest are recorded by measuring the movement of the fovea in the retinal perception of an image, resulting in a series of connected lines and nodes in a 'join-the-dots' style process - the darker nodes represent the haptic gaze, which is longer in duration, and concentrated on certain areas of interest, while the lines, or saccades indicate the sweeping movement of the optic gaze which grasps the compositional whole.[167]

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[165] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-1926*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 84.
[166] Benjamin, 85.
[167] Claude Gandelman, *Reading Pictures, Viewing Texts,* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 5.

The saccades reveal how the compositional arrangement conveys its narrative by demonstrating the path taken by the eye, while the points of fixation indicate the particularly potent visual cues, such as the arc from eye to mouth in the profile of Nefertiti, as reproduced in Gandelman's text from Russian psychologist Alfred L. Yarbus' study *Eye Movements and Vision* (1965; English translation 1967). That points of particular visual interest can be represented in terms of data is significant because it indicates areas of an artwork which provide the viewer with the most valuable visual cues. Determining how the knowledge of an artwork's title would influence the movement of the fovea would further demonstrate the impact of language on the interpretation of a visual image.

Points of Fixation

The Yarbus study reveals a number of aspects in relation to perception and eye movement which are of relevance to our understanding of atmosphere in a work, and how it is derived. The subjects in the study fixated on certain areas in images which "may contain information useful and essential for perception."[168] The points of fixation are of individual subjects do not correspond with the number of details in that particular part of the artwork, nor does colour or brightness/darkness have a bearing on such areas. In short, there is no standard reason for the fixation of an individual on certain areas in an image, other than their personal determination of that area being essential to their perception of the whole. From this we can deduce that such areas are those which convey the highest density of meaning to an individual. The same experiment was carried out on a number of individuals, and the points of fixation, joined by the spanning arcs of saccades, are illustrated in Yarbus' text. These demonstrate that while there are

[168] Alfred L. Yarbus, *Eye Movements and Vision*, trans. Basil Haigh, (New York: Plenum Press, 1967), 175.

certain core aspects which consistently attract the attention of all subjects tested, it is equally evident that some aspects communicate with varying degrees of strength as each individual seeks out different aspects of an image for closer examination. The greatest difference in perception is evident in the saccades. These lines demonstrate peripheral vision, and the pathways are already decided upon before the eye departs from a point of fixation. Furthermore, with continual or subsequent tests, it has been shown that the eye returns to the same points of fixation, rather than moving on to other areas in the composition.[169] It becomes clear that there are particular elements in an image which retain their interest and attraction for the individual. Often they are aspects which betray facial, expressive meaning, such as eyes and lips, but also the relational gestures between forms, such as a mother's hand cradling a child.[170] Longer periods of fixation can also be granted to "elements that are unusual in the particular circumstances, unfamiliar, incomprehensible, and so on."[171] Such incongruous elements are in line with the punctum, which does not necessarily express overall meaning, but from which the viewer derives some sense of attachment or attraction, thereby deeming it significant in their interpretation of the work, and subsequently, contributing to its atmosphere. Yarbus concludes by stating that the movement of the eye and duration of fixation is dependent on the purpose of the observation, and by the individual's thought process.[172] The purpose of the individual's observation can be textually influenced, by paratext or associated literary source. While the eyes of the sitter in Ejnar Nielsen's *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* are undoubtedly magnetic, prior knowledge of the painting's title would almost certainly result in a higher concentration of darker nodes, or haptic gaze, around the eyes than without such

[169] Alfred L. Yarbus, *Eye Movements and Vision*, trans. Basil Haigh, (New York: Plenum Press, 1967), 193.
[170] G. L. Petrushavich *My Child*, (sculpture), as illustrated in Yarbus, 197.
[171] Yarbus, 191.
[172] Yarbus, 211.

information. This is in spite of the fact that most concentrated focus on figurative forms is on the highly expressive eye and mouth area. Individual thought process is more complex to categorise, but it can be stated that such a factor is influenced by memory, episodes or associations from the past, all of which can be triggered by certain elements within an artwork and may in turn demand greater fixation than other aspects. I argue that these points of fixation are contributing factors in the viewer's perception of the atmosphere of an artwork. While points of fixation are the result of focused vision, they nonetheless embody the significance of an artwork for a viewer, and as points of intense visual interest they colour the reaction to the whole. That they are threaded together by saccades in the peripheral vision, which is more commonly associated with the unspecificity of atmosphere, is paradoxical, as these fixations are *felt* by the viewer.

Atmosphere has been defined by numerous sources as the unifying quality in which details cannot be ascertained; it is the prevailing mood which permeates through the entire object. This would suggest that the optic gaze has most in common with atmosphere, in that it grasps the whole, the relation between parts, and this is naturally a significant aspect which contributes to atmosphere in a work. However, the concentration on particular areas, demonstrated by the series of haptic nodes suggests that a haptic gaze provides a more meaningful source of mood or atmosphere to the viewer. The series of nodes is mentally processed: perhaps it is a junction forms, an expression, the application of materials or the treatment of colour that demands closer inspection from the viewer, and as such, each reading of an artwork is entirely individual. Aspects speak differently to the individuality of the viewer, with the result that haptic viewing is both empirical and rooted in episodic memory. While atmosphere is an all-encompassing feeling that pervades a work, its point of origin may nonetheless be localised to a single point or series of points.

In a similar sense, Barthes addresses a feeling equivalent to atmosphere in his 1980 text *Camera Lucida*, in which he describes the aspect of a photograph that reaches out to affect him deeply as the punctum, as it "rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me"[173]. In opposition to the punctum is the studium, that is, the viewer's active approach to and interest in a work.[174] Both concepts have equal validity and application across the arts, beyond photography. Benjamin's sign and mark and Barthes' studium and punctum set up the theoretical framework to support the duality of analysing atmosphere in art. The studium and the sign are both external to the artwork to some degree; the studium being the viewer's intellectual interest, the sign being that which is imprinted, related to the optical gaze which perceives surfaces and outlines. These qualities are associated with linearity; they are directional and focused, characteristics which are positioned in antithesis to atmosphere. The punctum and the mark, however, are implicit in the artwork, and seemingly make themselves known to the viewer. Barthes' use of the word *mark* and *wound* to discuss the nature of punctum finds parallels in Benjamin's designation of the mark as something on and of the flesh. "A photograph's punctum is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me.)'[175] The punctum, while being similar to the mark in a painting, is also embodied as a bruise or wound in the viewer. This alludes to the duality of the punctum as the feeling emerging from the work but simultaneously affecting the emotional state of the viewer. The particular points, wounds or marks that remain in the mind long after viewing an image are the result of haptic vision, whereby the eye has settled, perhaps unconsciously, on certain details which possess particular resonance for the individual. and are formed from the sensory perception. Punctum, mark, haptic gaze; there is

[173] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, (London: Vintage, 2000), 26.
[174] Barthes, 26-7.
[175] Barthes, 27.

significant overlap between these three concepts, all of which contribute to understanding the atmosphere of art.

The punctum is an element derived from the artwork but received by the viewer, and as such, the punctum of a work is an entirely subjective experience, one that is grounded in a particular aspect of an artwork 'speaking to' the viewer by way of their memory and empirical experience. Barthes writes that "the photographs I am speaking of are in effect punctuated, sometimes even speckled with these sensitive points; precisely, these marks, these wounds are so many *points*."[176] The 'sensitive points' are in line with the nodes of haptic gaze represented in Yarbus' study; points which possess for the viewer some incalculable palpability, punctuating the artwork with personal, intimate meaning. It may only be a detail, but it is that feeling that these sensitive points spark that colours for an individual the entire work in a certain mood, thus embodying atmosphere. Barthes furthermore purports the significance of personal memory and the punctum: "however lightning-like it may be, the punctum has, more or less, a power of expansion. This power is often metonymic."[177] That the punctum, or in this study, the atmosphere, triggers associations in the viewer is suggestive of a wider narrative beyond the artwork. This means that the feeling derived from the punctum, located within the artwork, makes itself known to the viewer and expands in meaning and association when conflated with individual memory to create a highly subjective atmosphere.

Atmosphere is the pervading sense associated with a given work, it is borne of the work itself, but because it requires the viewer's perception, it retains a separateness from the artwork: "the punctum should be revealed only after the fact, when the photograph is no longer in front of me and I think back on it. I may know better a photograph I remember than a photograph I am looking at, as if direct

[176] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, (London: Vintage, 2000), 26-7.
[177] Barthes, 45.

vision oriented its language wrongly, engaging it in an effort of description which will always miss its point of effect, the punctum."[178] From this it can be gathered that a certain feeling, or atmosphere, is locked within memory. Atmosphere is suggested under the scrutinising focused vision of the viewer, but is only fully revealed in the form of the lingering feeling after the viewing the artwork. The neurobiologist Margaret Livingstone echoes Barthes' sentiment in claiming the Mona Lisa's cryptic smile was enhanced and more cheerful when she looked away from it, i.e. when the facial expression was in Livingstone's peripheral vision.[179] Thus, a 'feeling' of cheerfulness was exuded from the image when its details were blurred, or as in Barthes, entirely absent. Simmel's notion of atmosphere as a suffusion of indistinguishable details is furthermore called to mind,[180] as is Pallasmaa's idea that "peripheral perception is the perceptival mode through which we grasp atmospheres."[181] These findings substantiate my claim that the atmosphere of an artwork is derived from the peripheral background of the pictorial space, perceptually attuned to the relations of negative and positive forms within the picture plane. The periphery is imprecise, ambiguous, and flexible. It allows for a multiplicity of interpretation, and therefore invites the participation of the viewer's imagination.

The punctum appears to defy linguistic description, and this furthermore aligns it with atmosphere as the intangible, inseparable feeling that unites an artwork aesthetically. Rather than a literal recollection of an artwork, it is the emotional response in the viewer, triggered by certain aspects within the work, that remain and affect the individual. The externality of the punctum is underlined

[178] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, (London: Vintage, 2000), 53.
[179] Margaret Livingstone, *Vision and Art: The Biology of Seeing,* (New York: Abrams, 2008), 71.
[180] Georg Simmel, *La tragedie de la culture et autres essais*, (Petites Biblioteque Rivages) 239. Translated in Guénola Stork, "P. S. Krøyer's Light as the Poetics of Memory" in *Harmony in Blue*, eds. Annette Johansen and Mette Bøgh Jensen, (Skagens Museum, 2001) 98.
[181] Juhani Pallasmaa, "Space, Place, and Atmosphere: Peripheral Perception in Existential Experience", in *Architectural Atmospheres: On the Experience and Politics of Architecture,* ed. Christian Borch, (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 2014), 39.

by Barthes in differentiating between erotic and pornographic photographs: "The *punctum*, then, is a kind of subtle *beyond* - as if the image launched desire beyond what it permits us to see…"[182] Then it can be said that atmosphere, on the basis of the punctum, alludes to images and feelings beyond the suggestion of the pictorial space, yet is simultaneously grounded within it. The atmosphere pervades the work while referring the viewer to a broader sense of narrative.

The nodes of haptic gaze and the punctum are both reminiscent of the mark, which emerge from the painting as an indistinguishable element. The haptic eye rests on and finds interesting aspects represented by the nodes in the Yarbus study, and the pathway taken by the optic gaze linked by the graphic lines of the saccades. The punctum only makes itself known to the individual when the object is no longer before their eyes, echoing Wittgenstein's point that "when I am looking at an object, I cannot imagine it."[183] Memory is forced into action, and the recollection of the significant, affective aspects will most likely align with those dark nodes focused on by the haptic gaze, so that in combination, it is these aspects that form the atmosphere of an artwork. Atmosphere is born of the artwork, it is rooted in the compositional arrangement of elements, but it is also dependent on which of these elements entrance the viewer's haptic gaze, from which this meaning is derived.

The significance of atmosphere in the context of this thesis is the transmission of feeling. Thus, in the text and image dynamic, in which artworks and their associated linguistic texts 'transmit' the same idea, this thesis assesses the extent to which each element exudes the same 'feeling', or atmosphere. However, differences exist by virtue of visual art and writing as diverse, expressive media. This means that reading the poetic text written by Hansen Jacobsen for his

[182] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, (London: Vintage, 2000), 59.
[183] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Embodied Image*, (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 34; Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel,* section 621.

sculpture *The Shadow* (1897-98) affects the viewer's perception of the artwork by suggesting a narrative and perspective. The potential differences in narrative afforded by the atmospheres of each visual art and language are integral to the perception of an artwork, as demonstrated in the following chapters.

Part One: Titles as Paratexts

Introduction: Titles as Paratexts

The artworks included in this study of Nordic Symbolist art 1890-1915, encompassing the themes of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self, are enriched with multiple layers of form and meaning, pertaining to both the artwork as a visual object, and to associated linguistic texts. The purpose of this thesis is to establish a comprehensive understanding of the breadth of word and image relationships in such works of Nordic Symbolism. Text is attached to all artworks of this era in some form or another, and in order to fully explore the text and image relation in its broadest sense it is necessary to grasp the spectrum of titles as an elementary component of the relationship. Leaving associated texts and literary quotations attached to a work to Parts Two and Three, Titles as Paratexts is a two-part chapter focusing exclusively on the text that confronts the viewer in simultaneity with the artwork – the title. The title-artwork relationship is explored in the context of two Danish artists, representative of the themes of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self, Ejnar Nielsen, and Vilhelm Hammershøi, each of whom demonstrate contrasting approaches to the titling of their work. Reference will also be made to other works within the thematic framework of this research to further illustrate the influence of the title in the perception of an artwork. Drawing on the concept of atmosphere, discussed in detail in the preceding chapter, this section focuses on how feeling or mood is communicated from both the title and the artwork in relation to the work of Nielsen and Hammershøi, as demonstrated in relevant examples.

The tension between the title and the artwork raises a number of questions which this chapter seeks to answer: do words confirm what the eye

perceives, or do titles prompt the viewer in a different direction? How is the linguistic element harnessed by the artwork's title and in the artwork itself? While Mieke Bal's *Narratology* is broader in its scope to include as any text a "finite, structured whole composed of signs",[184] for the purposes of this thesis, 'texts' refers specifically to linguistic texts, while 'visual texts' will be specified as artworks.

In this chapter I adapt the arguments of Gerard Genette and Leo Hoek on the function of paratexts of literary works to the analysis of visual art. The term *paratext*, from Genette's text of the same name[185], is described as a 'threshold'. Genette refers to all extra-textual elements of a literary work as a paratext - the author's name, preface, contents etc., all the aspects which allow the text to become presentable to an audience.[186] While it is possible to call all verbal texts associated with an artwork paratexts, aside from those that may appear within the artwork itself, the focus of this chapter is the most prominent paratext of all: the title.

As a paratext, the title of a work occupies a liminal space between a literary work and its audience, and is typically devised and installed by the author. This theory, which in Genette's text is limited to the realm of literature, can be usefully expanded and adapted to the visual arts. While the expansion of Genette's theory to include artwork titles has been suggested, this thesis presents an original application of the theory to works of Nordic Symbolism.[187] The title is the chief paratext in relation to the visual arts – other aspects include the artist's name, the date of execution, dimensions, media and current location of a given work. To

[184] Mieke Bal, *Narratology*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 5.
[185] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation,* trans. Jane E. Lewin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2.
[186] Genette, 1.
[187] Mikko Pirinen also suggests the application of Genette's theory of paratexts to artwork titles in his article "Parergon, Paratext, and Title in the Context of Visual Art" in *Picturing the Language of Images,* eds., Nancy Pedri and Laurence Petit, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 241-250.

understand a title as a threshold suggests that one cannot 'enter' the picture plane without first passing through the paratext, i.e., that the image is quantified by language. The title has the potential to function as an interface between reader and text, viewer and artwork, and as such implies that the textual element of title may serve as a guide to understanding visual art. Some books direct the manner in which they should be read through the preface,[188] and convey the intentionality and 'correct' interpretation of the work by the author and/or publisher. It must be emphasised that in order to qualify as a paratext, the text must be affixed by the author (artist) or a permitted associate as this brings it in line with intentionality on the part of the artist and the fulfilment of their brief, or the expression of their idea. The artworks included in this study are selected for their titles, which possess a particular or special relation to the artwork itself. The focus will be on two works: Ejnar Nielsen's *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* (1897, fig. 56-62), and *White Doors (Open Doors) Strandgade 30* (1905, fig. 67) by Vilhelm Hammershøi. The English translations render the titles identical to the original Danish, as included in the List of Illustrations. These paintings are selected for the poetic nature of their titles in relation to the visual representation, which both invite and resist the viewer's understanding.

The paratext in this study refers to the linguistic, textual appendages of visual art, that is, the title, subtitle, associated texts written by the artist. These are regarded as minor secondary texts whose relevance relies entirely on the primacy of the artwork. However, there is another type of paratext, namely literary works which generate visual illustrations. Genette also includes illustrations as iconic paratexts of a text,[189] but equally, the illustration is a work of art in its own right, and has as its paratext the primary textual source. An example of such is

[188] For a list of such examples, consult Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation,* trans. Jane E. Lewin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 11.
[189] Genette, 7.

Ejnar Nielsen's series of illustrations to accompany Karl Larsen's short story entitled *The Old Man's Child* (1900), and the effects of illustrations within the text and image sphere are discussed in Part Three Literary Sources for Artworks.

Building on Hoek's categories of titles, Genette ascribes titles to be either thematic, expressing content and subject matter, or rhematic, revealing form and genre. This bears resemblance to the definition of literary genres, according to René Wellek and Austin Warren, which consists of both outer form, being structure, and inner form, subject and tone.[190] The categorisation of a work as a particular genre reinforces the conventions of its type; the title, by contrast, provides scope for the individualisation of the artwork. While titles can be indicators of genre, they can equally subvert the conventions of their supposed genre. Kellman differentiates between the discursive title,[191] which encapsulates the broad themes at play, and the referential title, which "refers us back to an element within the work, while it is in fact the text itself which supplies the title."[192] There is a symbiotic circularity between the referential title and its work, which draws the two elements closer together as one cohesive form, not further apart as distinct entities. Using Peirce's 'Division of Signs' as a methodological framework,[193] the title is the representamen, its firstness expressed as a sinsign, which is arranged as a single piece. The object of the Peircean triad becomes the artwork, which can contain iconic, symbolic and indexical characteristics in some combination, varying between works. The interpretant then is the notion formed in the viewer's mind upon conflating the title and the artwork.

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[190] John Hollander, ""Haddock's Eyes": A Note on the Theory of Titles" in *Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 213; quoted from René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1949).
[191] Steven G. Kellman, "Dropping Names: The Poetics of Titles", in *Criticism*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Spring 1975), 159.
[192] Kellman, 160.
[193] See C. S. Peirce, Nathan Houser, ed., *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings Vol. 2., The Peirce Edition Project*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.

The title of an artwork is of greater significance to the whole than mere identification. Titles represent the confrontation between art and language, and their relationship reveals the subtleties of interpretation navigated by the viewer. The title provides the first point of contact between the viewer and the artistic concept, and this chapter sets out to address the issue raised in the introduction; to what extent do the artwork and its title communicate the same atmosphere?

Unless the literary text is presented in Genette's "unadorned state",[194] it is difficult to avoid paratexts such as the work's title and author, which are usually printed on the book cover or spine, the external casing which both shields and advertises a work and must be uncovered. By contrast, one can begin to become familiar with a work of art without ever reading information labels in a museum, scholarly notes; in short, wherever the work of art exists, either the real object or a reproduction, it is possible to avoid paratexts in a sense that is less possible with a literary work. Artworks as material objects and the titles of literary works therefore occupy a similar level of familiarity in the public mind. One can recognise a painting or sculpture without any textual (and perhaps explanatory) knowledge of it, and equally, one can know the title of a literary text without having read the body of work. However, it is usually the case that the literary title only makes sense once the text has been read, often selected as a significant phrase from the text itself. This raises the question of value and priority in the visual and textual expression.

The title is also rife with contradictions; it is both attached and detached from the artwork, and while it often provides some form of clarification to the viewer, such as place, genre, etc., it can also challenge interpretation and its

[194] That is, a body of text without the paratexts of title, author, chapters etc. See Gérard Genette, trans. Jane E. Lewin, *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

relation to the artwork. The meaning of a work which may have been regarded as inappropriate to contemporary audiences can be disguised by a more decorous title.[195] A work called *Untitled* still bears as its title, *Untitled*, but as with numbered series, simultaneously attempts to subvert the power of the conventional, narrative-driven title. Additionally, titles are often applied to a work retrospectively by third parties, such as by an owner or art dealer in anticipation of an auction;[196] such titles are usually descriptive of type and in Genette's terminology, rhematic. By the nineteenth century it became commonplace for artists to fix the titles of their own artworks,[197] and as such, the strands of artwork, title and the artist's intentionality become enormously strengthened. Thanks to the artist's intentionality, titles had increased potential to influence public reception of an artwork.[198]

There are a number of definitions of the title, in the context of both visual and literary art. In combination, these definitions present a multi-faceted construct which is further enriched by the viewer's perception. John Hollander regards titles as a sort of declaration of intention, a framing or presentational device.[199] Hollander also draws parallels between titles which denote a person's status, and the titles of artworks, as in both instances, the title "designates and at least directs certain forms of behaviour toward its holder."[200] Theodor Adorno calls

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[195] By altering the title, Veronese effectively changed the subject matter of his work from the Last Supper to Feast in the House of Levi. The biblical reference LUCAE CAP. V was inscribed on the surface of the work to appease the Holy Office of Inquisition, who had deemed the licentious figures surrounding the Last Supper impious. Also, Édouard Manet's *Dejeuner sur l'Herbe* (1863) was renamed as such by the artist, having been known as *Le Bain* in contemporary media; *Dejeuner sur l'Herbe* deflects attention from the figures' sociality to the pleasant natural setting. For further details on these references see Greg Petersen, "Titles, Labels and Names: A House of Mirrors", in *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 40 No. 2 (Summer 2006), 40-42.

[196] See 17th Century Dutch auction lists and inventories for further examples, e.g. the Montias Database at the Frick Collection, New York http://research.frick.org/montiasart/recordlistA.php?-skip=0

[197] John Hollander, ""Haddock's Eyes": A Note on the Theory of Titles" in *Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form*, ed. John Hollander, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 214.

[198] Michelle Facos, *Symbolist Art in Context*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009 p. 3

[199] John Hollander, ""Haddock's Eyes": A Note on the Theory of Titles" in *Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form*, ed. John Hollander, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 19850, 214.

[200] Hollander, 214.

the title a "microcosm of the work";[201] in this sense, the title becomes a distillation of themes and ideas, the body of work in miniature. This would place the title as an intrinsic element of the artwork, as essential to its existence and meaning as the visual representation, but Kellman suggests a counter-argument in which titles "remove us to an external vantage point, to enable us to observe the thing and to deal with it as a whole."[202] This implies that the title is the key to understanding an artwork by extracting the viewer from the tangled subjectivity of the body of work (literary or visual) and into the clarity of an objective standpoint. The issue with such a concept is that it ascertains the title's independence from the artwork, and in doing so, creates a barrier between the work itself and its title. It also points to the degree to which the title can be called an extension of its artwork, or whether it should be regarded as a separate, external entity, the intermediary to aid the viewer's interpretation. The title becomes relevant to the visual content by virtue of its presence. I argue that the viewer's perception is a site of tension between the visual content and the textual quantifier. As Kellman further elucidates, "except in rare cases in which letters are painted on the canvas, the name is not part of the work itself […] These conceptual tags [titles] belong to a different order of reality than do the works themselves; if art is intuitive, they are discursive."[203] Ejnar Nielsen's *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* is one such exception as the title is inscribed on the canvas, but if the artist intentionally endows a work with a certain title, then it must be as inherent and intuitive to that work as any manipulation of pictorial space. This is in spite of the title's physical presence in relation to the artwork. As will be seen in the Nielsen and Hammershøi case studies, the artist's utilisation and placement of the title plays an indivisible role in the communication

[201] Harry Levin, "The Title as a Literary Genre", *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 72 no. 4 (Oct. 1977), xxiii.
[202] Steven G. Kellman, "Dropping Names: the Poetics of Titles", in *Criticism*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Spring 1975), 153.
[203] Kellman, 153, 155.

of entire artwork's intention, forming a type of *Gesamtkunstwerk* in which text and image contribute to an aesthetic message.

The grammar of a title (and in the context of this research, the translation into English) creates a narrative bond between the title and the 'action' of the artwork, indicating stasis or movement, the moments preceding or following an occurrence. Stephen Bann outlines two divergent methods of approaching the issue of artworks' titles, one being the historic approach, whereby the history of the painting is documented through records, auction catalogues, inventories etc., tracing the evolution of the work's title from varying sources, and secondly, a semiotic approach:

> In terms of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics, for example, we might arguably classify the title of a painting as a *dicent indexical legisign*. It would be a legisign (unlike the painting itself, which because of its singularity would be qualified as a sinsign) because its representational function was discharged through the public medium of language; indexical because its role was to point to, or indicate, certain features of the work to which it was attached; dicent because it served to announce the 'actual existence' of its object (unlike the painting itself, again, because the painting might well be an *icon* of its object, but in its condition of resemblance would not necessarily presuppose the existence of that object).[204]

Bann seeks to combine both approaches, claiming that a semiotic approach alone isolates the historical context.[205] But this historical context can be discarded in favour of semiotics when the title of an artwork was selected by the

[204] Stephen Bann, "The Mythical Conception is the Name: Titles and Names in Modern and Post-Modern Painting", *Word and Image*, Vol. 1 Issue 2 (1985), 177.
[205] Bann, 177.

artist, and has been referred to by this title since its creation. The modern timeframe of this study between 1890-1915 should be receptive for such an approach, and may lead further into the nature of verbal/visual relations than is possible through tracing a title's historic evolution, as is necessary with older works. Bann however, claims that a title inscribed on the picture frame removes it from replicated legisign to unique sinsign, on the threshold of the picture plane, and in turn, will affect our interpretation[206]. Therefore, the title inscribed directly onto the canvas, invading the picture plane so that one is indistinguishable from the other, is elevated further still to the same sinsign as the painting itself.

The title is manifested through the linguistic medium, removed from visual representation, and as a result there is a separation between media. When a textual element is appended to the (primary) visual object, the externality of one to the other becomes apparent; the visual as the internal aspect, while paratexts shield the image with a linguistic barrier, in the same manner as the cover of a book shields its content. The title is external as it is not usually found within the pictorial space but rather on the frame or information label on the adjacent wall. Labelling and identification addresses the audience in preparation for the 'internality' of visual representation. Frequently, the viewer is confronted by the visual object first, and title later, while the reverse is usually the case for literary art. Kellman uses the phrase "contribution to the aesthetic experience"[207] when describing the lack thereof in the numerical titling of pieces of music, and in doing so highlights an essential function of a poetic title when selected with intent on the part of the artist.

Remarking on the crucial role labels, or titles, play in our response to art, W. J. T. Mitchell recounts the reaction of Mark Twain to Guido Reni's *Portrait*

[206] Stephen Bann, "The Mythical Conception is the Name: Titles and Names in Modern and Post-Modern Painting", *Word and Image*, Vol. 1 Issue 2 (1985), 179.
[207] Steven G. Kellman, "Dropping Names: the Poetics of Titles", in *Criticism*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Spring 1975), 157.

of Beatrice Cenci (c. 1600, oil on canvas, 75 x 50cm, Gallerie Nazionali di Arte Antica di Roma, Palazzo Barberini, Rome):

"A good legible label is usually worth, for information, a ton of significant attitude and expression in a historical picture. In Rome, people with fine sympathetic natures stand up and weep in front of the celebrated "Beatrice Cenci the Day Before Her Execution." It shows what a label can do. If they did not know the picture, they would inspect it unmoved, and say, "Young Girl with Hay Fever; Young Girl with her Head in a Bag".[208]

With this anecdote, Mitchell furthers the notion that the visual arts encounter the "limits of pictorial expression",[209] namely Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's claim that visual art cannot represent ideas because it lacks by its motionless nature the progression of narrative required for full expression, a quality that is found in language alone.[210] Lessing is wary of abstract ideas being represented in the form of allegory because it moves too closely to the realm of writing and away from the function of artworks as visual objects. This thinking undermines the unique impact of visual communication to suggest and imply, rather than precisely state, like language. The many examples of continuous narrative, such as Giotto's fresco cycle in the Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel in Padua (c. 1305), refute Lessing's claim by demonstrating narrative progression through a series of interconnected scenes. Setting such examples aside, Nordic Symbolism is by its nature, *symbolic* of ideas in the Peircean sense, and as such, many artworks of this era become sites of rumination for abstract ideas of illness, death and psychological dimensions. Visual art can grant ideas full expression because part of their function is to form infinite number of ideas in the mind of the viewer. Narrative progression within the bounds of the frame can be gleaned from

[208] W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986, p. 40, quoted from Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, chapter 44, "City Sights".
[209] Mitchell, 40.
[210] Mitchell, 40-41.

paratexts: titles, poetic texts written by the artist, or external, literary sources upon which an artwork is based. Twain's comments, however, reveal the influence of titles in clarifying for the viewer the "attitude and expression" in figurative painting. Though duly noted by Mitchell, interpretation is dependent on the viewer's knowledge of the historical context, even with the name of the sitter is included: meaning is not derived from text alone. All art is perceived through the individual's subjective filter, their empirical accumulation of knowledge and experience. Therefore, the atmosphere the artwork and title transmits, and that which the viewer absorbs, will vary.

Chapter 3: Ejnar Nielsen: *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* (1897)

Introducing Ejnar Nielsen

> When I arrived there, walking on foot from Silkeborg – this was before the time of the railway, you know – it struck me clearly, that this was the place for me, here were the subjects I wanted to paint. And soon it proved to be the same case with many of the people I got to know. Strange though, that in such beautiful surrounds there was so much illness and misery – amidst the hills, tuberculosis was ravaging terribly.[211]

So claimed the Danish artist Ejnar Nielsen (1872-1956) in an interview about his arrival in the rural Jutland town of Gjern. The town became his home from July 1894 after reading an article extolling the natural beauty of the area, in particular, the golden, serpentine stream that appears in *The Blind Girl* (1896-98), and thought that he must see these sights for himself.[212] Born in Copenhagen, Ejnar Nielsen embraced in his art the darker aspects of the Symbolism with which this thesis is concerned, namely representations of illness, death and psychological dimensions. His response to the unsettling juxtaposition of beauty and decay, death and nature in Gjern characterises his canvases from the 1890s, in which the rolling landscape is frequently offset by the morbid social

[211] "Da jeg kom dertil, vandrede på min fod fra Silkeborg – det var før jernbanens tid, må De vide – stod det mig med det same klart, at det var stedet for mig, at her fandtes de motiver, jeg brød mig om at male. Og snart viste det sig, at det samme var tilfældet med mange af de mennesker, jeg efterhånden lærte at kende. Mærkelig blot, at der i så smukke omgivelser fandtes så megen sygdom og elendighed – mellem bakkerne hærgede navnlig tuberkulosen frygteligt."
Steffen Lange, *Eneren - Maleren Ejnar Nielsen*, (Herning: Poul Kristensen Forlag, 1998), 15.
From the Nielsen's 80th birthday interview in *Silkeborg Avis*, 4. March 1952. Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen.

[212] Lange, 12-15, 201-203. Interviews with the artist in *Nationaltidende*, 17. Oct 1920 and *Silkeborg Avis*, 4. March 1952

reality of illness. As a known atheist,[213] Nielsen's treatment of death does not transcend the hard realities of existence, but in his linear, reductive style there is a mysticism of the unknown, of what lies beyond death. This chapter examines one such painting completed during this period in Gjern, *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* (1897), in which the function of the artwork's title, inscribed directly on the picture plane, is given particular focus as the quantifier of the painting's narrative.

The titles of Ejnar Nielsen's early canvases betray an attempt at atmospheric painting, or *stemningskunst*.[214] Among them are *At Sunset in April* (1893, fig. 63), the windswept diagonal of the fence and trees leads the eye along the road and across the canvas. The delicate colouration of sap green and mauve in feathered brushstrokes align it with the sentimentality of the introspective 'blue hour' peculiar to the Nordic twilight. These titles steer the viewer to regard the natural beauty and quality of light of this subjectively rendered landscape. The title borders on the sentimental by pinpointing the time of day and month, with all its seasonal connotations, thereby imbuing this painting, and similarly titled works, with a sense of atmosphere in its own right. Early works such as *At Sunset in April* demonstrate Nielsen's attempts to conform to the academic style of painting, first dominated in Denmark by C. W. Eckersberg (1783-1853) and Frederik Vermehren (1823-1910) during the Golden Age of Danish Painting and later, Bonnat's students such as P. S. Krøyer (1851-1909) and Theodor Philipsen (1840-1920), both of whom attempt to coalesce all colour values as a whole in the manner of French valeur painting, as developed by Camille Corot.[215] The evocative potential of light and space that is harnessed for contemplation in *stemningsmaleri* builds on the concept of valeur painting, in which colours are harmoniously combined. While this early work by Nielsen is particularly indebted to Philipsen's impressionistic

[213] Steffen Lange, *Eneren - Maleren Ejnar Nielsen*, (Herning: Poul Kristensen Forlag, 1998), 49.
[214] Ulla Sjöström, *Maleren Ejnar Nielsen*, (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers' Forlag, 2000), 10.
[215] Lise Svanholm, *Northern Light: The Skagen Painters*, (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2004), 32.

style,[216] the blurred brushstrokes are a stark contrast to the linearity and rigidly structured compositions of Nielsen's later Symbolist work.

The undulating landscape of Gjern features prominently in Nielsen's paintings of the 1890s, as natural and organic as the process of dying. Nielsen encountered widespread illness and death in the area, the primary cause of which was tuberculosis. Nielsen himself found himself sketching the ebbing of life as he visited Anna Dorthea Kristensen every day in her home, culminating with the painting *The Sick Girl* (1896). Sjöström describes Nielsen's pale, beautiful rendering of the dying girl as "aestheticizing death".[217] The girl, whose figure sinks to the bottom of the cavernous room in a pose reminiscent of John Everett Millais' *Ophelia* (1851-52, fig. 64), grasps the side of her bed in a last attempt to cling to materiality, summoning her remaining strength and in doing so breaches the barrier between the picture plane and the world of the viewer. The sitter for *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* is named as Erik Kjærsgaard, a young man suffering from tuberculosis who became the posthumous model for Nielsen's *Death and the Cripple* (1898-99). Completed in two consecutive years, *The Sick Girl* and *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* can be regarded as a pair, and are displayed as such, side by side in Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen (fig. 65). Both figures are in the final stages of their illnesses, depicted in sterile white-washed rooms, dominated by a looming black chest. The status of Anna Dorthea is defined by three small signs of life: the grasping hand at the railing, her raised knees, though not initially visible against the black oven, and most poignantly, the open slit of eye, downward cast, that indicate some awareness of her being observed, some remnant of life. Anna Dorthea is arguably closer to death than Erik, yet the title of her work remains *The Sick Girl*, trapped in the eternal stasis of her illness. The only text to appear on the canvas of Anna Dorthea is the artist's name and date of completion in the lower

[216] Ulla Sjöström, *Maleren Ejnar Nielsen*, (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers' Forlag, 2000), 10.
[217] Sjöström, 17.

right corner, providing only administrative and authenticating (paratextual) details of the work. By contrast, Erik is released from the confines of his cell-like space by the expansive narrative his title implies, prompted by the paradoxical vitality of his gaze.

The composition is cut off at the sitter's upper leg, a jarring amputation of the remainder of his body, but in effect his body and the chest to the left appear fused together as one entity. The abrupt cropping of the composition lends a photographic quality to the work, and is further enhanced by a monochrome palette. The urgency of the form and the urgent cropping gives way to the solemnity of Kjærsgaard's gaze. The sitter exudes the timelessness of a statue, solid and motionless, and the photographic greyscale conveys an atmosphere of extinction, as he becomes a 'living memory'. The clasped hands and sloping posture betray a pitiful uncertainty, receding further into his illness and farther from the world around him. The title *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* poignantly highlights this withdrawal; he is blind to all but death, sinking back into the wall. The shadows behind the figure are curiously doubled around his head. The shadow along Kjærsgaard's left side is consistent with a light source emanating from the left foreground diagonal of the pictorial space. However, the shadow appears at the right side of his head also, and is a deliberate and clear radiating effect, encircling the head with a second shadow as a precursor to death. The doubling of death and shadow is located on the wall, which constitutes the negative space of the composition. The significance of the negative space, or background, is discussed in Chapter 2 as crucial in conveying the relationship between forms in the artwork, and as such can be regarded as evocative of the artwork's atmosphere.

Taking an overview of artworks Nielsen completed while in Gjern, the title *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* becomes all the more anomalous. The closest title in terms of poetics and symbolic meaning is *People Listening to the Bells*

Closing in the Day (1900). As a linguistic fragment it is similar to *And in His Eyes I Saw Death*, but as a phrase written in the third person, it lacks the immediacy of a first person narrator. Other titles such as *Death and the Cripple* (1898-99), *The Sick Girl* (1896) and *The Blind Girl* (1896-98) are highly reflective of the pictorial representation. These titles do not allude to a context beyond the clearly discernible subject matter; they categorise the figures presented in the pictorial space, not as individuals, but as representations of a type, i.e., 'the sick girl', 'the blind girl', 'the cripple', while the deceased man loses his identity as a symbol of death. Such titles present the viewer with a cycle of focused internality, in which the representation leads to the title, which leads back to the representation. The lack of external references forces the focus within the boundaries of the frame, and encourages the viewer to populate the sparse canvases with the possible implications of its denotations.

Text is attached directly to the pictorial space in a later work by Nielsen, yet the context differs to the focus and parameters of this study. In addition to the artist's name, date, and location of the work's completion, Nielsen's *Portrait of the Writer Ellen Key.Firenze, Volterra* (1907, fig. 66) bears the name of the sitter, Ellen Key, along the lower portion of the picture plane, while above the sitter in a fictive framework reads the inscription HAVDE JEG KUNNET GIVE DIN AANDS RENHED.[218] I argue that the inclusion of such textual details in the pictorial space differ in function to that of *And in his Eyes I Saw Death;* Ellen Key was a renowned Swedish writer, feminist and advocate for social change. The inscription is Nielsen's invention, yet it does not serve to place the portrait of Key in a poetic narrative, rather it functions as the artist's comment on the sitter's achievements and character. Also, the genre of portraiture of known sitters falls

[218] Ulla Sjöström, *Maleren Ejnar Nielsen*, (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers' Forlag, 2000), 54. Nielsen's appraisal of Key translates as "If I could give your spirit's purity." Translated from Danish by K. Mortensen

outside the remit of this study, which instead focuses on the text/image interaction within representations of illness, death and the psychological self as motifs of fin de siècle society.

Death and the Title

Direct interaction occurs between text and image on the surface of the canvas in Nielsen's *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* (fig. 57). The inscribed text doubles as the title of the work, although text on the surface of the painting does not necessarily indicate the work's title.[219] The category of retrospective title application can be dismissed in this case as the painting is listed in a Charlottenborg exhibition catalogue from 1927, during the artist's lifetime, as *Og I Hans Øjne Saa Jeg Døden* (And in His Eyes I Saw Death).[220] The title is inscribed on the canvas as an epitaph on a tombstone, a deliberate analogy it can be assumed, given Nielsen's pre-occupation with death working in Gjern in the 1890s. Nielsen paints on the edge of death, just as the paratext positions itself as the threshold between viewer and artwork. The title opens the canvas up to a broader narrative than paratexts like *The Sick Girl* suggest. It bears stylistic and compositional resemblance to the illustrations of Karl Larsen's novella *The Old Man's Child* (1900) Nielsen would later complete, which include phrases from the novella in cartouches below their visualisations; these illustrations form a separate case study in Part Three Literary Sources for Artworks.

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[219] Greg Petersen, "Titles, Labels and Names: A House of Mirrors", *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 40 No. 2 (Summer 2006), 31.
See the work of René Magritte for examples of differing artwork titles and surface inscriptions, e.g. *The Treachery of Images*, (1928-9, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 93.98cm, LACMA Los Angeles), which bears the inscription *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*.

[220] "Kunstforeningen i København: Udstilling af Ejnar Nielsens Arbejder 1894-1926, Charlottenborg, 16. Januar – 9. Februar 1927", Danmarks Kunstbibliotek, p. 5 Accessed 7/10/2016 http://www.kunstbib.dk/objekter/udstillingskataloger/Udst_0877.pdf

The presence of text on the picture plane raises the issue of whether the textual presence renders the painting as a form of illustration. There is a duplication of the title, because firstly, it exists as per conventional use of artwork titles, in reference to the work in exhibition catalogues, academic texts and all other reproduced formats, and secondly, as an integral and active part of the painting. There are a number of implications regarding the inclusion of the title in the pictorial space, namely how a title integrated with the painting's materiality is differentiated from one externally attached to a work. The inclusion of a title on the picture plane points to its significance as a narrative element, and in turn 'fixes' the narrative in place. The painting *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* consists of two interpretive layers, a visual and a textual, both of which form interdependent narrative texts, in the sense set out by Bal as "a text in which an agent or subject conveys to an addressee ('tells' the reader) a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof."[221] A story is told separately through the visual image, and another through the linguistic text, but a third story is then told taking both elements as one narrative text, and as a material object, *And in His Eyes I Saw* Death is a single narrative text.

Relating the narratology of the title to the visual demands an examination of the pictorial space. Nielsen's composition is enclosed on one side by the room's corner, into which the coffin-like chest is set, and at its foot sits Erik Kjærsgaard. Compositionally, the sitter is at the centre, and due to the title, the viewer's vision is guided directly to his gaze. However, it is the chest which is endowed with rich symbolism. It is black, forbidding, and most significantly, its lid is pressed down in closure. Gaston Bachelard's observations on the inside/outside dialectic of caskets have many parallels with the chest in this painting (fig. 59). When a casket is closed, it allows for the imagination's unfettered speculation; as

[221] Mieke Bal, *Narratology*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 5.

soon as it is opened, the fantasy of what lies within is shattered by reality: "to verify images kills them, and it is always more enriching to *imagine* than to *experience*."[222] The imagining of what is within the chest is akin to the imagining of what awaits after death. To this end, the chest, which is a conventional item of furniture in an ordinary dwelling contemporaneous with the painting, takes on the symbolism of death. What is contained in this chest? It may store personal belongings, the ephemera collected over a lifetime, or it may be empty, not yet fulfilling its function as a coffin. It is as sealed and premonitive, as though already containing the sitter's corpse. The inside/outside dialectic continues into the title: in his eyes, as though shining from within, the narrator (and by extension, the viewer) identifies the fatalism of the sitter's expression (fig. 58). The external appearance of the sitter reveals the internal illness, while the damp peeling of the white-washed walls act in sympathy with Kjærsgaard's deteriorating health and the subsequent decomposition of the body (figs. 61-62).

A Semiotic Analysis

Establishing the semiotic relation between the painting and the title of Nielsen's *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* allows for the disentanglement of the painting's pictorial content from the paratextual, inscribed title. The representamen is firstness, the pure quality of feeling, emotion from which all else is derived: it is the thing that represents another thing. As an object consisting of canvas and frame, the painting is a thing onto which another thing is represented, and thus stands for the artist's idea. The entire materiality of the painting, not as a two-dimensional plane, but occupying three dimensional space, supports the effects the artist intends to apply to the canvas surface. Therefore, the thing that represents

[222] Gaston Bachelard, (*The Poetics of Space*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 88.

another thing can be read on two levels in the case of visual work: firstly, as the materiality of the canvas, the frame, supports and materials which are the vehicle for the idea, and secondly, the representation found within the picture plane itself, entering the world of pictorial space. These qualities combine in the painting as representamen, a thing that stands for an artist's idea. Structure and representation allow for the manifestation of the idea as a tangible object in our world. However, as a painting consists of coloured forms or embodied qualisigns placed together, artworks as a whole can be regarded as sinsigns of a spatio-temporal event, being "an actual existent thing or event which is a sign. It can only be so through its qualities; so that it involves a qualisign, or rather, several qualisigns."[223] The combination of qualisigns produces the sense of atmosphere, the feeling that is perceived by the viewer.

If the materiality of the painting represents the artist's idea, then the forms and colours that commit this idea to the canvas and are representative of *something* (the idea), are termed the object. The dynamical object of the painting is the model, Erik Kjærsgaard, suffering from tuberculosis, but the immediate object is the representation of this man, on canvas, in which he is depicted seated. The information regarding the sitter's identity and circumstances can be located through research, but without external clues the interpretation of the painting lies in the final component of the Peircean triad or interpretant, in which the representamen and object are crystallized in the individual's perception with only the material presented in the artwork. Occurring in the mind of the viewer, this crystallization is a subjectively rendered phenomenon. However, the system could be regarded in reverse, so that the title becomes the representamen, and the visual image becomes the object. This is determined by ekphrasis or illustration, depending on whether text follows image or vice versa.

[223] Charles Sanders Peirce, ed. Justus Buchler, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, (New York: Dover Publications,1955), 101.

Following Peircean analysis, the figure is can be regarded as iconic of the model, Erik Kjærsgaard. His perpendicular position to the black chest echoes the position of a tombstone to a grave, forming a symbol of his impending death. This is further accentuated by the muted colour palette of black and yellow-white like pallid flesh. The chest can also be read as indexical of the man's death, pointing to the eventual outcome of his illness which Nielsen later presents in *Death and the Cripple*. Though these issues are significant in their own right and have been granted due attention in discussion, it is the nature of the title/painting relationship that lies at the centre of this chapter. It is from the title that the viewer deduces the impending death of the sitter, that one is prompted to interpret the signs as indices/symbols of death and illness, and from the title that one is instructed, by virtue of the narrator's claim, to direct the gaze to that of the sitter, Kjærsgaard. The title shapes interpretation of the work, and so, as a linguistic phrase, it influences the interpretant. Adding the linguistic phrase *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* contributes a crucial interpretive element as the text directs the viewer's reading of the painting.

Grammar of the Title

Evaluating the transmission of a single idea through both the visual and verbal representation requires examining the type of language used. To approach this title, we must first make a rudimentary distinction between the title 'And in his Eyes I Saw Death' as a grammatically structured phrase, and its inscription as part of Nielsen's composition. The title is constructed in the first person, past tense (imperfect), and begins with a conjunction. This is poetic language, the conjunction implying a breadth of narrative; the phrase could be preceded by another thought, or extracted from a larger body of text. Its position on the canvas, on the lower right plane of the picture, is just legible against the white

background, to the right of Kjærsgaard. The visual and the textual are integrated as one fluid phrase, joined by the conjunction 'and' (*og*), so if the narrative moves from left to right, according to Western linguistic convention, the phrase opens with the long hyphen of the chest, is broken by the upright peak of the model, and concludes with the unobtrusive yet potent linguistic phrase 'and in his eyes I saw death' across the negative space of the empty wall.

The perspective of the narrator is not determined, but given Nielsen's proximity to the dying in Gjern during the 1890s, the initial assumption is that it is indeed the voice of the artist. The text could also be attributed to a witness to the model sitting, or a third party overheard by the artist; spoken aloud, it is the voice of the viewer after seeing this work; or words put in the mouth of the sitter upon seeing his own reflection. Here, the title actively engages with the viewer's cognition. The title is not a mere name or identification for the painting; instead, it performs a narrative function, strengthened by its prominent position on the picture plane.

The title *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* furthermore connects the concepts of vision and death. The title is instructional, initially directing the viewer's vision to the eyes of the sitter, whose gaze in turn falls just beyond the viewer's line of sight, into what is assumed to be death, if the eye reflects what is seen. There is nothing to direct the eye to the text, nothing to point the viewer to the lower right section, only that it is here that such paratexts (artist's signature, date, place, etc.) are frequently found. The clue is embedded in the text itself, with the duality of vision it implies, that of the narrator's vision and the sitter's eyes. The large eyes of the sitter are magnetic, and following his gaze one crosses diagonally the left side of the canvas, which contains the coffin-like chest, while the right wall remains blank. The title draws our attention to the eyes of the sitter as being indexical of death; it is an ocularcentric standpoint. The title conveys more about the perceptions of the narrator than the sitter. Despite the apparent reference

to the sitter's eyes being 'full of death', to consider the phrase as Kjærsgaard's words would lend the title a hallucinatory, delirious dimension.

Setting aside the respective media of painting and writing, the visual and textual elements of Nielsen's painting can be instead examined according to the type of vision they demand of the viewer. Alois Riegl describes a dichotomy in which optic vision encompasses linearity, contours and outlines, while haptic vision penetrates to depth and texture.[224] Optic vision could be used in the processing of linguistic text, as the outline of letters form the conventional words of a language, and in this case the viewer is usually more concerned with semantic value rather than the aesthetic form of letters, while narrative in linguistic text is conventionally linear in format. Haptic vision might include in its scope the surface of the picture plan as a tactile object, and the textural depth of meaning. The optical reading of an image is, according to Gandelman, a semantic reading of such, in that the eye attempts to link and derive meaning from unconnected elements in a picture.

Text and image are often described as binary, oppositional elements competing for dominance. The actions of reading and seeing are integral to the study of text and image, as one is often associated exclusively with the other – we *see* images, but *read* text. However, both require our visual (ocular) comprehension. Louis Marin draws on Panofsky's *motives* in outlining the paradigms of his analysis of Poussin's *Et in Arcadia ego* (1637-8): "a motive implies a practical recognition of gestures, things, persons; a story implies literary knowledge. Although stories are carried by motives, both imply readings that are different but nonetheless integrated by practical experience and literary knowledge."[225] His essay is an insightful parallel to the analysis of *And in His Eyes*

[224] Claude Gandelman, *Reading Pictures, Viewing Texts,* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 5.
[225] Louis Marin, "Towards a Theory of Reading" in *Calligram: Essays in New Art History from France*, ed. Norman Bryson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 65. From Erwin

I Saw Death, as both paintings contain within them a linguistic text inscribed on the picture plane. The imagery of *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* fits Marin's description of motif, despite the narrative 'guide' provided by the inscribed text on the canvas; Nielsen's illustrations of Karl Larsen's short story *The Old Man's Child* however, require the context of the source literature in order to fully comprehend the accompanying extracts of text; both instances present aspects in which the image forms and communicates part of the narrative.

The function of the title is referenced in passing by Merleau-Ponty in his discussion of linearity and colour in "Eye and Mind" (1961). In this he inadvertently addresses a frequent, conventional definition of an artwork's title as identifying an artwork's subject matter if this is not visibly discernible from the work itself: "First, the painter may, like Klee, decide to hold rigorously to the principle of genesis of the visible, the principle of fundamental, indirect, or – as Klee used to say – absolute painting, and then leave it up to the *title* to designate by its prosaic name the entity thus constituted, in order to leave the painting free to function more purely as a painting. Or alternatively he may undertake, with Matisse (in his drawings), to put into a single line both the prosaic, identifying characteristics of the entity and the hidden operation which combines such indolence or inertia and such force in it as are required to constitute it as *nude*, as *face*, as *flower*."[226] This implies that the title 'grounds' the visual representation in familiar and readily understandable terms, quantifying the creative flourish of the artist with the conventions of language, and thus undermining the artistic potential of language. Merleau-Ponty also remarks that "painting celebrates no other enigma but that of visibility."[227] Nielsen's visibility is stripped to the barest economy of

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Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*, (New York, 1962), 3-31.

[226] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" trans. Michael B. Smith, *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader, Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 143.

[227] Merleau-Ponty, 127.

forms and colour. The composition is spare and linear, the empty walls give the impression of a cavernous room, yet the figure is compressed in the space against the perimeter. Nielsen makes visible the black chest, yet the contents remain concealed from view. The most striking visibility is the sitter's eyes; their visibility is offset by their evasiveness to communicate directly, remaining as closed to the viewer as the black chest. Nielsen makes exteriors visible, yet interiors are only implied. The depths beyond the surface are suggested by external appearances, i.e., what is visible to the viewer. However, it is through verbalisation that Nielsen's visualisation is elevated to intense solemn meaning; the text provides the foundation for the painting's superstructure. The painting evokes in the viewer a series of moods which only sharpen in focus in light of the text.

The 'hidden operation' Merleau-Ponty refers to is similar to Viktor Shklovsky's transformation of a thing into a work of art by defamiliarisation or 'making strange' (ostranenie, остранение.)[228] The object must be decontextualised in order to be seen with new eyes, as an object of artistic value. It suggests that the title is the anchor of the painting, it ties it down with a specific identification and meaning, whereas the painting, when liberated of such linguistic shackles, is free to function on a fluid and flexible visual plane. The title here fulfils a dual identification function. Firstly, language is used as a form of shorthand reference for the identification of individual works, which otherwise would require extensive description; secondly, the linguistic title grants a solidity of interpretation which is ambiguous in the visual. The implication is that the artist's use of line, or rather, a naturalistic, mimetic style can incorporate the function of a title in that the image itself becomes recognisable in the eyes of the viewer as a representation of its subject matter – as nude, face or flower.

[228] Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Device" in *Theory of Prose,* trans. Benjamin Sher, (Normal, Illinois: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998), 6.

Optography

As a phrase taken in the context of the living man, modelling for this painting, 'and in his eyes I saw death' is prophetic, but the narrator does not describe what form death should take, whether this is meant in the metaphorical sense of death as the Grim Reaper, as depicted elsewhere in Nielsen's oeuvre (and discussed in the Introduction, Part Two) or perhaps death as mere absence, a lack of existence, or the void of being, of which the sitter's dark, flat eyes are symbolic. The link between vision and death in Nielsen's painting is potentially furthered by optography, an experimental process which gained much attention in the late nineteenth century by which photographic images are captured on the retina, so that the eye functions as a camera. The separate investigations of German physiologists Franz Christian Boll and Willy Kühne were published from 1876 onwards both in medical journals, and translated for popular newspaper media in Europe and the US.[229] The best known optographic experiment was conducted by Kühne in 1878; an albino rabbit was kept in darkness for a period to allow rhodopsin to gather in the retinal rods. Rhodopsin was the pigment first discovered by Boll, and plays essential part of the optographic process by absorbing the light on the retinal rods, which Kühne believed could function like a photographic plate.[230] The rabbit was then exposed to a barred window, killed, and immediately afterwards its eyes were removed and sliced open. The retina was placed in alum as a fixative to allow the image to 'develop', as bleached on the retina. The resulting image of the barred window appeared on the rabbit's retina, which Kühne drew, thus creating an optogram. A further experiment was conducted in Bruchsal, Germany in 1880, the only recorded optogram involving a human subject; the man

[229] Arthur B. Evans, "Optograms and Fiction: Photo in a Dead Man's Eye", *Science Fiction Studies,* Vol. 20, No. 3 (Nov., 1993), 342-43.
[230] George Wald, "Eye and Camera", *Scientific American,* Vol. 183, No. 2 (Aug. 1950), 37-8.

in question had been served a death sentence, and after his execution Kühne performed the necessary tasks to produce an optogram. The process was successful, but the result, however, was both indecipherable and inconclusive; the form produced on the man's retina could not be identified as anything he would have seen in the moments leading to his death.[231]

While it is unknown whether Nielsen was exposed to optography, or whether it served any influence in the selection of this title, optography was popularised in the later years of the nineteenth century both in fiction and for its use in forensic investigation, with the belief that the retina of a deceased victim would have retained an imprint of their last living image. Most notably, the concept of the eye as a camera influenced the Scotland Yard investigation of Jack the Ripper in London, 1888, in which close-up photographs of the murdered victims' eyes were taken, in the (unsuccessful) hope that the retina had captured some clue as to the last living scene they had witnessed.[232] Due to the international circulation of the theories and practice of optography, it is possible that the idea of the eyes holding images at death infiltrated Nielsen's thinking, at the time of executing *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* in 1897. The macabre public interest garnered by optography is further symptomatic of the Symbolist fascination with death and degeneration of society.

Space, Narrative and Meaning

Time and space, the condensed action of a narrative into one representational 'scene' is another aspect which comes to the fore when addressing issues of text and image. The peculiar phrase 'and in his eyes I saw death' begins

[231] George Wald, "Eye and Camera", *Scientific American,* Vol. 183, No. 2 (Aug. 1950), 39.
[232] Arthur B. Evans, "Optograms and Fiction: Photo in a Dead Man's Eye", *Science Fiction Studies,* Vol. 20, No. 3 (Nov., 1993), 343..

with a conjunction implying it is an extract, a jarring fragment misplaced from a larger body of text, but it is also formed in the past tense. That the narrator 'saw' death and does not presently 'see' death in the sitter's eyes implies a sense of recollection on the part of the narrator, emphasising the recounting of the story rather than a conversation taking place at the time of the sitting. The artist may have painted from life, but 'and in his eyes I saw death' is a phrase founded in memory, addressing the viewer directly with a half-whispered secret, both fearful and sympathetic. Whether this was decided after the sitter's death undetermined in this study; but metaphorically it points to narrative retrospection.

Marin defines three layers of space in representational painting – the representational screen being the painting as two-dimensional material surface; the stage as the illusory space created on the picture plane, and the loci, which are the points of action in the communication of the story.[233] Though Marin writes with specific reference to Poussin and the genre of history painting, a similar principle can be applied to an artwork such as *And in His Eyes I Saw Death*, which contains inscribed on the representational screen a text which has been affixed to transmit a message to the viewer in tandem with the visual image, i.e. the text and specifically the eyes of the sitter function as loci. The notion that a painting should present a diachronic tableau within a synchronic space is equally applicable to those paintings in this study which have their roots in literary sources and quotations, forming Part Three Literary Sources for Artworks, which examines Nielsen's illustrations for Karl Larsen's short story *The Old Man's Child,* and Niels Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture *Death and the Mother,* based on the Hans Christian Andersen's *Story of a Mother* (1847). Such works rely on the viewer to draw context from these external sources. As in Poussin the text *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* is inscribed directly onto the painted surface, and does not assume any prior

[233] Louis Marin, "Towards a Theory of Reading" in *Calligram: Essays in New Art History from France*, ed. Norman Bryson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 66.

knowledge of the subject on the part of the viewer; all that is needed for the viewer's reading is contained within the borders of the frame. The great difference between Marin's narrative analysis of history painting and this study of Nielsen's Symbolist painting is the role of the first person narrator in the latter. In the telling of a story, the narrator's voice must be passive and depersonalised, so that the narrative is not told to us, but rather, tells itself – but the opposite is true of *And in His Eyes I Saw Death*. The individual comes to the fore as the bearer of allegory in a paradoxical combination of realism and deep symbolic meaning.

Titles play a crucial role in determining context. In isolation, the title does little to provide the viewer/reader with any significance, therefore it is the pictorial which provides deictic structure to the text which simultaneously seeks to clarify it. The genre of *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* is between genre scene and portrait; the sitter can be positively identified, in a contemplative genre scene composition. However, it is the title elevates the significance of the context. The viewer is presented with both mimetic and diegetic representation in the form of the visual image and the inscription, respectively. The text thus enforces a certain reading of this painting. Isolating the visual image from the text momentarily, the viewer perceives a foreboding atmosphere, as achieved by the stark monochrome scheme, the spatial void and not least, the sitter's mournful expression. The visual image does not rely on the text for its power, rather it is an unspecified dolour veiling the scene that the viewer perceives, its evocative presence does not diminish when isolated from its inscription. Thus the function of the phrase *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* is to put linguistic form on the atmosphere transmitted by the visual motif.

Atmosphere

The relationship between colour, forms, and their embodiment into a recognizable representation triggers a response in the viewer, which, when interpreted through their own subjective filter, can be described as the atmosphere of the artwork. Thus the large background area of *And in his Eyes I Saw Death*, which denotes the negative space, impresses upon the viewer the illusion of a cavernous room, empty and void of detail. The isolation of detail or ornament in such a space is interpreted as isolation, loneliness and alienation, which are some of the moods communicated to the viewer by the arrangement of (visual) qualisigns on the canvas.

The visual representation of the man sitting against a bare wall is the representamen of a man sitting against a bare wall in reality. Sjöström claims the duplicated shadow behind the man is reminiscent of shadows on the lung, a symbol of his tuberculosis; such a shadow finds precedence in Edvard Munch's oppressive, phallic shadow in *Puberty*, to whom Nielsen was artistically indebted, as evidenced in his *Self Portrait* (1899).[234] The mark itself recalls Benjamin's early essay *On Painting, or Sign and Mark* (1913-1919). Benjamin makes a distinction between the "sign" and the "mark"[235] – "the sign is imprinted; the mark, by contrast, emerges."[236] The sign is recognisable, but the mark makes itself known to the receptive viewer. The essence each viewer extracts is individually nuanced. The sign represents and resembles its subject, while the mark, like the atom, cannot be broken down into a purer form – "a mark resembles nothing else in its

[234] Ulla Sjöström, *Maleren Ejnar Nielsen*, (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers' Forlag, 2000), 19-20.
[235] Judith Butler, "Beyond Seduction and Morality: Benjamin's Early Aesthetics" in *The Life and Death of Images*, eds., Diarmuid Costello and Dominic Willsdon, (London: Tate Publishing, 2008), 64.
[236] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibilty, and Other Writings on Media*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 222.

manifestation."[237] The mark and atmosphere are arguably one and the same entity, and can be categorized as qualisign. Both the mark and atmosphere emerge as effects of the (represented) sign on the viewer. I argue that the qualisign, the most basic and essential quality, is the element that determines the atmosphere of an artwork. Atmosphere fuses both visual and verbal elements of a narrative text in order to project a unified message, as that aspect which is indivisible from the whole. It is the whole and complete existence of this atmosphere, in which there is no distinction between the representational media employed.

[237] Judith Butler, "Beyond Seduction and Morality: Benjamin's Early Aesthetics" in *The Life and Death of Images*, eds., Diarmuid Costello and Dominic Willdson, (London: Tate Publishing, 2008), 64.

Chapter 4: Vilhelm Hammershøi, *White Doors* or *Open Doors* (1905)

Introduction

The second section of Part One Titles as Paratexts continues to focus on the function of the artwork title as a confrontation between art and language. This relationship reveals the subtleties of interpretation navigated by the viewer in the liminal space between viewer and artwork. Titles can lend impenetrability to an artwork, reinforcing a sense of mystery, none more so than the reticent canvases of Danish artist Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864-1916). Works such as *Five Portraits* (1901-02, fig. 8) and *White Doors (Open Doors), Strandgade 30* (1905, fig. 67), whose titles correspond to the painted image with literal exactitude, seem impervious to natural curiosity. Hammershøi's artwork titles do not add or subtract, but exist as the artwork's verbal equivalent. The process of vision and visualisation, of subject and object, is combined in the duality of the mirror's gaze, which raises a number of questions: are linguistic titles reflective of visual representation? Or is visual interpretation moulded by language? Using the dynamics of self-portraiture and the cast light of shadows as frameworks, further analogies for the title/artwork dichotomy are conceptualised in this chapter. The title of an artwork is of greater significance than mere identification. Adapting the methodology of Genette's paratexts and Peirce's 'Division of Signs', this chapter analyses the function of artwork titles in the oeuvre of Hammershøi, encompassing issues of intentionality, atmosphere and the dual logics of visual and verbal reading. Particular focus is granted to the titles of Hammershøi's interior scenes at his Strandgade apartments in Copenhagen. These sparse, cavernous rooms

withhold from the viewer, their insularity compounded by titles which describe the scene rather than overlay a textual narrative.

Born in Copenhagen in 1864, Hammershøi was educated at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and Kunstnernes Frie Studieskoler, the independently established, anti-academic art school, under the tutelage of P. S. Krøyer.[238] Many of Hammershøi's paintings, whether figurative, portraiture, genre or architectural, are devoid of the extraneous detail that betrays meaning; the only content is the subject as structure, formed by delicate, atmospheric lighting. It is in such frugality of suggestive, narrative meaning that Hammershøi's unique symbolism is located.[239] Hammershøi's monochrome palette and empty rooms, occasionally peopled with unobtrusive individuals, does not depict the scenes of death or illness so typical of Nordic Symbolism. Rather, the spatial arrangements and subtle light diffusion turn the viewer inward, prompting introspection; these works become triggers of psychological reflections, imbued with the evocative stillness of landscape *stemningsmaleri.* The narrative 'void' of the interior scenes awaken feelings of isolation, emptiness, solitude, thus it can be said that Hammershøi paints from a psychological perspective. His urban paintings deliberately turn away from the teeming chaos of fin de siècle society. The expansive narrative alluded to in Ejnar Nielsen's title *And in His Eyes I Saw Death* is nowhere to be found in Hammershøi because of the absence of external reference points, as though the frames suppress reality from entering the fictive space. The titling methods of Nielsen and Hammershøi function as a foil to one another, and the contrasting approach to titles in their respective oeuvres provides insight into the multi-faceted function of artwork titles as paratexts. I argue that the titles fixed to Hammershøi's paintings form a barrier to the viewer, denying the conventional explanatory role of the artwork's title in favour of equally

[238] Kasper Monrad, ed., *Hammershøi and Europe*, (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2014), 225.
[239] Monrad, 14.

impenetrable text. Such examples include *White Doors* or *Open Doors*, [Strandgade 30], (1905), *Sunbeams* or *Sunlight* [later titled *Dust Motes Dancing in the Sunbeams*], (1900, fig. 55), *Interior from Strandgade with Sunlight on the Floor*, (1901, fig. 72) and *Interior or The Quiet Room,* [Strandgade 30] (1906, fig. 68).

Jerrold Levinson's maintains that the title 'slot' retains aesthetic potency, no matter how it is filled across the arts.[240] Parallel to Genette's thematic and rhematic titles discussed in the introduction of Titles as Paratexts, Levinson outlines seven titular types in literature, which correspond to the titles of artworks. The neutral title is in direct correlation with something in the artwork itself, referring to a character, place or object. Hammershøi's interior scenes, fit into the category of neutral title, one which communicates a textual equivalent of the visual content.[241] There is an underlining title, which emphasises a qualitative aspect of a work, and overlapping this is the focussing title, which singles out one strand of the content as the definitive for the work, aiding interpretation. The example Levinson gives of an underlining title is Munch's *The Scream* (1893) writing that "screaming content is fairly evident in the canvas itself, but the titular stress seems not completely redundant, and makes for a stronger statement by the work as a whole."[242] Further to these types is an undermining title, which embraces irony, mystifying titles which are characterised by their tangentiality or deliberate irrelevance to the content as a method of stitching together disparate eidetic threads, and allusive titles which contain reference to works beyond the titled work itself, a fact that Levinson argues should not be "aesthetically negligible" when it comes to reading a work. Lastly, there are disambiguating titles which seek to rationalise non-representational content otherwise considered too abstract or obtuse

[240] Jerrold Levinson, "Titles", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 44 no. 1 (Autumn 1985), 29.
[241] Levinson, 34.
[242] Levinson, 35.

to interpret without aid. There is much crossover in these categories, and no set boundaries, as the author himself admits, and this claim is certainly maintained in the context of Hammershøi's titles. With the exception of two of the artist's early works, *Job* (1887) and *Artemis* (1893-94), which respectively refer to biblical and mythological sources beyond the canvas in the most tangential manner, Hammershøi's titles appear to convey their subject matter as expressed on the two-dimensional plane.

Scenes of the Interior

Hammershøi's interior scenes are readily identifiable as the rooms of his home on Strandgade 30 in Christianshavn, central Copenhagen, where he lived with his wife Ida from 1898-1909. This address often finds its way into the titles of such paintings, usually in square brackets as a later point to inform the viewer. Interior, domestic scenes comprise approximately one third of his 370-work production.[243]

Art historian Poul Vad observes a crucial element in Hammershøi's rendering of space, particularly evident in a number of interior scenes at Strandgade: by leaving the canvas foreground devoid of forms, a vacuous barrier is created between the viewer and the picture plane one which is difficult to traverse because it severs the connection to the pictorial space.[244] Furthermore, the eye is met by the "plane-parallel arrangement" of wall, doors or windows along the middleground, prohibiting the viewer's continuing gaze. This creates a disorienting sense of space which, because of this foreground lack, proves challenging to grasp. The spatial arrangement also confronts the scope of the term 'genre painting'. The

[243] Felix Krämer, "Vilhelm Hammershøi: The Poetry of Silence" in *Hammershøi*, eds., Felix Krämer, Naoki Sato and Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2008), 13.
[244] Poul Vad, *Vilhelm Hammershøi and Danish Art at the Turn of the Century*, trans. Kenneth Tindall, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 188.

paintings depict everyday life insofar as it is a domestic setting, occasionally including a figure in absorbed in some activity concealed from the viewer's perspective. Rather than highlight the figure's actions, or render in detail a still life within the genre scene, Hammershøi replaces the focus on detail with an overarching diffusion of light and shadow, and this, together with the emphasis on spatial structure, subtly conjures the introspective mood of the artwork. The rooms are viewed with an alienated gaze that is removed from the scene, where absence paradoxically becomes a pulsating presence in negative space.

Hammershøi's Titling Method

Something of Hammershøi's intention with regard to the titling of his works is revealed in one of his major early works, *Job* (1887, fig. 69). Though surviving today only as a preliminary charcoal sketch, the original painting is described as being incredibly dark, and due to chemical reactions with the pigments used, became progressively and irrevocably darker over time, despite restoration efforts made in the 1940s. It was suggested by art historian Wilhelm Wanscher that Hammershøi found inspiration to depict Job after conversing with Kristian Zahrtmann (1843-1917), who himself had painted *Job and his Friends* (1887);[245] Vad however claims this is proven otherwise by contemporary sources.[246]

I reiterate that the primary concern of this study is the artwork title fixed either by or in agreement with the artist, not a later addition to the work by external sources. There are such cases regarding Hammershøi with subsequent titles added to poeticise his interior scenes. Hammershøi's titles are, for the most

[245] Wilhelm Wanscher, "Vilhelm Hammershøi", in *Ord och Bild,* (Stockholm 1915), 404.
[246] Poul Vad, *Vilhelm Hammershøi and Danish Art at the Turn of the Century*, trans. Kenneth Tindall, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 39.

part, very direct and clear in their meaning, and any embellished titles are frequently ones given by the art collector and advocate of Hammershøi's work, Alfred Bramsen, even during the artist's lifetime.[247] In the case of *Sunbeams* or *Sunshine. Dust Motes Dancing in the Sunbeams*, (1900) the latter, more poetic phrase of *Dust Motes Dancing in the Sunbeams (Støvkornernes Dans)* was applied by the poet Sophus Michaëlis in the 1918 text he co-authored with Alfred Bramsen. Bramsen's biography of the artist is preceded by ekphrastic poems by Michaëlis under the titles of some of Hammershøi's best known works, including *Artemis* and *Job*.[248] Such poetic responses to Hammershøi's works undoubtedly moulded public opinion of the artist and his aesthetic.

Original titles are, in the words of Levinson, "true titles - those given by the artist at roughly the time of creation or constitution of the work".[249] These potentially reveal the artist's visual intention, and the extent of their interest in textual analogy. Contemporary reports outline the arbitrary nature of Hammershøi's title to the work of art. A newspaper article in *Dagbladet* (2. April 1888) describes the motivation behind the title, *Job*:

> The name was chosen after lengthy consideration because none better could be found - at times it has its disadvantages that pictures must, for the catalogue's sake, have titles - but the intention was merely to depict a man who, physically and spiritually suffering, awakes at night and cannot find calm or rest.[250]

[247] Anne-Birgitte Fonsmark and Mikael Wivel, *Vilhelm Hammershøi 1864-1916, Danish Painter of Solitude and Light*, (Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation New York, 1997), 145.
[248] Alfred Bramsen and Sophus Michaëlis, *Vilhelm Hammershøi: kunstneren og hans værk,* Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1918.
[249] Jerrold Levinson, "Titles", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 44 no. 1 (Autumn 1985), 33.
[250] Poul Vad, *Vilhelm Hammershøi and Danish Art at the Turn of the Century*, trans. Kenneth Tindall, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 413.

The art historian Karl Madsen, an avid supporter of Hammershøi, corroborates this point, writing in *Kunstbladet, Nordisk Tidsskrift* (Copenhagen 25 March 1888, vol. 1 no. 6 p. 72):

> [Hammershøi] has not intended to characterise the biblical Job, but has appropriated him as the symbol of suffering, the great hopeless suffering whose fire is not extinguished and whose worm does not expire.[251]

Additionally, in a scrapbook entry the artist's mother further attests that the biblical title *Job* is an afterthought:

> Vilhelm has never thought that it should be a biblical picture, but when it was supposed to have a title in the catalogue he chose the name *Job* as being the best designation for a suffering human being.[252]

Free of superfluous, iconological adornment, the figure embodies suffering to the degree that there is no longer a distinction between man and emotion. The absence of extraneous detail and iconological signposts (clothing, props) is subverted into the figure of the man, and it is his humanity that becomes the vehicle for expressing the 'great hopeless suffering'. The raised right arm, blackened in shadow, suggests discomfort, the closed eyes are deeply meditative and parted lips verge on speech. His body, in movement and gesture, articulates his inner turmoil; this outward demonstration of psychological, emotional discomfort can be termed expressionist. The shrouding darkness of the original painting suggests a dramatic tenebrist lighting scheme, an effect partially conveyed in the preliminary charcoal sketch. While the figure is in evident discomfort, the knowledge that he experiences unquenchable suffering cannot be derived from the painting alone; this information is supplied by the title, which requires the viewer's

[251] Poul Vad, *Vilhelm Hammershøi and Danish Art at the Turn of the Century*, trans. Kenneth Tindall, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 413.
[252] Vad, 42.

prior knowledge of biblical references to untangle, and thus brings with it connotations of Job as subject matter external to the pictorial content. Thus, *Job* is a prescriptive title; interpreting the treatment of the subject matter relies on the viewer's extra-pictorial knowledge.

A similar pattern of picture naming follows with Hammershøi's monumental *Artemis* (1893-94, fig. 70). At once evocative and indecipherable, *Artemis* is a stylistic reference to Classical reliefs and Renaissance frescoes, made unsettling by the figures' misaligned anatomy, not painted from life but from memory. A mythological confusion of four androgynous figures, the presence of a man amongst three woman might suggest 'The Judgement of Paris', which requires one of the women to be Venus, but the central figure, with a crescent moon corona, is seemingly distinguished as the Greek goddess Artemis, as per the title.[253] However, as Emil Hannover wrote in *Politiken* on 4 May 1894:

> [*Artemis*] is said to have been christened only when it was about finished, and when asked about the meaning of its name Hammershøi is supposed to be not unreluctant to admit that it has only been given a name because one is necessary for a picture.[254]

Stylistically, this work borrows the planar rendering and soft, natural colouring from Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898), the French artist who became a somewhat spiritual leader for the Symbolists; Hammershøi is known to have seen his work in Copenhagen in 1888 and 1897[255] and almost certainly at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, 1888, at which Puvis's *Young Girls by the Seaside* (1879, fig. 71) was exhibited.[256] However, it is the Danish artist Mogens Ballin who, in delineating the strange beauty of the stylised figures for the Symbolist

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[253] Kasper Monrad, ed., *Hammershøi and Europe*, (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2014), 25.
[254] Poul Vad, *Vilhelm Hammershøi and Danish Art at the Turn of the Century*, trans. Kenneth Tindall, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 123, 423.
[255] Felix Krämer, "Vilhelm Hammershøi: The Poetry of Silence" in *Hammershøi*, eds., Felix Krämer, Naoki Sato and Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2008), 16.
[256] Peter Nørgaard Larsen, *Sjælebilleder*, (Copenhagen: Statens Museum for Kunst, 2000), 18.

journal *Taarnet* in 1894, comes to convey the central essence of Hammershøi's oeuvre:

> Fortunately far removed from the plain bodies of the models, they are not weighed down with the weaknesses and struggles that make up the burden of life. They move freely in the pure world of thought. Almost motionless, they convey their noble thoughts to each other wordlessly. Soul speaks to soul of the deepest secrets of life, of unique beauty and the purest harmony.[257]

Thought and idea, wordlessness and motionlessness; these are accurate descriptions of the artist's austere aesthetic, and are equally applicable to the work of Puvis. Hammershøi's paintings can be likened to thoughts, abstract ideas rendered representational in the setting of interior domesticity. The apparent straightforwardness of the interior genre scenes belies the depth of their intellectual construction. The interiority of space is aligned to the interiority of the mind, with windows, doors and frequently a preoccupied, unidentified figure providing the only links to externality. The time of day depicted also has bearing on the atmosphere transmitted by the paintings; the dark evening pictures suppress the external world in favour of introspection, while studies in daylight provide new, exploratory pathways accessed through doors, windows and sunlight, as though encouraging the mind's circulation beyond the pictorial space. In this sense, Hammershøi's interior scenes visualise the process of thinking, with the empty space as a site of abstraction where ideas form. The process of thinking is slow and ruminative, and the space he paints reflects this stasis, with the changing of light, economy of form and the leaching of colour indicating gradual transformation. The psychological turn forms part of the Symbolist tendency for introspection, elevating the emotions of the individual amidst the wider society, and a sombre

[257] Felix Krämer, "Vilhelm Hammershøi: The Poetry of Silence" in *Hammershøi*, eds., Felix Krämer, Naoki Sato and Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2008), 16.

inclination that is manifested aesthetically in the themes of illness, death and the psychological self in Symbolism, both in the Nordic region and with European counterparts.

Thoughts do not merely consist of a chaotic assembly of images, but are also formed by words and phrases, so that in combination, visual and linguistic stimulants represent ideas. Krämer writes that Hammershøi's "non-naturalistic palette divorces his images from reality to create an abstracted equivalent of it",[258] and the austere colour scheme Hammershøi employs can be said to resemble the delineating quality of text, which provides the contour or outline. That the titles of these works confirm their location - the address of Strandgade - noting the room and light conditions seems to reaffirm that these paintings are shards of time, cut from their context and reduced to their most basic structural form by the artist. Photographs can be described as such fragmentations of time, and though Hammershøi's work is frequently compared to the medium, due to the monochrome tone and cropped compositions,[259] his interior scenes go beyond the apparent objectivity of photography and into the realm of the psychological. The artist possesses stylistic autonomy over a painting - the choices made with regard to colour, light, line and facture make what appears to be an objectively rendered scene one of utmost subjective expression, and so Krämer's 'abstracted equivalent' of reality becomes the imaginary, a derivative of the artist's reasoning. The struggle to locate narrative footholds in his work is attributed to what Peter Nørgaard Larsen terms 'existential formalism', in which traditional narrative qualities are suppressed and instead, meaning is found in absence, in atmosphere and the formal properties of the work.[260] The painting's function moves away from a presented tableau told through legible, iconographic symbols, to one which requires deeper

[258] Felix Krämer, "Vilhelm Hammershøi: The Poetry of Silence" in *Hammershøi*, eds., Felix Krämer, Naoki Sato and Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2008), 21.
[259] Krämer, 21.
[260] Peter Nørgaard Larsen, *Sjælebilleder*, (Copenhagen: Statens Museum for Kunst, 2000), 23-24.

connotative input from the viewer. Hammershøi's method is subtractive, in which all but essential structures are stripped from the composition, and it is in the negative space he leaves behind that meaning resides. In such instances, the title has the capacity to act as a verbal support for the viewer which may illuminate the artist's rationale, or provide iconographic references which are absent in the artwork.

The Line of a Title

Linearity and text are associated, not merely because of the use of the line in forming letters and words, but in the convention of narrative linearity, in which events are presented in a sequence. Further links to the textual can be found in Hammershøi's own rationale with regard to his work method. In a 1907 interview, the artist discusses the significance of linearity in his work, from the very inception of a motif, almost above all else:

> What makes me choose a motif are...the lines, what I like to call the architectural content of an image. And then there's the light, of course. Obviously, that's also very important, but I think it's the lines that have the greatest significance for me. Colour is naturally not without importance. I'm really not indifferent to how [the motif's] colours look. I work hard to make it look harmonious. But when I choose a motif I'm thinking first and foremost of the lines.[261]

Colour is clearly a matter of significance for the artist because of its relation to light, but the focus on linearity brings the visual image closer to reason and the black and white letter of language, as though with the economy of colour, the message can be delivered with heightened clarity. Linearity is associated with

[261] Felix Krämer, "Vilhelm Hammershøi: The Poetry of Silence" in *Hammershøi*, eds., Felix Krämer, Naoki Sato and Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2008), 23.

structure, form and outline rather than the fleshy content of colour. Aside from occasional items of furniture, props are absent from many of his interior scenes, a deliberate action, as photographs of the artist's home betray that he and his wife lived with more bourgeois accoutrements than his paintings would suggest.[262]

Textual identification is a necessity to which Hammershøi reluctantly submits, and in doing so highlights the significant bearing a title has on visual representation. The quotes surrounding his titles suggest that if not for convention, Hammershøi would have left his work without a title as a purely visual entity, unanchored by a linguistic fragment, removing the interpretive filter a title imposes on the viewer. And in many respects, that is precisely what occurs with the titles of most paintings. They do not distract from the content, nor can it be said that they greatly augment symbolic meaning of what is portrayed. Rather, they function as mirror images or linguistic parallels, but the viewer is still faced with the impenetrable stasis of narrative that characterises Hammershøi's work.

Hammershøi's obsession with finding the linearity in a composition speaks about intentionality and meaning in his paintings, calling to mind Barthes' discussion of denotation. Defined as the literal message, denotation finds that "the letter of the image corresponds in short to the first degree of intelligibility (below which the reader would perceive only lines, forms, and colours)."[263] All images and texts can be understood in the denotative terms of their formal structure, before they are dressed by the viewer's interpretation. Such connotations imbue the denotative outline with nuanced, multi-faceted meaning. However, if Hammershøi's intention is to locate the line in his composition, to focus on such architectonic structural planes as opposed to allegory, portraiture, or any of the plethora of themes present in visual art, (the latter two exist as minorities in

[262] Patricia Berman, *In Another Light: Danish Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013), 244.
[263] Roland Barthes, 'The rhetoric of the image', in *Image - Music - Text,* (London: Fontana, 1977), 42.

Hammershøi's oeuvre), then perhaps his work can be defined as intentionally denotative. The apparent absence of narrative hooks in his work is a rich source of discussion, and it is indeed the viewer who is driven, perhaps through frustration, to fix connotative meaning where it cannot stick. That is not to claim that Hammershøi's interiors are meaningless, for there is profound richness and variety in his depictions of light, space and form. In the above quote, Hammershøi only alludes to the visual dimension of his work, and in doing so suggests the primary motivation for his compositions is rooted in visual rather than textual or literary sources. Therefore, the significance of his artwork titles as linguistic appellations seems to be of secondary concern.

The imbalance of titles and artworks occurs because as text, a title assumes an automatically authoritative position, appearing to communicate more directly than the visual language with which a viewer may be unfamiliar, when in reality the title is a secondary to the artwork. A title does not exist in its own right, and therefore must be subject to what is the primary artistic object. In the case of *Job*, it forces a narrative frame upon the painting from which Hammershøi was disinclined, as is evident in the majority of his titles which do not seem to endow narrative nor indicate any symbolic meaning beyond that which is depicted. What is clear in the quotes surrounding *Job* is Hammershøi's intention to represent suffering, as manifested through this seated male figure, through his hand's gesture and facial expression. That the title was applied retrospectively again attests to Hammershøi's primacy of visuality in conveying ideas, that the mental image later shapes the title, rather than beginning with a textual source, or verbal idea. Painting is, in Hammershøi, an emotional response to an idea, and with the title in place he fixes a name to his idea. *Artemis* and *Job* represent the most ambiguous and curious titles in Hammershøi's oeuvre, and are the only titles which carry with them the weight of external literary connotation.

***White Doors*, or *Open Doors* [Strandgade 30]**

This chapter analyses *White Doors* or *Open Doors [Strandgade 30]* (1905) as representative of the interiors scenes painted by Hammershøi from 1898, when he first moved to the Christianshavn area of Copenhagen.[264] The title, *White Doors* or *Open Doors,* is significant in this thesis as representative of a title that presents differing narratives. *White Doors* or *Open Doors [Strandgade 30]* appears to have a double title, describing two aspects of the subject matter and hence dividing the attention of the viewer; one referring to the quality of the doors, being white, and secondly to their physical positioning, as open and thereby providing circulation between spaces. The work was first exhibited as *White Doors* in Berlin in 1905 and at *Den Frie Udstilling* (The Free Exhibition, established in 1891 as the Danish equivalent of the *Salon des Réfusés*) Copenhagen in 1908, both during the artist's lifetime.[265]The common thread of both titles however, is the door, which is in each case qualified by an adjective. While 'white' and 'open' specify certain attributes of their noun as descriptive adjectives, their function in the title differs greatly.

From 1898 onwards, Hammershøi begins to exclude with increasing frequency the figurative element from his compositions, in favour of the empty room, the pure, architectural space of doors, windows and walls. Such interiors seemingly lack the iconological motifs to prompt and direct interpretation. Devoid of a figurative focal point, previously a woman with her back to the viewer echoing seventeenth-century Dutch genre scenes, these works become sites of tension between light, space and the resulting atmosphere. The absence of interpretive touchstones in these interior scenes increases the psychological tension between

[264] Kasper Monrad, ed., *Hammershøi and Europe*, (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2014), 96.
[265] Anne-Birgitte Fonsmark and Mikael Wivel, *Vilhelm Hammershøi 1864-1916, Danish Painter of Solitude and Light*, (Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation New York, 1997), 165.

the title and the pictorial content due to the title's potential for elucidation and prescription. Hammershøi's progression from figural domestic scenes to empty interiors results in a perspective shift for the viewer - instead of observing a figure absorbed in their own presence, the viewer is immersed in the pictorial space as seen through the eyes of a figure in the scene, as though subsumed within their line of vision. Thus the painted figure is eliminated as the intermediary between viewer and space. Hammershøi frequently paints the figures with their backs to the viewer, the face turned away, but finally in paintings like *White Doors* or *Open Doors*, the figure's perspective is revealed across the entire picture plane.

Comparing the two titles, we find the interpretive focus shifts from colour to physicality under the linguistic guidance of the title. Vad notes that in *White Doors* the greatest luminosity comes from the strip of window visible in the furthest reaches of the pictorial space, serving as a tonal focal point of the composition.[266] The light from this strip illuminates the diagonal pathway through the rooms into the foreground, possessing a subtle yet enormously significant structural function. The eye is led from this backlit window to the open door of the room, through the intermediary hall space, and into the foreground room occupied by the viewer, the path of its light now continued by the distressed patina of the wooden floorboards, and met by the angle of the right foreground door. In total there are four door frames with three visible doors, four distinguishable spaces (the foreground room and its adjacent space, the hall and the background room containing the window) and the suggestion of a fifth space, through the profile of a door frame to the right in the hallway. Given the gleaming white of the doors and their shadows against the wall, the viewer is evidently positioned in front of a light source to create the impression of looking directly through the apartment from one side to the other.

[266] Poul Vad, *Vilhelm Hammershøi and Danish Art at the Turn of the Century*, trans. Kenneth Tindall, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 200.

That the painting was exhibited during the artist's lifetime as *White Doors* indicates Hammershøi's input in the titling, and shifts the viewer's focus to issues of tonality and light, rather than the potentially existential choices presented by open doors and fenestration.[267] The painting is usually titled in publications as *White Doors*, or *Open Doors*, and as such it demonstrates the eye's shifting perceptual adjustments from the planar to the spatial, according to the linguistic emphasis of the title.

The semantic difference between the white and open doors of the title reveal different aspects of the visual work. Colour is a qualisign, a basic and inseparable property of an object, or "quality which is a sign."[268] Peirce warns that the qualisign cannot function as a sign until it is embodied, that is, made tangible in some visual form; in the Hammershøi title, the colour white is manifested as a series of doors. However, in the Peircean tradition, the form the qualisign takes does not interfere with the properties of the qualisign, meaning that the form of the doors does not detract from their quality of being white. As the quality of an object, colour is a permanent, non-variable and defining attribute. Focusing on colour, *White Doors* directs perception to the immediate space and the structural aspects of the interior, as depicted on the picture plane. The brightness of the doors is offset by grey walls and dark wooden floors, but pure white features only in minute quantities amid modulations of grey. Such slivers of whiteness draw the viewer's attention to the multiplicity of light sources and their effects.

The leaching of colour in *White Doors. Open Doors* is characteristic of Hammershøi's entire oeuvre. Much has been made of the artist's monochromatic colour schemes, including the theory that the artist was

[267] Kasper Monrad, ed., *Hammershøi and Europe*, (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2014), 98.
[268] C. S. Peirce, *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings Vol. 2., The Peirce Edition Project,* ed., Nathan Houser, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 291.

colourblind,[269] to the influence of photography, as suggested by his sharply cropped compositions. However, as Monrad notes, the detail captured in a photograph is not in line with Hammershøi's aesthetic; rather, the artist preferred to discard certain 'realistic' detail to create an all-encompassing atmosphere of light and space, in which the fine, precise details of reality are not suited.[270] The rejection of precision for the non-specificity of form is reminiscent of Simmel's definition of atmosphere in landscape: the mood evoked cannot be divorced from the overall composition, or pinpointed to its constituent parts, rather atmosphere is formed from the spatial arrangement of these forms,[271] and the relation between them. Contemporaries of Hammershøi also remarked on his monochromatic scheme. The art critic Emil Hannover's labelling of the artist's style as "colour neurasthenia"[272] implies that the lack of colour is an unhealthy, sick method of painting which undermines vitality of painting in colour. Furthermore, Hammershøi was called "Denmark's first neurasthenic artist"[273] by Karl Madsen in 1886, the ambiguous nervous disorder commonly associated with the sensitivity of artists and writers. Given the questionable medical validity of neurasthenia today, Hannover's statement is best understood in a metaphoric sense. The nervous system plays a fundamental part in perception, and perhaps a heightened sensitivity, rather than the suggested weakness of the nerves, accounts for Hammershøi's tonal focus on light and space. This view is further cemented Karl Madsen, who purported that profound sensitivity to colour was an inherently

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[269] Robert Rosenblum disputes Dr. Ib Ostenfeld's colourblind diagnosis for Hammershøi in 1981 on the basis of his monochrome palette, which was instead symptomatic of fin de siècle artists like Puvis de Chavannes, Ejnar Nielsen, and as mentioned by Rosenblum, Whistler.
Anne-Birgitte Fonsmark and Mikael Wivel, *Vilhelm Hammershøi 1864-1916, Danish Painter of Solitude and Light*, (Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation New York, 1997), 45.
[270] Kasper Monrad, ed., *Hammershøi and Europe*, (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2014), 37.
[271] Georg Simmel, "The Philosophy of Landscape", trans. Josef Bleicher*, Theory, Culture & Society,* SAGE, Vol. 24 (7-8, 2007), 26.
[272] Henrik Wivel, *Den Store Stil: Dansk symbolisme og impressionisme omkring år 1900*, (Copenhagen: Fogtdal, 1995), 101.
[273] Felix Krämer, "Vilhelm Hammershøi: The Poetry of Silence" in *Hammershøi*, eds., Felix Krämer, Naoki Sato and Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2008), 13.

Danish quality, so "...behind Hammershøi's colours, we [Danes] sense an infinitely cautious person, a quiet, sad dreamer, the weirdest soul ever to grace Danish painting."[274] This combination of peculiarity and sensitivity set Hammershøi apart from his contemporaries, with a chromatic scheme that is suggestive beyond its delineation.

To reiterate, the title *White Doors* or *Open Doors* presents the viewer with contrasting aspects of the painting; firstly a quality, that distinctive attribute or characteristic possessed by the object versus a state, a physical condition referring to form or structure.[275] The doors are not always open, but they are, for the purposes of this study, always white. *Open* doors, however, suggest mobility and a potential narrative beyond the confines of the pictorial space. Building on Monrad's statement on the psychological meaning of open doors as moral choices, open doors (and fenestration) lead the eye away from the visible pictorial space, and impose a narrative on the work that struggles to be located within its composition. *Open Doors* also suggest a circuit within the space, in which the viewer could potentially travel from the right foreground open door, through the hall to the furthest room, and passing through the unseen rooms of the apartment, would lead back to the first foreground door. Being open is not an inherent quality in the doors as objects, unlike the colour white; rather, it is a state of being. The physical positioning of the doors affects the spatial structure of the picture space, and therefore is a careful consideration in the compositional arrangement. The door is the consistent centrepoint of the title emphasis; the word 'interior' features in a great many of Hammershøi's titles, chiefly because the 'space' of his paintings is usually the subject matter, rather than the setting for an unfolding narrative. Hammershøi's address, Strandgade 30, is frequently included in the title,

[274] Patricia Berman, *In Another Light: Danish Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013), 232-233.
[275] Oxford English Online Dictionary, Definitions of 'state' and 'quality': https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/quality, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/state

grounding the scene with a sense of location, and imbuing the titles with a sense of the general and the specific. Thus as the title oscillates between being 'white' or 'open', so too does the atmosphere transmitted to the viewer, in accordance with the conditions associated with each aspect. However, both the state of openness and the quality of whiteness provide a quality of receptivity, which is open to ideas, images, inscriptions in a positive sense. By comparison, to consider the opposite state of being closed or darkened suggests condemnation, rejection of possibilities, or isolation.

The Significance of Colour

The chromatic vibrancy of reality has been processed out of Hammershøi's colour scheme, resulting in the three dimensional relief of his canvas compositions. Rudolf Arnheim also suggests a 'boundlessness' of the grey scale in defining volume, in which "there could be a brighter white or a darker shadow than those used for gradation in the object, and therefore the modelling by shading gives less finality to the volume."[276] Arnheim argues that complementary colours provide superior distinction of forms to monochrome schemes, and it is the introduction of subtle, muted tones that lifts the monochrome to create the layered depth and solidity in Hammershøi's interiors.

In seeking the linear forms in his compositions, Hammershøi created a painting in *White Doors (Open Doors)* consisting entirely of such man-made, architectural lines, the parallel and perpendicular lines of intersecting doors and walls. Linearity (likened to *disegno*, and conversely to *colore*) gives clarity to the compositional structure, is direct and unembellished, providing form without extraneous detail, or populated by objects. The comparison of visual and verbal

[276] Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 361.

representation frequently positions language as conventional and comprehensible and visual imagery as more reliant on the viewer's connotative sense for interpretation; in this sense of the pictorial organisation of the *White Doors* or *Open Doors* has commonalities with linguistic representation, the rigidity of grammar. There is no life, only the mark-making and mouldings of human construction.

The contextualisation of colour is a significant consideration in this work by Hammershøi, as colour is granted meaning through form. The colour of the doors is not white, but a series of modulations of white, subject to varying light exposure and contouring volume - it is white in context. Arnheim quotes John Ruskin, who wrote that a colour absorbs different values depending on the surrounding hues, and in recounting Johannes von Allesch's theory that the variability of meaning is reduced when the colour is contextualised, Arnheim claims that "the order of a pictorial composition stabilises the character of each colour, making it as unequivocal as is necessary for the artistic statement to be valid. This means that the identity of a colour does not reside in the colour itself but is established by relation."[277]

Furthermore, colour is the first aspect to be visually perceived, followed by form and motion.[278] Thus the ability to process colour before form heightens the significance of colour when considering visual impact and perception. Colour, as a disembodied qualisign, can therefore be aligned to atmosphere, given Zeki's scientific experiments which prove the precedence of colour in the individual's visual perception. This first impression is likely to give form to subsequent readings of an artwork. The compositional arrangement of form and shape anchors the semantics of the colour scheme; colour, which begins as the

[277] Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 362.
[278] Semir Zeki, *Inner Vision: An Exploration of Art and the Brain,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 66.

isolated qualisign, acquires meaning through the form it takes and its place among the other forms and hues of the composition. Though the processes of contextualisation and embodiment differ, both seek to make tangible and clarify meaning. Thinking in terms of pigmentation, the white of the doors is nominal insofar as it forms part of the title, and the paint on the canvas is representative of the qualisign white, but to create the illusion of reality, the representation of the colour must also reflect the content of the picture plane in terms of spatiality, light and three-dimensional form.

With these observations in mind, it becomes evident that the colour has significant potential to impose and adjust the atmosphere of an artwork. The mood of *White Doors or Open Doors* is determined by the modulated deployment of light and shade. There is a prominent shadow cast on the wall by the right foreground door. The brightness of white is elsewhere used in this painting to represent clarity – the window in the background, or as a tonal foil to shadow. However, the whiteness of this door becomes paradoxical; it does not reveal, as in other instances, but rather it conceals the corner of the room. The concealing of this space is made more prominent to the viewer by the shadow cast by the door on the wall. The contours of the shadow are blurred against the surface of the wall. Thus the openness of the doors and freedom of circulation is undone by this deliberate shutting off of this corner space. Certain details in the painting, such as this shadow behind the door, evoke what can be termed the atmosphere of the artwork. Colour is integral to this, as the depth and tone contribute to the overall visual harmony of the work, and in this painting there is a stark contrast between high and low values. The evocative details are subjectively perceived by the viewer, as per the Yarbus study, in which the darker nodes indicated a longer, intense gaze on particular details. These points of fixation are highly individualised, as different aspects of a work may affect viewers differently, recalling Barthes' punctum as "that accident

which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)."[279] I maintain once more that the punctum's quality to remain with the viewer and intensify in presence when the image is no longer before them equates to an artwork's atmosphere. It is the mood that lingers in the individual. In *White Doors or Open Doors,* that mood could be derived from the lack of furnishings in the sparse architectural interior, the austerely modulated monochrome palette, or perhaps the shadow behind the door, for that which is hidden from view or inconclusive appeals to the imagination;[280] it is the viewer's imagination that is fired by the prompts made visible in the artwork, resulting in the work's atmosphere. When the text of the title is taken into the consideration of this creation of atmosphere, the directionality and specificity of language begins to mould the initial atmosphere perceived by the viewer. However, in the case of Hammershøi, and especially his interior scenes such as *White Doors* or *Open Doors,* the title does not present the viewer with an alternative narrative to that represented on canvas. Thus the title transmits the same mood to the viewer; the translation of the same idea through text and image is harmonious and complementary, to the extent that nothing narratologically new is added to the other. Thus a barrier is created between the viewer, the artwork and the title. The pictorial representation of *White Doors or Open Doors* is the epitome of minimalism, symbolised by a spatial void structured by architecture; the narrative is frozen, rather than absent, but the title provides little elucidation. Further to this is Hammershøi's documented disinterest in the textual potential a title could bring to bear on the visual narrative. The lack of resolution motivates the viewer to impose a highly subjective and semantically flexible atmosphere on the artwork, so that the list of meanings for this work is potentially boundless. From this a number of issues arise relating to the function of titles and artworks: does

[279] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, (London: Vintage, 2000), 27.
[280] Semir Zeki, *Inner Vision: An Exploration of Art and the Brain,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 32.

reading confirm what we are seeing? Is that perhaps why the title itself is often reflective? And lastly, can titles be called mirrors of the artwork?

Mirror-Text and -Image

The process of seeing and being seen, the binary of subject and object is combined in the duality of the mirror's gaze. Marin describes the two-dimensional picture surface as a screen or "representational mirror",[281] while Merleau-Ponty discusses the mirror as anticipating the "labour of vision".[282] However, image and mirror image are not identical, for the mirror image is the reverse of its subject. It presents the object as a subtle yet crucially different image. If text, or titles become the reflection of a visual work, they too become these mirror images that in essence are the same, but differ in the formal qualities of their translation: this raises the question of whether a visual work throws back a linguistic reflection. Marin discusses the circularity of thought and language as series of reflections, of language mirroring thought, of signs (words) which represent ideas in the mind.

The title, if it is to be called the reflection of the artwork, is not the thing itself; but for the artwork, the title would not exist. Descartes believes that reflections are mere effects, like the bouncing of a ball,[283] rather than the thing itself being reflected. If so, then the title of a work becomes the effect of the visual on language, a consequence rather than an object in its own right. This also presumes that the title is a secondary element of the entire artwork. However, in Cartesian theory, the recognition of resemblance between the real object and its

[281] Louis Marin, "Towards a Theory of Reading" in *Calligram: Essays in New Art History from France*, ed. Norman Bryson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 66.
[282] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" trans. Michael B. Smith in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader, Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 129.
[283] Merleau-Ponty, 131.

reflection is made by the individual's thought.[284] The connection between reality and reflection is automatic when the viewer is presented with the title of an artwork; the artwork is always understood as 'reality', and the title as the effect, or 'object in the mirror'. Umberto Eco maintains that a mirror image is only "present in the presence of a referent which cannot be absent";[285] in the context of this thesis, the title cannot exist independently of the artwork. This strengthens the bond between the pictorial content and the verbal 'reflection' in Hammershøi's titles, as evident in *White Doors* or *Open Doors*, in which the text provides a literal translation of the visual depiction.

Representation and Description

The dichotomy of reflection and representation is pertinent between artworks and their titles, namely to ascertain whether the title is a fluid label or as essential to the artwork as the artist's final brushstrokes, and whether it represents the (art)object or reflects it. The distinction between a title and its artwork can be likened to that between Nelson Goodman's definitions of representation and description: "A picture must denote a man to represent him, but need not denote anything to be a man-representation. [...] where a representation does not represent anything there can be no question of resemblance to what it represents."[286] To put this into the context of Hammershøi's artwork titles, if we substitute the title for 'man', the suggestion is that the thing the artwork represents need not be real. In order for the visual image to be a representation of its title, it must in some way resemble it, denoting it as being a legible visualisation of the text, but returning to

[284] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" trans. Michael B. Smith in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader, Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 133.
[285] Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language,* (London: Macmillan Press, 1984), 216.
[286] Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art*, (Indianapolis, New York, Kansas City: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1968), 25.

the mirror and its function in vision: the image in the mirror is not the real object, but a trick played on the eye. According to Merleau-Ponty the reflection deceives the eye by its resemblance to the object.[287] However, he affirms that the resemblance is purely superficial, a mere projection of thought; one does not equal the other. This is equally true of the imbalance between the primary artwork, and secondary aspect of title. To paraphrase Goodman on the topic of resemblance,[288] the title may represent the artwork, but the artwork does not represent the title. If it did, it would allow for the elevation of the title from a utilitarian, linguistic identification to a poetic function. The instance in which this reversal could occur is in the illustrations of literary texts, in which the illustration is involved in a service to the textual source, visualising the source material and conveying the narrative of the text. Thus the illustration takes on a secondary role as a paratext of the literary source, in a similar sense to the convention of the title and artwork. The dynamic between the literary source (written externally to the artist) and the visual equivalent is examined in Part Three Literary Sources for Artworks, in relation to Niels Hansen Jacobsen and Ejnar Nielsen.

An object might look *like* something without necessarily *being* that same thing. It is up to the viewer to recognise a resemblance in a reflection, or indeed in the relationship between an artwork and its title. In the same manner as reflections function as deceptive mirages of their objects, so too do titles. A layer of deception exists in the reflective title, as the reflection bears only outward resemblance to its object, but additionally, the semantic content of that the title may not correlate with the visual image as truthfully as first impressions might suggest. This may be by the artist's design. However, in the context of artworks

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[287] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" trans. Michael B. Smith in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader, Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 131.
[288] Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art*, (Indianapolis, New York, Kansas City: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1968), 4.

and titles, the distinction Merleau-Ponty makes between representation and resemblance must be applied - that an object may certainly be represented on the canvas, but its artistic interpretation may not necessarily resemble the original object. Despite this, how does the notion of resemblance fit, when the titles and artwork in question bear strict resemblance to one another, by virtue of the fact that they describe, in visual and linguistic terms respectively, the same state of being? The literal resemblance of *White Doors* or *Open Doors* and its pictorial representation gives way to the symbolic implications of the work, as perceived by the viewer. In this painting, the title does not contribute any additional narrative value; this meaning is imposed on the artwork by the viewer's emotional response, influenced by memory and imagination. In this instance the viewer's perception must work harder to find or impose a narrative upon the pictorial space. With little clarification from the title, the atmosphere of the work becomes an intensely individual phenomenon.

Light

In reading Descartes' *Dioptrics*, Merleau-Ponty remarks on the former's focus on the contour of the object depicted in engravings, without regard for other aspects such as colouration.[289] The delineation of forms provides a cursory structure of an object which finds a parallel in Hammershøi's interior scenes, for these too can be understood as structural outlines of their subject matter. The reduced palette of greys and white characterise light and shade in the paintings; theirs is the denotation of space, three-dimensionality, the cursory structure on a par with Cartesian discussion of engravings. And if the walls,

[289] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" trans. Michael B. Smith in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader, Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 133.

windows and doors of Hammershøi's work are depicted as external boundaries, drained of colour and blurred of line, then these the architectural features become the encasings of negative space in the rooms. Negative or empty, unoccupied space, is never addressed in either Hammershøi's interiors titles or within the visual work itself. The titles always refer to these architectural casings, the doors, the windows or the address of the apartment itself. In this sense the titles are reflective of the visual surface to which they belong, such as *Interior from Strandgade with Sunlight on the Floor* (1901), *Sunbeams* or *Sunshine. Dust Motes Dancing in the Sunbeams*, (1900) and *Sunshine in the Drawing Room III* (1903, fig. 73).[290]

Further Reflections: Titles and Self-Portraits

Further analogy for the title and artwork can be found in the self-portrait, in which the artist produces a likeness of the self in another medium. But when the rhetoric of the self-portrait is called into play, it demands that there must be an original 'self', and the artwork which becomes the portrait of this 'self'. Taking Hammershøi's predilection for naming many of his paintings upon their completion, usually with titles of literal resemblance, we can understand the painting being the 'original self', and the the title as the linguistically constructed 'self-portrait'.

Peirce's Division of Signs supports the triadic structure between the artist, the mirror, and the subject (the artist's image in the mirror). The mirror-image acts as the representamen (the reflection of the artist in the mirror is the thing that represents another thing), the artist's physicality as the iconic object (the mirror-image resembles the real appearance of the artist), and the interpretant is the

[290]Felix Krämer, Naoki Sato and Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark eds., *Hammershøi*, (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2008), 105, 103, 99.

resulting fusion of the representamen and object in a self portrait. However, the image in the mirror, as a two dimensional, intangible mirage within the confines of reflective glass throws back a representation of the original artist self in another medium. Mirrors exist in many forms, from smooth, planar contemporary mirrors to beaten metal in the past, and other reflective surfaces; furthermore, the purpose of the mirror is not always faithful mimicry, but distortion for humorous or flattering effect. In the context of this thesis, the mirror is presented as an even, reflective surface, and following this line of thought, a parallel can be drawn between the artist and self portrait, and the artwork and its title.

Hugh J. Silverman defines the act of self-portraiture as "the self [seeking] to render itself visible by painting a picture of itself with the use of a mirror."[291] The use of the mirror is significant because the self portrait becomes the reversed image of its original, and as such it becomes a threshold through which the image simultaneously passes and rematerialises. While it is obvious that a title is not something the artwork can generate independently, the artist determines the nature of the relationship between the artwork and its name, just as the artist determines their self-representation. Hammershøi's titles appear as direct reflections of their visual content. So if, in the words of Silverman, the self-portrait is a "pictorial account of the self",[292] and titles are a somewhat or partial reflection of their paintings, then the title can be said to be the 'linguistic account of the painting-self'. The reflective surface between the two is not therefore the mirror, as in self-portraiture, but the artist acting as intermediary and originator. In the case of so-called 'reflective' titles, such as those implemented by Hammershøi for his interior scenes, the same relationship exists between the title and the artwork as between the artist and the self portrait. The artist imprints (rather than marks,

[291] Hugh J. Silverman, "Cézanne's Mirror Stage" in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader, Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 262.
[292] Silverman, 263.

which must emerge as an essential, internal quality, as per Benjamin) the reflection of the self in the mirror onto the canvas.

Titles as Shadows

The title, in relation to the work of Hammershøi, is both an extension of the artwork and a separate entity; extension because the title cannot exist without its contextualising artwork, and separate because it derives from its source a new form, in the written medium. As such, the title is analogous with reflections and shadows. But in each of these cases, the analogy requires a third, 'threshold' component for its completion: the mirror provides the reflection, and a light source the shadow, as previously outlined. The nature of shadows, together with the laws of reflection and the function of mirrors, these analogies provide analogies for the function of the artwork title, as demonstrated in Hammershøi's oeuvre.

The object is an obstruction in the light's path, and when it hits the object, a shadow emerges on the opposite side of the object to form three-dimensional spatiality: "...like attached shadows, [cast shadows] define space. A shadow cast across a surface defines it as plane and horizontal or perhaps as crooked and sloping; thereby it indirectly creates space around the object by which it is cast."[293] In order to exist, it requires a surface to absorb the shadow as a distorted version of the object based on its three dimensional form, the shadow becomes the negative form to the positive object. But the light source distorts the cast shadow, and factors such as the angle of the light in relation to the object can create misalignments in the shadow that deviate greatly from the actual outline of the object. With this in mind, what factors distort the title of an artwork? If the artwork and its title is regarded in the same manner as an object and its shadow,

[293] Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 317.

then we quickly realise that the distorting factor of light, which has such bearing on its shadow product, has an equivalent in the title-artwork question: the pictorial content. The visual representation has the same power to influence and mould the title in relation to the artwork as light does on the cast shadow.

It must be determined whether the shadow plays the part of negative or positive space: "Throughout the world the shadow is considered an outgrowth of the object that casts it. Here again we find that darkness does not appear as absence of light but as a positive substance in its own right."[294] The negative form of the shadow is an extension of the object from which it is cast, yet the shadow still exists as a separate form; the title must not be relegated as inconsequential, as adjustments made to the title can potentially affect how the pictorial content is perceived, i.e., the atmosphere.

The cast shadow derives meaning and context from its original object, in the same manner that the title bears no meaning when severed from its artwork. It requires the principal component (the object from which the shadow is cast) for anchorage. The mirror will continue to reflect light, but the reflection of an image before the mirror is as transitory as the shadow cast by a light source - in both cases, the result of reflection or shadow require the presence of another surface, onto which the object can transmit its reflection.

Employing the analogies of the mirror and the shadow sheds light on the significance of the title in Hammershøi's oeuvre, given the artist's reluctance to put words to his work. The perceived impenetrability and stunted narratives of his interior scenes heighten the scope of narrative possibilities presented to the viewer. This is underscored by their reflective titles. Thus, it can be claimed that the atmosphere transmitted by both the artwork and its title is unified; the (largely)

[294] Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974) 317.

empty spatiality of the canvas is reflected in the title's literal transcription of the scene, creating a narrative stasis.

Part Two: Texts by the Artist

Introduction: Texts by the Artist

Part Two of this thesis examines the degree to which texts written by the artist, appended to or associated with a certain work, correlate with the visual object. The function of the text in relation to the (primary) visual object is also explored in this section, as it reveals further modes of interaction between text and image, as derived from the artist's aesthetic. The focus of the following two chapters is on textual components relating to specific artworks by the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863-1944) and the Danish sculptor Niels Hansen Jacobsen (1861-1941). The aspects of the artist-written text to be examined are the presentation of the text-image relation, which visual and verbal elements communicate to the viewer, and how this affects the understanding of an artwork's narrative.

Consisting of two chapters, Texts by the Artist will examine the poetic texts Niels Hansen Jacobsen attached to his sculpture in Chapter 6, and here, will evaluate the pictorial and literary surfaces of Edvard Munch work, including *The Scream* (1893, figs. 74-80). This is achieved with reference to the *Scream* text, the visual poem from the Tree of Knowledge sketchbook, and the painting in the National Gallery, Oslo. *The Scream* should be read according to both linguistic and visual logic, and lends itself particularly well to semiotic analysis because of its duality as dynamic exercise, launching between written and visual language. Munch repeats the *Scream* motif onto multiple surfaces, a process which demonstrates his experimentation with a single aesthetic and its translation into various media. This chapter aims to explain the relation between the visual and

linguistic messages linked through atmosphere and narrative within a single artistic concept.

Munch's writings and textual sketches are widely recognised, and were the subject of the 2011 exhibition at the Munch Museum, Oslo, entitled *eMunch.no - Text and Image*, which coincided with the launch of a digital archive of the artist's textual output, comprising diaries, literary sketches, and letters. There is a wealth of textual and visual material available from throughout Munch's career. However, within the thematic scope of this thesis I will only examine works which make reference to Illness, Death or the Psychological Self, specifically Munch's *Scream*. Many texts which in some way refer to known paintings remained unpublished during the artist's lifetime; one such example visually and thematically related to the *Scream* series is a notebook entry from 1896, in which the text is associated with *Anxiety* (1894, fig. 82). A number of figures crowd the foreground picture plane, against the blood-red sky of the *Scream,* emulating the street setting of *Evening on Karl Johan* (1892, fig. 1).[295] The focus in this chapter however remains on texts which were actively made public by Munch, as they indicate their function as a narrative tool over a private, preparatory sketch for his personal use.

The Danish sculptor Niels Hansen Jacobsen (1861-1941) accompanied a short poem to his work *The Shadow* (1897-8, figs. 97-102). Hansen Jacobsen is widely known to have used the work of Hans Christian Andersen as a source for his sculptures, including *Death and the Mother*, (1892) for which Andersen's *Story of a Mother* (1847) was the inspiration, *The Sea Witch* (1893, fig. 117) and *The Little Mermaid* (1901, fig. 118), both of which are based on

[295] The text associated with *Angst* is located in Munch's notebook from 1896: "I saw all the people behind their masks – smiling, phlegmatic – subdued faces – I saw through them and there was suffering – in them all – pale corpses – who restlessly nervously – scurried about – along a torturous road whose – end was the grave."
Munch Museum MM N 626, in *eMunch.no - Text and Image*, ed. Mai-Britt Guleng, (Oslo: Munch Museum, 2011), 276.

Andersen's fairytale *The Little Mermaid* (1837). Works with an external literary source as the basis for their narrative are discussed in Part Three of this thesis, entitled Literary Sources for Artworks. The poetic text accompanying *The Shadow* is written by Hansen Jacobsen, but given the sculptor's interest in H. C. Andersen and thematic similarity to his story *The Shadow* (*Skyggen*), it is likely to have also provided inspiration for the sculpture.

Both Hansen Jacobsen and Munch include poetic texts in exhibition catalogues at some point during their careers, ensuring wider public access to the texts pertaining to specific works. This suggests that both artists placed a high regard on textual communication, and that actively publicising such texts would be of some benefit to their audience's interpretation. In this chapter, the function of the texts appended by Munch and Hansen Jacobsen to their works is analysed: how does the text direct the viewer in reading a visual narrative? Does the text contribute the same aesthetic as the visual image, and how does text and image (either two- or three-dimensional) affect the atmosphere of an artwork? What degree of interdependency exists between the artwork and the text, both conceived of by the artist?

This second category of texts are written by the artist with deliberate, artistic intent, rather than as explanatory notes. Such texts are typically longer than and separate to the titles, employing poetic language and thus provide the interpreting viewer with more 'information' which helps to fill in the gaps of visual indeterminacy. Whether the text is made available to a general audience must be taken into account, as this determines the intention of the text as integral to the public reception of the work, or for artistic purposes, or both. Furthermore, such poetic texts provide the artist with an additional outlet to express the central idea of the artwork, and as such these texts and artworks present a dual expression of the same motif, as translated between media. Thus they present an opportunity to evaluate the extent to which the text and the artwork convey to the viewer a unified

atmosphere, or whether there are inherent differences in the expression of each medium.

There are multiple examples of text and image interaction, from medieval manuscripts (specifically bibles), cartography, to advertising; the latter, which comprises of both visual and textual parts, that of the artwork and associated text. Paul Messaris writes on the distinction between visual and verbal communication in advertising, and makes the claim that the success of visual persuasion is due to its syntactic indeterminacy. Language is explicit, and while the visual implies spatio-temporal relationships, it cannot convey exact relations, analogies or arguments with (potential) linguistic precision.[296] Messaris states that the syntactic indeterminacy of the visual forces the viewer to contribute their own interpretation, and engage with the material on a deeper, subjective level, than is necessary with an explicit presentation of arguments.[297] However, that is where the textual element of the artworks is engaged, and therefore it can be claimed that any textual appendage to an artwork, particularly one attached by the artist, is of utmost significance and must be considered as integral to the work as the visual object itself. If the text is also written by the artist, rather than a quotation extracted from another source, (e.g. from a literary work, in which case it can potentially qualify as an illustration, or be suggestive of a narrative external to that of the artwork, as created by the artist) then it must be considered an original and intentionally created artistic work, and due to its explicit nature, integral to a narrative arc, together with the visual component. Thus the text by the artist forms, with the visual, a compound artwork, or *Gesamtkunstwerk.*

[296] Paul Messaris, *Visual Persuasion: The Role of Images in Advertising*, (Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1997), xvii-xviii.
[297] Messaris, xviii.

Chapter 5: Edvard Munch, *Scream* (1893)

Born in 1863, Munch grew up in Kristiania (Oslo) and began studying at the city's Royal School of Design in 1880; from 1882 received tuition from Christian Krohg.[298] He suffered from ill health, and the loss of his mother and sister to tuberculosis during childhood exerted enormous impact on his later creativity.[299] Munch's attitude to text is somewhat of a paradox; while he had little regard for the naming process of his artworks, he created an immense body of writing, consisting of literary sketches, diary entries, and notes associated with specific paintings. Prideaux describes Munch as being "indifferent" to titles, allowing friends and acquaintances to contribute names to works without ever maintaining a definitive title leading to confusing identification process.[300] The same process applied to dating his work. The fact that there are multiple versions of the same motif creates further difficulty which is not limited to his paintings. Some of the works found in sketchbooks such as *The Tree of Knowledge*, begun in early 1900s, are undated, some inserted leaves date to 1890s, while others could be from Munch's mature career in 1920s.[301] Writing, however, was regarded as an entirely different venture. Writing for Munch takes on a deeply psychological dimension, as he writes in his Mad Poet's Diary notebook in 1908-09, and he was encouraged by Hans Jæger, a central figure in the Kristiania Bohême and friend of Munch, to transcribe memories as part of the psycho-archaeological method, a Freudian excavation of the psyche.[302] Writing became so central to his life in Paris in 1889, that it is

[298] Gary Garrels, Jon-Ove Steihaug, and Sheena Wagstaff, eds., *Edvard Munch: Between the Clock and the Bed,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press and Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2017), 128.
[299] Garrels, et al., 128.
[300] Sue Prideaux, *Edvard Munch: Behind the Scream*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 91.
[301] Bente Torjusen, *Words and Images of Edvard Munch,* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 17.
[302] Sue Prideaux, *Edvard Munch: Behind the Scream*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 83
Mad Poet's Diary, MM T2734, p. 374, Munch Museum Oslo https://emunch.no/HYBRIDNo-MM_T2734.xhtml#.Wz8aCM5H0_V

suggested he wrote more than he painted; the subjects ranged from death, his family, and inner torments, all frantically driven by a concoction of alcohol, influenza and the news of his father's death.[303] Broadly speaking, the function of text in Munch can be described as a kind of therapeutic record-taking of the soul (1909-1911, fig. 84):

> When I write these notes with drawings, it is not to describe my own life. For me, the importance is to study certain hereditary phenomena that determine a person's life and destiny. [...] I am writing a study of the soul as I observe myself closely and use myself as an anatomical testing ground. But it is mainly for the creation of an artwork, and so the soul study is changed and exaggerated. [...] It would therefore be wrong to look on these notes as confessions.[304]

This would suggest that Munch's approach to writing and language is as a tool of transcription rather than an artistic medium, which is further supported by his ocularcentric method of approaching subjects:

> One must paint precisely the fleeting moment of significance - one must capture the exact experience separating that significant moment from the next - the exact moment when the motif struck one.[305]

Enormous focus is placed on the visual detail of memory, the visual imprint left on the mind in a Baudelairean sense, recalling his seminal essay *The*

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[303] Sue Prideaux, *Edvard Munch: Behind the Scream*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 116.

[304] Prideaux, 83.
Prideaux quotes and translates portions of this text, while the additional underlined text is translated from Norwegian by Kerstina Mortensen. Due to the fragmentary nature of Munch's writing style, the underlined passages should be considered as approximate translations.
Original Norwegian text: "Når jeg skriver ned disse optegnelser med tegninger – er det ikke forat fortælle mit eget liv – Det gjælder for mig at studere visse arvelige […] foreteelser der lægger bestemmer et menneskes liv og skjæbne […] Det er også almindeli sjæl e[n]t sjælestudium jeg har […] da jeg jo […] nærmest kan studere mig s[lv]elv – brugt mig selv som et anatomisk sjælepræparat – Men da det hovedsageli er at la gjøre et kunstværk og et sjælestudium har forandret og overdrevet – og har brugt andre til studierne – Det er altså […] feilaktig at anse disse optegnelser som bekjendelser."
The entire text is available on emunch.no: T 2734, (Sketchbook dated 1909-1911), 374.
https://emunch.no/TEXTNo-MM_T2734.xhtml#.W3wpjM5H0_V

[305] Prideaux, 84.

Painter of Modern Life (1863). Further allusion to Munch's ocularcentric approach to subjects is found in a quote from the writer Sigbjørn Obstfelder in 1892, in which he states:

> Munch sees…the branches of trees in waves, women's hair and women's bodies in waves…He feels colours and he feels in colours…he sees sorrow and cries and worry and decay. He does not see yellow and red and blue and violet.[306]

The suggestion of both synaesthesia and monism, the belief in the singularity of existence, is amalgamated into Munch's approach, in which the eye encompasses all sensory experience. The significant aspect for Munch is the intersection between visual image and emotional response. Munch's phrasing, 'the exact moment when the motif struck one' bears uncanny resemblance to Barthes' punctum, "that aspect which pricks me, (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)".[307] I have already aligned the punctum with theories relating to atmosphere; Munch pinpoints the moment he seeks to capture as that which is most potent. It differentiates itself from the other 'moments' of an experience as that which affects the perceiver, being 'struck' by it. The mark-making motif that both Barthes and Benjamin use finds form in Munch; this points to the haptic relation between atmosphere as an aspect that imprints itself upon the viewer, the artwork, and the viewer. Munch also repeated and reworked the same motifs, either in sketches and paintings or in his writings so that the artist begins to quote from his own work; rather than being variations each iteration on a motif is self-contained, yet cross-referentially set within a broader narrative.[308] It has also been claimed that the interaction of motifs across works can be aligned with Munch's monistic beliefs.[309]

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[306] Robert Goldwater, *Symbolism*, (London: Allen Lane, 1979), 216.
[307] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, (London: Vintage, 2000), 27.
[308] Mai-Britt Guleng, "Edvard Munch - The Narrator" in *eMunch.no - Text and Image*, ed. Mai-Britt Guleng, (Oslo: Munch Museum, 2011), 232.
[309] Reinhold Heller, *Munch: His Life and Work*, (London: John Murray, 1984), 133.

In this sense it is possible to deem Munch's visual and verbal output as meta across media, in that there is no separation of writing and painting but a monistic, singular form that can find expression in any medium. The replication of forms, colours, spatiality and expression is especially visible in the series of works concerning the location of Ekeberg surrounding Oslo Fjord, the setting for *The Scream*; on this subject Munch wrote in 1918 that of the paintings in the *Frieze of Life* series, "the sinuous shoreline weaves through them all, beyond it is the ocean, which is in constant motion, and beneath the treetops multifarious life unfolds with all of its joys and sorrows."[310] Thus the themes of illness, death, and psychological self play out against the topographical backdrop of the Oslo area, which functions as a visual grammar for their expression and implicates place.

A similar case can be made for the texts Munch wrote to accompany these works, which contain minor alterations to portions of text. The layering of meaning suggests that there are certain aspects which maintain a particular feeling or atmosphere across works, in either the visual or verbal sphere. In the same exhibition catalogue text from 1918, Munch further comments that the series of artworks that comprised the *Frieze of Life* was intended as a poem.[311] The free alignment of painting and poetry underlines the uniformity with which Munch regarded his work: visual poems, and verbal pictures of intensely visual quality. This calls to mind W. J. T. Mitchell's terms 'metapicture' in which he describes the dual function of visual-verbal cross-reference "not just a double vision, but a double voice, and a double relation between language and visual experience."[312] Furthermore, referring to the content of *The Scream*, a critic of Berlin's *Adels- und*

[310] Edvard Munch, Text from Exhibition Catalogue at Blomqvist Kunsthandel, (Oslo, 1918), 2. Munch Museum Oslo, MM UT 23
https://emunch.no/TRANS_HYBRIDMM_UT0023.xhtml#.WmXznM6Z4_V
[311] Edvard Munch, Text from Exhibition Catalogue at Blomqvist Kunsthandel, (Oslo, 1918), 3. Munch Museum Oslo, MM UT 23
https://emunch.no/TRANS_HYBRIDMM_UT0023.xhtml#.WmXznM6Z4_V
[312] W. J. T. Mitchell, "Metapictures" in *Picture Theory*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 68.

Salonblatt claimed that "Munch's subject matter is easier to understand from the point of view of poetry than as painting."[313] This suggests a potency of eidetic expression inherent in Munch's work, that perhaps expands the limits of visual representation to convey deeply personal and psychological themes.

Munch wrote various prose poems which share parallel themes to his paintings, particularly from the *Frieze of Life* series. Munch kept written records of major life experiences, such as the death of family members long before visualising them.[314] These are the translations of emotion into text, then reformulated as sketches and paintings. Returning to Munch's self-proclaimed 'study of the soul', it can be said that this is not 'art for art's sake', but art created from the deep emotional drive to express inner turmoil and experience; the medium is of secondary importance to subjective expression. Thus I argue that Munch strives to convey the core atmosphere of an experience through his work, a process of distillation that is translated from direct empirical experience, to the written form of language in his diaries, to a final visualization as a work of art.

A Multiplicity of Motifs

The first iteration of the Scream motif is in a notebook entry dating from 1892 (MM T 2367, fig. 83) consisting of a drawing accompanied by a descriptive note, the composition of which would later become the blueprint for both *Despair* and *Scream*. The text here clarifies the context of the scene, placing the narrator on a road by a fjord at sunset, in the company of two friends:

[313] Jay A. Clarke, *Becoming Edvard Munch: Influence, Anxiety, and Myth*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press and the Art Institute of Chicago, 2009), 89.
[314] Bente Torjusen, *Words and Images of Edvard Munch,* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 18.

> I was walking along the road with two friends – then the sun set. The heavens suddenly turned a bloody red and I felt a shiver of sadness. A clutching pain in my chest.
>
> I stopped – leaned against the fence, for I was deathly tired. Over the blue-black fjord and town lay blood in tongues of flame.
>
> My friends continued walking – and I was left trembling in fear. And I felt a huge endless scream course through nature.[315]

The *Scream* text was widely published and translated in magazines and exhibition catalogues during the artist's lifetime. By evaluating the function of the text in the visual sphere, it is clear that the unifying element in Munch's oeuvre is an atmosphere derived from the psychological motivation behind his work, which manifested itself as an intense visuality in his writing and painting. Focusing on the paintings of illness, death and psychological dimensions from the *Frieze of Life* series begun in c. 1890, which were revisited many times during the artist's career,[316] this chapter will especially focus on the many iterations of the *Scream* motif, as well as other repeated aspects of Munch's visual idiom which piece together the poetic narrative of the *Frieze.*

It is interesting to note from photographs of the 1903 Leipzig exhibition of the *Frieze of Life* that beneath the twenty-two works in the series hang a selection of prints made from the exhibited works.[317] Their inclusion underscores the idea that these prints are not merely significant in their own right as artistic works, but function as part of the multiplicity of motifs in the wider context of the series. They are given equal status to finished, large scale works, and not merely made *after* the paintings. This would suggest the significance of

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[315] Drawing with a version of the *Scream* text, MM T 2367, Munch Museum Oslo https://emunch.no/HYBRIDNo-MM_T2367.xhtml#.Wz6Ha85H0_U

[316] Edvard Munch, Text from Exhibition Catalogue at Blomqvist Kunsthandel, (Oslo, 1918), 1. Munch Museum Oslo, MM UT 23 https://emunch.no/TRANS_HYBRIDMM_UT0023.xhtml#.WmXznM6Z4_V

[317] Photographs of the Leipzig exhibition are reproduced in Reinhold Heller, *Edvard Munch: The Scream*, (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 15-17.

multimedia expressions of a motif or theme, which extends to verbal expression in both theory and in practice, as demonstrated by Munch's vast written output. Narrative and theme become the central motivations in the translation of ideas across media, and the inclusion of Munch's *Scream* text in various publications from the 1890s onwards seems to support this: *La Revue Blanche* (1895, fig. 85) published the text in French,[318] an English translation appeared in Vance Thompson's *Mademoiselle* article (1896, fig. 86)[319] and *Moderní Revue* (1897, fig. 87) contains a Czech translation of the text as part of an article written by Stanislaw Przybyszewski.[320] These texts are included as parallels to the image; thus the visual motif of the screaming figure, and Munch's written text becomes inextricably entwined and mythologised within the few years after the first painting was completed in 1893.

Painting as Memory

Just as the *Scream* forms part of the wider narrative sequence of the *Frieze of Life* series, so too the visual motif of the *Scream* situates itself within its textual landscape, through the numerous, pleonastic iterations. Munch reveals his approach to art by stating, "I paint, not what I see, but what I saw".[321] Painting from memory disassociates the subject from its original context, allowing the mind to distort the factuality of the event over time. The memory becomes infused with emotion as it is internalised and embedded in the individual, so the resulting artistic

[318] Thadée M. Natanson, *La Revue Blanche*, (1895 6 anné, tome IX, no. 60 MM UT 2), accessed 4/05/18
https://emunch.no/FACSIMILENo-MM_UT0002.xhtml#.WuxsL85H0_U
[319] Vance Thompson, "Munch, The Norse Artist" in *Mademoiselle*, (10 January 1896, New York, MM UT 30), accessed 4/05/18
https://emunch.no/FACSIMILENo-MM_UT0030.xhtml#.WuxtY85H3Uo
[320] Stanislaw Przybyszewski, "Edvard Munch", in *Moderní Revue,* (1897, MM UT 34), 165. Accessed 4/05/18
https://emunch.no/FACSIMILENo-MM_UT0034.xhtml#.WuxlPc5H0_U
[321] Reinhold Heller, *Edvard Munch: The Scream,* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1973), 27.

product can be described as a distilled version of the atmosphere of that initial moment, rather than any factual depiction. The text assists Munch in anchoring his subject, and so assists the viewer in interpreting the scene and significance of the *Scream* motif.

Munch's claim of painting not what he sees but what he saw is true not only in a metaphorical sense but also a literal one: the text was written in Nice in January 1892, when he was reflecting on an incident which had previously occurred east of Oslo, in Ekeberg. The violence of the sunset itself clearly disturbed Munch, and the artist and writer Christian Skredsvig recollects how, when in Nice, Munch had "…talked himself sick about that sunset and about how it had filled him with great anxiety. He was in despair because the miserable means available to painting never went far enough."[322] The potential inadequacy of painting to fulfil Munch's aesthetic has been already discussed with respect to his furious note-taking, yet beyond the progress from *Despair* to *Scream* compositions, there is relatively little change in either visual or linguistic aspects of the motif; Skredsvig's comment is perhaps indicative of Munch's frustration in conveying the essence of his experience as motif. The effect of this sunset on the artist bears many parallels to Roland Barthes' experience of a photograph's essence as the punctum, a feeling whose significance is overwhelmingly palpable yet remains elusive, and difficult to pin down. Munch effectually transcribes the atmosphere, linguistically and visually, of his experience above Oslo Fjord.

Semiotic Analysis

Text written by an artist to accompany a specific work is an ekphrastic exercise in which visual content is presented in poetic, artistically-rendered

[322] Reinhold Heller, *Edvard Munch: The Scream,* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1973), 66.

language. As part of the methodology, Peircean semiotics allow for a breakdown of relations between visual and verbal components which form the basis of further examination. The translation of a single motif between language and visual expression finds no clearer example than in Munch's *Scream,* and employing this methodology allows for a fuller exploration of this dynamic.

According to Peirce's Division of Signs, the qualisign denotes nothing other than its own character, and is manifested most clearly as its purest, unembodied form in the strip of colour along the right hand of the *Scream* (National Gallery Oslo, fig. 74). This forms a border on one side of the painting, having no other apparent function than as a qualisign. The text that is the legisign, providing further information on how Munch's use of colour relates to the *Scream* narrative, which itself is the sinsign (the thing or event which is a sign, and is recorded in the *Scream* text). The hands clasped to the head point to the aural sense and so are indexical of the scream. The contact between the skin surfaces of the hands covering the ears emphasises that the scream is physically being 'felt', as stated in the text, not heard. The open mouth possesses the qualities of index, icon and symbol in Peirce's second trichotomy: it is indexical of the scream as the sound is visually represented as emanating from a mouth, iconic because it mimics the shape of a mouth when forming a scream, and because this is an established bodily function, the open mouth can also be recognised as symbolic of this function.

Munch's text provides the narrative sequence for the image and greatly influences our reading of the visual representation in an ordered, clockwise fashion. The compositional template of the *Scream* paintings remains consistent across versions, formally consisting of a rectangular sky, the triangular shape of the fjord and the city, and in the lower left corner, a further triangle of the pathway (fig. 78). The head of the figure occupies the liminal space between the left and central triangular spaces. From this basic structure of thirds, the motif is constructed in

both painting and in the text. The narrative of the text leads the eye on three circuits around the composition, as directed by the text and as ordered numerically below:

1. From I was walking along the road with two friends – then the sun set. The heavens suddenly turned a bloody red and I felt a shiver of sadness. A clutching pain in my chest.
2. I stopped – leaned against the fence, for I was deathly tired. Over the blue-black fjord and town lay blood in tongues of flame.
3. My friends continued walking – and I was left trembling in fear. And I felt a huge endless scream course through nature.

Thus the visual narrative mimics the concise movements of the textual narrative. The key aspects of the sparse composition – the road, sky and the fjord – are all directional, structural aspects which in conjunction with the text, function as narrative devices.

Text and Image as Haptic Echoes

There is a distinction between atmosphere of a painting (which can be brought in line with artist's intentionality) and the atmosphere a work of art evokes in the viewer. While it has been argued that Munch centralises the motif over the artistic medium, the effect of the artwork on the viewer and the resulting atmosphere it evokes in them has not yet been addressed. Munch presents to the viewer a unified atmosphere, in both visual and textual representation, so close in narrative that one does not 'stray' from the other. The sum of parts in the painting add up to no more than the textual narrative. However, it is not merely the translation of a motif between text and image; the translation takes place between the events above Oslo fjord on a certain night, and the artist's perception. To re-quote Benjamin, "the task of the translator consists in finding the particular intention toward the target language which produces in that language the echo of

the original."[323] As referred to in Chapter 2 Atmosphere, the terms *Stimmung* (German) and *stemning* (Danish, as in *stemningsmaleri*) denote the role of sound and acoustics in the creation of atmosphere, from which both the noun 'voice', and the verbs 'to vote' and 'to tune (an instrument)' are derived.[324] If Munch's recording of his experience is treated as a translation, it begins with the visual as the originating source; it is the scene that Munch saw, and absorbing its qualities, translated into the first iteration of the scene, the preparatory text and sketch for *Despair* (MM T 2367). Furthermore, Saussure describes language as "thought organised in sound"[325]; the reverse can be said of Munch's organisation of chaotic sound into language in the *Scream* text, while the 'scream through nature' simultaneously disorganises and subverts the expressive power of language.

The atmosphere of any experience addresses all senses. Art has an ocularcentric tendency, but the link to sound when transcribing an experience is, as demonstrated, of equal significance. That the visual can evoke such acoustic resonance in an individual is brought to bear in Merleau-Ponty's writing on how the visual affects the viewer's body: "Quality, light, colour, depth, which are there before us, are there only because they awaken an echo in our bodies and because the body welcomes them. Things have an internal equivalent in me; they arouse in me a carnal formula of their presence."[326] The sensorial manifestation of visual qualities is complementary to Munch's idea of capturing the precise moment an individual is struck by a motif, while the verb 'strike' further suggests reverberation and echo. The receptive viewer engages their entire sensory system with an artwork, thus the perception of an artwork (or in the case of Munch, that

[323] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-1926*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 258.
[324] See Chapter 2 Atmosphere for further details, and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Atmosphere, Mood, Stimmung*, trans. Erik Butler, (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2012), 3-4.
[325] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics,* Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye eds., Roy Harris, trans., (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 131.
[326] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind", in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, eds., Galen A. Johnson and Michael B. Smith, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 125-6.

material which becomes the basis for an artwork) is an intensely physical experience.

The Texts

There are a number of widely reproduced versions of the *Scream* text available; assembling them in this chapter, one gauges the scale of iterations, as well as the subtle, distinguishing nuances which warrant the repetition of the motif. On the 1895 lithograph Munch writes the title of the work, *Das Geschrei,* and the central line of the text in German translation: "Ich fühlte das grosse Geschrei durch die Natur" (fig. 89).[327] The inclusion of the text in the immediate space of the image is one of a number of such examples in Munch's oeuvre; others include the scrawled words "kan kun være malt af en gal mand!" ('could only have been painted by a madman!')[328]" across the red sky in *Scream* (1893, figs. 74, 76); another version contains the text in a small panel beneath the image in *Scream* (1895, fig. 88). This physical overlay of text onto the painted surface occurs only once, with the phrase 'kan kun være malt af en gal mand!'. While it is not confirmed to be the writing of Munch (or indeed if it is nineteenth century Norwegian or Danish), its continued presence was certainly permitted by Munch during his lifetime, and seemingly signifies the madness of the artist.[329] This can be regarded as a metatext, one which refers to its own presence on the surface of the artwork, to its existence as an artistically created object, and to the state of mind of the artist. Heller claims that the consistent inclusion of text in the presence of *Scream* reveals Munch's sense of inadequacy at being able to convey the theme

[327] Gerd Woll, *Edvard Munch: The Complete Graphic Works*, (London: Philip Wilson, in association with Munch-Museet, 2001), 69.
[328] Kan kun være malt af en gal mand! - Reinhold Heller, "Could Only Have Been Painted by a Madman" - Or Could It?" in *Edvard Munch: The Modern Life of the Soul*, ed., Kynaston McShine, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2006), 17.
[329] Heller, 17.

visually, and without textual assistance; therefore it was written not for art's sake, but for the audience as an interpretive tool.[330] The consistent revision of works may support this notion, as well as the inclusion of some portion of the text on the painting, lithograph and catalogues of the era; however, if the communication of a motif were truly the driving motivation behind the *Scream*, the numerous visual iterations are not altered to convey with greater specificity the scream or initial verbal message detailed by Munch. Aside from the evolution of the motif from *Despair* (1892, fig. 90) with the man in profile, leaning at the balustrade without any internal reference to sound or screaming, to the inhuman figure of the *Scream,* the visual composition remained relatively unchanged. *Despair* most certainly requires textual accompaniment if the aural dimension is to be conveyed; yet the *Scream* image implies this sense within the pictorial space. Even the sky has been stylised from feathered flames in *Despair* to the vein-like plasticity, demonstrating Munch's development from the Naturalist *stemningsmaleri* of *Despair* to *The Scream*'s proto-Expressionism in order to specify the precise feeling of the moment, rather than the natural transcription of the visual world.

Returning to the 1895 lithograph, the line "Ich fühlte das grosse Geschrei durch die Natur" takes on the function of subtitle, both physically in its positioning below the title, *Geschrei*, and in meaning. The narrative of the longer *Scream* text is trimmed to this climactic moment of the motif, 'feeling the scream through nature'. The first person narration denotes a highly subjective response, the verb, *fühlte* or 'felt' refers to sensory perception, *das grosse Geschrei* as the noun is qualified in strength, and *durch die Natur* implies a sensorial, psychological unity between the individual and the environs. Two versions of the Norwegian text are handwritten on the reverse of this lithograph, along with their German

[330] Reinhold Heller, "Could Only Have Been Painted by a Madman" - Or Could It?" in *Edvard Munch: The Modern Life of the Soul*, ed., Kynaston McShine, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2006), 19, 24.

translations (fig. 92). While it is not Munch's handwriting, it can be assumed that the inclusion of the text, in its multiple versions, was done at the artist's behest;[331] it is curious that two versions should be handwritten verso, when the differences between the two, as follows, are so minor: 'blode rød' (blood red) and 'blodig rød' (a bloody red); the in/ex-clusion of 'så' (then) and 'som' (as); stansede (stopped) and 'stod stille' (stood still); 'lå blod og Ildstunger' (lay blood and tongues of fire) 'lå Skyerne som Blod og Ildstunger' (lay clouds like blood and tongues of fire); 'jeg blev tilbage' (I remained) and 'jeg stod igjen' (I stood again); 'Jeg følte det store Skrig i Naturen' (I felt the great scream in nature) and 'Jeg følte det store uendelige Skrig gjennem Naturen' (I felt the great, unending scream through nature). The first version of this text, alongside the sketch for *Despair* (MM T2367, fig. 83), dating to 1892, is a hybrid of these two versions, barely changing in the intervening years.

Does moving around parts of a phrase, adjusting syntax and varying vocabulary, convey the same motivation as re-painting the *Scream* motif? The textual revisions have far less impact on perception and interpretation than the visual revisions. The changes made in the text are incredibly subtle, and at first glance appear to be inconsequential to the narrative progression and outcome. Interchanging the terms from the list above implies different nuances of interpretation, so that the text affects perception of the visual. The difference is that between simile and metaphor. Reading the 'blood-red sky' as 'bloody', or 'lay clouds *like* blood and tongues of fire' for 'lay blood and tongues of fire' delivers direct and explicit imagery, in which nature and the body intersect. Thus, the visual image of the *Scream* becomes an embodying, haptic skin that presents and represents the textual reference to blood.

[331] Edvard Munch, *Scream* lithograph, PN 992 Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, 1895 https://emunch.no/HYBRIDPN0992.xhtml#.Wmc81c6Z4_U

In the text, Munch describes every element made visible in the painting: the road, the friends, the fjord and city, and above it the sky, along with the narrator. The only invisible aspect is the scream itself, of which the gaping mouth is indexical. Nothing superfluous to the narrative is mentioned, and no painted detail is left undescribed in the text. This raises the question of whether *The Scream* is a pictorial text, or textual picture, to use Mitchell's terms.[332] The composition of the painting keeps so rigidly to the textual structure, throughout its iterations, that it cannot be claimed to be two separate entities. The second instance in which the text is found on the same plane as the image is in the 1895 pastel on board version, now in a private collection (fig. 88). Here, the text is handwritten and signed with the initials E. M. on a panel beneath the sketch. While it occupies the same plane as the picture, on the small panel nailed to the board, it does not invade the pictorial space. Neither does the composition make any reference to the text, or attempt to incorporate it in the pictorial space through visual, indexical cues. The inclusion of text on the board denotes its significance, and the handwritten scrawl (rather than a typographic text) mimics a diary entry. The handwritten aspect further underscores the personal dimension as a mark made by the artist in the immediate vicinity of the pictorial space. This textual structure is embedded in the visual composition, and likewise the sensorial visuality of the painting is rendered in the text; however, the mutual embeddedness of image and text blurs the lines between illustration and ekphrasis.

Mitchell defines ekphrastic text as one which "is said to speak to or for a semiotic "other" - an image, visual object, or spectacle - usually *in the presence* of that object. The point of view of the text is the position of a seeing and speaking subject in relation to a seen and usually mute object."[333] Describing the

[332] See W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994
[333] W. J. T. Mitchell, "Narrative, Memory, and Slavery" in *Picture Theory*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 184.

'scream' by using the word is merely indicative and equally indexical to the gaping mouth. It does not make it audible. The text itself, in whichever version, is diegetic in that the narrator *tells* the story, and this suggests that the picture is the antithetically mimetic, or imitating.

Mukařovský outlines the distinction between the static material of visual arts and that of literature, in which "the word not only changes relatively quickly, through development but can also be subject to subtle semantic shifts in passing from perceiver to perceived."[334] Munch deploys such semantic shifts in the many subtle variations of the text, the changes altering the meaning and 'feeling' of the text, and they are furthermore evident in the translations of the Norwegian text into English, German, and French. Mukařovský elaborates on this point, stating that each of the arts attempts to break through the limits of their material (or medium) to create what is ultimately an interdisciplinary work of art, resulting in grammatically described visuality in literature, and pictorialised poetic techniques in the visual arts.[335] The direct cross-pollination of art forms described by Mukařovský is actualised in Munch's *Scream.* Each element of the text and visual imagery expresses the content of the other, resulting in the verbalisation of the subject's distinct colouration in the text, while the painting's composition is structured as a visualisation of the text's narrative sequence.

The description of the *Scream* in the *Livsfrisens Tilblivelse* (c. 1928, fig. 91) becomes a metatext as it moves from what can be termed the 'standardised' version of the *Scream* text, to self-referentiality and awareness of the painting; though the first person narrates throughout, there is a shift of perspective with the line: "I painted this picture - painted the clouds like real blood. - the colours

[334] Jan Mukařovský, "The Essence of the Visual Arts" in *Structure, Sign, and Function*, eds., John Burbank and Peter Steiner, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 232.
[335] Mukařovský, 233-34.

screamed. - It became the picture *Scream* in the *Frieze of Life*."[336] The reader is redirected from the 'story' of the painting to its materiality; the viewer is presented with a twin view, one of the scene as a retelling of reality, and secondly, the act of making a picture, of translating the emotions into artistic expression. This act forges a relational link between the text and the image which does not otherwise occur in versions of the *Scream* text.

Textual and Visual Narrative

The degree of correspondence between Munch's *Scream* paintings and his poetic *Scream* texts has been ascertained so far in this chapter. In line with the objectives of this thesis, it should be determined whether two separate narratives exist in the *Scream*: that which is visually rendered in paintings, sketches and prints, and that which is set out in the text, containing, as in the visual versions, minor variations. Visual narrative and textual narrative function perform differently, due to the nature of their representation. In light of the inherent difference in media, I argue that each individual version, either visual or verbal, possesses a separate narrative which must be addressed as such within the broader context of the combined artwork. By adopting this method, the translation of Munch's essential idea or atmosphere becomes fully illuminated.

The difference in visual and verbal narrative in this context can be likened to the Platonic dichotomy of mimesis, (imitation or enactment), and diegesis, (narrative).[337] The diegetic narrator exists in a duality of worlds, one to "which the narrator belongs and the different, subordinated, world which he

[336] Edvard Munch, *Livsfrisens Tilblivelse/ The Origins of the Frieze of Life*, (Oslo c. 1928, MM UT 13), 12. https://emunch.no/TRANS_HYBRIDMM_UT0013.xhtml#.WmcfnM6Z4_U
[337] Stephen Halliwell, "Diegesis - Mimesis", Paragraph 2, in Peter Hühn, et al., *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press. http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/

presents."[338] Berger draws on the diegetic aspects of quotation and allusion previously mentioned by Genette to describe the repetition of motifs, not only in literature but also in music and art: "...self-quotation or [self-]allusion can occur only when the same figure or object appears in the picture or series of pictures more than once and we have reasons to believe that the figure or object truly "is the same" rather than merely "looks the same.""[339] The visual and the verbal composition scarcely vary in the *Scream* series, and furthermore can be extended to such paintings as *Angst*, which is set against the same background of Oslo Fjord as the *Scream*. Munch's repetition of motifs can be regarded as a form of self-quotation which create new narratives with each iteration.[340] In this sense, both scenes quote from one another in terms of colour, representation, and subject matter, although the aural dimension is absent from the *Anxiety* painting. Berger makes a comment on the nature of the diegetic, narrative voice in music as manifested by "repetition, recapitulation (as a return of the same or similar material after an intervening discourse is technically called), and elaboration (such as variation or development)", and the recognition of the two narrative hierarchies which separate the narrator from the narrative.[341] These musical techniques are a form of grammar which help structure musical phrases, and the concepts of return and revision have particular resonance with Munch's approach to and development of motifs. Berger argues for the possibility of diegesis in figurative painting, but the central presence of text in Munch suggests the position of diegetic narration, and by extension, a visual mimesis of the text. However, this operates on the assumption that the painting is based on textual depiction, when it is clear from both Munch's ocularcentric method, starting with the parallel text and sketch for

[338] Karol Berger, "Diegesis and Mimesis: The Poetic Modes and the Matter of Artistic Presentation" *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 12, no. 4 (Autumn 1994), 421.
[339] Berger, 428.
[340] Mai-Britt Guleng, "Edvard Munch - The Narrator" in *eMunch.no - Text and Image*, ed. Mai-Britt Guleng, (Oslo: Munch Museum, 2011), 232.
[341] Karol Berger, "Diegesis and Mimesis: The Poetic Modes and the Matter of Artistic Presentation" *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 12, no. 4 (Autumn 1994), 426, 429.

Despair, that the visual experience is the basis for his compositions, which are also set in linguistic terms. It can also be claimed that, along the lines of Berger's argument, that the diegetic mode of narrative appears within the pictorial space in the form of the *Scream* figure. Turned with its back to all other compositional elements, the frontal pose addresses the viewer directly; together with the gaping mouth the figure acts as a literal narrative mouthpiece, indexical of both the scream and the narrative voice of the text. This can perhaps be reconciled with the earlier statement that the *Scream* figure is not a representation of the text's narrator, but is an aural personification of narrative content, so in this sense the figure performs both the diegetic function of 'telling' the story of the text, and the mimetic function of demonstrating this story.

Given that a diegetic text presents to the viewer a self-reflexive text consisting of a "narrated world embedded in the world of the narrator",[342] then the text by the artist also takes on the qualities of the title, as discussed extensively in Part One Titles as Paratexts. The nature of the title, for the purposes of this study, is one which has been set in place or recognised by the artist with a prescriptive function to potentially eradicate the external interpretation of a work and ensure the artist's intentionality. Titles are more or less a necessary paratext, at the very least serving a practical identification purpose, at the most possessing a narrative function. Munch's accompanying poetic texts also possess this latter function; they are rich, deliberate and most importantly, converse with the visual narrative. The text and the painting of the *Scream* are two parts of the same thing, a metapicture or metatext, or Berger's 'picture-within-picture'. Visual diegesis can be said to occupy two levels of consciousness. Firstly, it functions as the artwork which 'tells' itself though its very materiality and existence before the viewer; it is a positive space or plane to be perceived. It is an object in space which can be

[342] Karol Berger, "Diegesis and Mimesis: The Poetic Modes and the Matter of Artistic Presentation", *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 12, no. 4 (Autumn 1994), 431.

approached and apprehended by the viewer without recognition of its semantic content, and this forms a very basic level of perception. Secondly, within the confines of the picture plane, the internal structure of the artwork presents a narrative to the viewer, and this narrative is 'told' according to the idiomatic visual devices, as opposed to the first person narrator of a diegetic text. But the level of self-referentiality or self-reflexivity present in an artwork varies. Munch's oeuvre contains aspects of self-reflexivity, but also of cross-reflexivity, in which motifs, backgrounds and colours are repeated and revised across individual artworks. The same can be claimed of the texts he wrote to accompany such sketches and paintings, and with the texts in mind, the diegetic dynamic needs to be refocused, with the introduction of a potential mimetic-ekphrastic dimension. Diegesis occurs both within the pictorial frame, and outside, in the context of verbal renditions. The *Scream* text is written with a first-person narrator, typical of diegetic texts.

I argue that the texts in Munch's *Scream* series function furthermore as a *mise en abyme*, which Dällenbach defines as "any aspect enclosed within a work that shows a similarity with the work that contains it."[343] Taking examples from art history, Dällenbach eliminates the use of the convex mirror as a mise en abyme as it does not reflect the pictorial space, but rather that which lies beyond the scope of the picture plane, and therefore cannot qualify as self-reflexive.[344] The *Scream* series does not contain mirrors or literal examples of (self)reflection; instead, the self-reflexivity found in Munch is the result of cross-pollination between text and image. In the initial sketch for *Despair* (MM T 2367), the *Scream* text is jotted alongside the preparatory drawing; here the mise en abyme is neither visual nor verbal, but eidetic in form, and is actualised by the viewer's mental participation in each aspect. Therefore the pictorial content and semantic content of

[343] Lucien Dällenbach, *The Mirror in the Text*, trans., Jeremy Whiteley with Emma Hughes, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 8.
[344] Dällenbach, 10-12.

the text are positioned in a state of infinite reflection,[345] in which one reflects the content of the other back and forth in an endless sequence. This builds on the earlier argument of the parallel structure shared by both the text and image; nothing extraneous to the text is added in the paintings, while the literary sketch provides a structural outline reflected in the composition. The narrative is on one level necessarily separate, as the visual and verbal aspects do not physically overlap in the same plane, yet on an eidetic level the narrative is the same, and undergoes translation from one medium to another. The *Scream* series exemplifies the artist's representation of a single aesthetic and its oscillation between visual and written media.

When presented alongside each other, the visual iterations of the *Scream* motif form a series of reflections, yet the aesthetic revisions made by Munch render them as individual artworks on the same subject matter. Therefore, the mise en abyme occurs twofold within the *Scream* series; self-reflexivity does not occur within a single work, rather there is cross-reference and reflection between all painted versions of the motif; and secondly, there is self-reflexivity between individual painted versions and the *Scream* text, so that text and image continuously reflect, quote, reference, and echo each other. They converse between one another, with different inflections placed to emphasise nuances of colour and form while propelling a unified atmosphere and narrative. Despite the stylistic differences between versions, the linear directionality of the visual compositions is striking, as it is consistent across all versions of the *Scream*, but also versions of *Despair* (1892, charcoal and gouache, (sketchbook MM T 2367) 37 x 42cm, Munch Museum, Oslo (fig. 83); 1892, oil on canvas, 92x 67cm, Thielska Galleriet, Stockholm (fig. 90); 1893-4, oil on canvas, 92 x 72.5cm, Munch Museum, Oslo (fig. 95) and *Angst* (1894, oil on canvas, 94 x 73cm, Munch Museum Oslo (fig.82);

[345] Lucien Dällenbach, *The Mirror in the Text*, trans., Jeremy Whiteley with Emma Hughes, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 24.

1896, lithograph, 41.4x 39.1cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York (fig. 93); 1896, woodcut, 46.5 x 37.5cm, Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo (fig. 94)) all of which share the same highly charged, structural background.

In the *Scream,* the straight receding lines of the road and balustrade lead the eye from the foreground figure to the background figures, and along the horizon the soft bulges of the sky follow into the curving coastline (the land of the lithograph is rendered in vertical lines of varying thickness, implying two-dimensional planarity of the receding land) before returning to the foreground figure once more. These broad stretches are clear of detail which the eye, without obstruction, can traverse in an endless cycle. While the major similarities are immediately obvious and do not require detailed transcription, some warrant a closer look. The screaming figure of the foreground appears to appeal to the viewer, acting as the access point to the composition, but following the line of vision, its gaze does not meet ours; in the later version of the *Scream,* (1910) the pupils are entirely omitted, implying blindness. The lack of vision, the closing-off of sight seems to emphasises the aural sense of the piercing scream through nature. The loss of sight heralds the triumph of sound, of which the hands clasped over the ears tries to further block out. The text, however, is heavy with visual imagery, but the scream figure, having turned its back to the blood sky and distant friends, can no longer see it, as though the sense of sight has been blocked or blinded by the scream.

What, of the visual, is retained in the text?

The greatest difference in *Scream* images is located in the pastel version (fig. 88), in which the two distant figures mentioned in the text as the 'two friends' take on the actions described by the text's narrator in a state of continuous narrative. Moving from the left to right, the first figure in the left background

occupies the space of the first line, walking along the road. Mimicking the composition of *Despair* and the first visual iteration of the motif, the second figure in the background leans on the balustrade, a move that is not inscribed on the panel beneath but is mentioned in other versions as "jeg standsede, lænede mig til gjæret træt til døden",[346] his face in his hand, feeling the melancholia wash over him as the sky turns to bloody flames. Via the text, the viewer's eye is finally lead to the foreground figure, as a depiction of the scream. The figure turns frontally to the viewer, an intercessor between pictorial and real space is no longer the narrator expressing the scream through nature, but it becomes this very nature, formless and inhuman, like Hansen Jacobsen's *Shadow* figure, a personification of a scream rather than a reflection of it. This would create a narrative sequence as receding through space, along the road, and in keeping with the narrative sequence of the text. The figure occupies a separate plane to the rest of the composition; neither does it interact with it in any sense, turning its back to the unfolding flames in the sky. The visual arts are often described as mute, with poetry lending the visual its voice, so here the figure is both mute and blind, the wide eyes staring blankly. Experience is not made of the visual alone - all senses play their part, but only one is used to perceive the visual.

The difference in position of the two figures in the pastel version, compared to other versions of the *Scream,* provides the viewer with an alternate communication of the narrative. This is the only version in which two distant figures act out mimetically the *Scream* text that is attached below, so that the 'two friends' also embody the actions of the narrator.

[346] "I stopped, leaned against the balustrade, deathly tired." Translated from Norwegian by Kerstina Mortensen.

Textual Types and Ocularcentrism

In 1894 Stanislaw Przybyszewski wrote that Munch encompassed "everything which is deep and dark, all that for which language has not yet found any words, and which expresses itself solely as a dark, foreboding instinct, that all this takes on colour through him and enters our consciousness."[347] Yet Munch manages to find words to describe his experience at sunset as the sky turned bloody. What is it that cannot be described in words, and what is the function of text in Munch's ocularcentric method?

The nature of the relationship between the visual renderings of *The Scream* and their verbal renditions is multifaceted, bearing the hallmarks of several textual categories. The use of literary terms in this is not only prompted by the literary aspect to this work, but by understanding 'text' to be in its broadest semiotic sense a sign, visual or verbal, to be interpreted. The *Scream* paintings and text display a form of intertextuality, which Genette defines as "a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts: that is to say, eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another."[348] This could take the form of quotation, plagiarism, or allusion. Plagiarism is ruled out in this context as Munch is the author of both the painting and text. Allusion presupposes prior knowledge of one text to recognise its reference in another, one that is not necessary or relevant for viewers of the *Scream.* Quotation, in that portions of one text (in this instance, either visual or verbal text) are transposed into the other, is the most fitting of Genette's three modes of intertextuality. Though quotation marks are naturally absent, there is direct quotation of the *Scream* motif between the painted and written versions, to the point of metatextuality. The metatext is one

[347] Stanislaw Przybyszewski, ed., *Das Werk des Edvard Munch: Vier Beiträge,* (Berlin: 1894), 4-5, as quoted in Reinhold Heller, *Edvard Munch: The Scream*, (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 76.
[348] Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 1-2.

which makes reference, in some form, to another text.[349] This is manifested through a series of visual correspondences which find form in their respective medium. I argue that the metatext adopts the atmosphere of another text which in turn affects part of its own form, i.e., in the *Scream*, the narrative of the text is reflected in the visual image, particularly the thick facture and blood-like colour, but the usage of the word 'blood' in the *Scream* text simultaneously influences the viewer's interpretation of the visual image. The text lends compositional structure to the image through the verbal specification of the narrative; such verbal aspects are located in the image, while the colours used and emotions represented are referenced by name in the text.

Munch's visual emphasis is on painting 'the moment a motif strikes one', and it is through the visual that the aural occurrence of the scream is represented. Both the *Scream* text and image are ultimately derived from Munch's memory of the experience at Ekeberg, as later recalled in Nice, and are eidetically linked as a single motif. It is difficult to ascribe precedence to the one medium over another - with the exception of one version of the text in *Livfrisens Tilblivelse* in which Munch explicitly states that he then painted the *Scream* after the described experience above Oslo Fjord, there is no direct reference in the text to the image, or vice versa. Therefore, precedence should perhaps instead be granted to the eidetic notion of the *Scream* motif itself.

However, the *Scream* text could also be regarded as a form of paratext, similar to the title, as it serves the viewer with a commentary on the visual. To deem it a paratext would place it in the same category as the title, which also includes any textual detail extraneous to an artwork and its perception, including dimensions, authorship, or location. However, this denies the text the

[349] Genette defines the metatext as that which "unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it (without summoning it), in fact sometimes even without naming it." Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 4.

significance evidently granted by Munch, who included it alongside the visual in the lithograph, the pastel version, and in the *Tree of Knowledge* visual poem (compiled 1930-35, fig. 81), which incorporates the visuality of colour with the semantic visuality of the word. The role of text in Munch's image-making is one of parallelism, of mirrors and reflections. These concepts are raised in the chapter on Hammershøi's titles, and have relevance here once more. Torjusen suggests that Munch intended to publish a series of texts and images, possibly with the text inscribed below the image, as in the 1895 *Scream* lithograph, based on twenty-five prints exhibited under the title *The Mirror* in 1897.[350] The *Scream* lithograph is among these prints, which also included *Death in the Sickroom* (1896, fig. 96), and *Anxiety* (1896, fig. 93), encompassing the major themes of illness, death and the psychological self which demarcate his *Frieze of Life* series and work of the 1890s. As a text and image created by the artist, Munch's *Scream* can also be defined as an example of bitextuality, which is "the concurrent use of verbal and pictorial media" to create a dual work in which the idea is translated between the the visual and the verbal.[351] Selecting the title *The Mirror* is a significant point to consider, as it in some sense reveals the status Munch placed on the verbal aspect of his oeuvre. Rather than explanatory commentaries, a mirror suggests an alternate reality of artistic expression, one which is not greater or lesser but equal in its value, yet inherently different in expression; for a mirror *reflects* reality, it is *not* reality.

[350] Bente Torjusen, *Words and Images of Edvard Munch,* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 19.
[351] Vladimir Feschenko, "Dematerializing Verbal and Visual Matter: Wassily Kandinsky's Bitextuality" in *The Aesthetics of Matter: Modernism, the Avant-Garde and Material Exchange*, eds., Sarah Posman, Anne Reverseau, David Ayers, Sascha Bru and Benedikt Hjartarson, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 94.

Sensorial Translation

How do we reconcile the immense ocularcentricity of Munch, with the function of text in his artworks, particularly the circulation of *The Scream* text in various iterations and translations in contemporary exhibition catalogues and publications?

While I have focused on the visual aspect of the *Scream* text and image, the central motif, that of the scream, is an aural occurrence, and this essence of the artwork is concentrated in the work's title. Pallasmaa eloquently distinguishes between sound and vision: "Sight isolates, whereas sound incorporates; vision is directional, whereas sound is omni-directional. The sense of sight implies exteriority, but sound creates an experience of interiority. I regard an object, but sound approaches me; the eye reaches, but the ear receives."[352] This dialectic of the senses is actively presented in *The Scream*. The aural experience of interiority implies a subjectivity of emotion prompted by both the image, and the text. The scream is defined by a series of visually perceived events: the sunset, the colours of the sky affecting the psychological landscape of the narrator to melancholia, exhaustion and anxiety, with the result of this equation being the scream, and aural expression. As the scene is set up in the text, it appears as though, following from Pallasmaa, the scream approaches the narrator, equalising the experiences leading to that moment, and strips it back to tabula rasa. The sense of nothingness that the scream delivers is the subsumption of the individual within nature, it embodies and literally gives 'voice' to the entire narrative. The eye reaches out and perceives, and its reply is a scream; while Munch represents the screaming figure, there is no sound, but rather it represents acoustic interiority. Visually, this is achieved through Munch's broad, undulating forms (fig. 80). The

[352] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, (Chichester: John Wiley, 2005), 49.

visual and the emotional is evocative of the aural sense because of acoustic hapticity, in which sound envelops the perceiver like a skin, and is closely linked to atmosphere.

Though sound is a significant aspect of the *Scream* motif, central to the title, text and image(s), rather than hearing it, the narrator *feels* the scream through nature, as one might feel vibrations through an object, or the reverberation of sound. While the noun 'scream' can also refer to the sound made by inanimate objects, a scream usually implies the crying sound made by humans or animals: by its very nature, a scream is associated with the tissue of living beings and the natural world, from which emanates the motif. This association with skin and surface is alluded to by figure's hands clasped around the ears (fig. 77, 79). I maintain that a scream is a series of sensations, the sound reverberates in the throat, against the walls of the mouth, the tongue quivers. A scream also implies voice, and that gives it an anthropomorphic quality which permeates Munch's expression. Therefore, the sound has a skin, and demands a haptic approach of the viewer. This experience of interiority that is felt with the sense of sound is the outward projection of turmoil described in the Scream text, and its highly expressionistic visualisation. The brushstrokes quivering become visual metaphors for aural imagery, undulating like soundwaves or pulsating like blood rushing in the ears. The strong diagonal composition ensures the sense of dynamic movement, as though the entire composition is in a state of flux.

Atmospheric Embodiment in *The Scream*

If atmosphere is aligned with style and aesthetic, then Munch develops and produces a unified atmosphere or presence across all iterations of the *Scream* motif, yet what of the atmosphere produced within the borders of the picture plane? The effects of atmosphere are manifold, and similar to the levels of

narrative present in the series, atmosphere can be identified both within and without the pictorial/textual frame.

On the issue of atmosphere within the narrative: what produces feeling in *The Scream*? The aesthetic choices made by the artist contribute to the type of atmosphere created, so that the artwork "becomes a demonstration of the possibility of creating atmospheres."[353] This possibility is dependent on formal aspects such as colour, treatment, composition, stylisation, and facture. The atmosphere of the *Scream* text relies on linguistic equivalents to convey mood, including tone, syntax, imagery, and perspective. Such aspects are inherent to their respective media, and when artistically combined, they become subject to the viewer's perception. Once perceived, they are assimilated in the viewer, mixing empirically with emotion and memory in subjective response to create what is termed atmosphere, mood, feeling or presence. I do not suggest that these terms should be used interchangeably, for the subtle difference between each allows for their precise and nuanced usage, yet they all allude to a similar state of sensory and emotional awareness.

Atmosphere in art is naturally conveyed by visual means. Yet ocularcenticity does not preclude the other senses, it is merely the vehicle for multisensory experience through the visual. Language addresses the senses through specification, by either explicitly naming the sensation or implicitly by setting up a certain response through suggestion. It is worthwhile re-quoting the architect Pallasmaa here, who believes that "all the senses, including vision, can be regarded as extensions of the sense of touch - as specialisations of the skin".[354] In the case of the *Scream* text, we are confronted with several sensory occurrences, all of which are centred around the body's perception: there is spatial perception (walking,

[353] Gernot Böhme, *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres,* ed. Jean-Paul Thibaud, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 170.
[354] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005), 42.

setting sun), visual perception (colour is granted corporeality with the sky turning red described as 'blood' and 'tongues' of flames), emotional perception (the sadness and angst that overcomes the narrator) and aural perception (the sound emanating from the scene, the 'great scream in nature'). Such sensations become 'specialisations of the skin' insofar as the sense of touch, that which we touch and feel, produces feeling in the individual. Texture is a quality, something that the body *feels* in the same sense that atmosphere can be *felt* by the body,[355] therefore, atmosphere must be directly related to the sense of touch. The atmosphere of the *Scream* paintings follows from this; if "vision reveals what the touch already knows"[356] then ocular perception relays information as a feeling. The sense of touch, that is, feeling, is linked to an individual's *feelings* or emotional response. That which is seen, is translated into something felt, it is the body that feels a subjective response. Atmosphere is the product of the body's physical and mental response to sensory stimuli, in "bodily presence in relation to persons and things or in spaces."[357]

The individual can separate sound from the object that produces this sound, and thus the sound is internalised by the listener, changing their aspect and affecting their inner space. Böhme writes that "in hearing that tone, voice, and sound do not transfer to the objects from which they may have originated, the listener perceives voice, tone, and sound as a transformation of the space of his own presence."[358] The aural sensation provokes bodily response, and in the *Scream* the aural aspect is granted prominence in the title and the text ("the great scream through nature"). Sound is indicated in the painting by the indexical gaping mouth and covered ears, and thus the figure's own bodily presence is affected by the

[355] In Chapter 2 I argue that atmosphere has an interwoven, dual aspect; one is perceptual and therefore aesthetic, as the feeling conveyed by an experience, or in this context, an artwork; secondly, it is a psychological effect evoked by an experience or artwork.
[356] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005), 42.
[357] Gernot Böhme, *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres,* ed. Jean-Paul Thibaud, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 17.
[358] Böhme, 174.

sound, as it either absorbs the sound or originates it. The link between sound and atmosphere is reminiscent of the Gumbrecht's definition of presence as mood or climate, with the etymological root of the German term *Stimmung* lying in 'voice', 'tuning' an instrument, or 'vote' (as in 'voicing' opinion).[359] The Scandinavian equivalent of *stemning* and subsequently, nineteenth century *stemningsmaleri* or 'mood painting' in Nordic art is discussed in Chapter 2. Therefore, the aural sense is embedded in these Germanic terms as being a central component of atmosphere. While having discussed the evidence that supports Munch's ocularcentric approach to art in that he painted what he saw, from memory, sound remains the essential motif of the *Scream* series. This raises the question of how is sound is performed soundlessly and visually. A painting cannot speak, yet the linguistic text attached lends it 'voice'. Sound travels through matter in waves which can be visually represented, however, this is not a scientific study but one of subjective, emotional experience, recalling the memory of the imagined sound. Sounds requires space through to travel, and if every space, as Pallasmaa writes, "has its characteristic sound of intimacy or monumentality, invitation or rejection, hospitality or hostility"[360] then space in any context has some of equivalence of these properties. Pallasmaa is referring to physical, architectural space, yet spatial constructs exist in other media, namely the pictorial space of painting, and the fictive, textual space of literature. The space is the created 'world' of the artwork, with its own fictive sense of perspective, and its own formal governance of the image's spatial order.

"A space is understood and appreciated through its echo as much as through its visual shape, but the acoustic percept usually remains as an unconscious background experience."[361] Building from this argument of sound and atmosphere, it is significant that Munch also regarded the *Frieze of Life* in musical terms, as

[359] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Atmosphere, Mood, Stimmung*, trans. Erik Butler, (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2012), 4.
[360] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005), 50.
[361] Pallasmaa, 50.

sound plays a crucial role in the creation of atmosphere. Munch wrote metaphorically of the cohesive tone of the *Frieze of Life* when viewed as a whole: "I placed them together and found that various paintings related to each other in terms of content. When they were hung together, suddenly, a single musical note passed through them all...a symphony resulted."[362] This single note that passed through the entire series of works is evident in the fact that Munch repeated motifs, colour combinations and backgrounds throughout the works, and across paintings and prints; however, this statement also reveals broadly the presence of mood and its permeation across a number of artworks; it is a thread that equalises through a consistency of aesthetic choices, resulting in a consistency of feeling or response in the viewer. The thematic connection between the paintings, whether or not it is considered as a musical note, recalls Simmel's definition of mood, in which all components play a role yet it is impossible to specify or differentiate one element from another, to the degree that the resulting mood is neither internal nor external to the components, yet it exists and is perceived by the viewer.[363] What Munch describes as a musical note unifying the aesthetic mood of the *Frieze of Life* is indeed the interaction of his own works interacting to produce a singular emotional response in the viewer.

Munch's poetic text, written in its variations to specifically accompany the *Scream* motif, demonstrates the translation of an intensely psychological experience into visual and verbal expression. Examining the narrative of each aspect reveals layers of self-reflectivity and narrative cohesion, thus a singular atmosphere is transmitted by both textual and visual elements in the *Scream,* in spite of disparate versions. This is in keeping with the thesis objective

[362] Jay A. Clarke, *Becoming Edvard Munch: Influence, Anxiety, and Myth*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press and the Art Institute of Chicago, 2009), 88.
[363] Georg Simmel, "The Philosophy of Landscape" trans. Josef Bleicher, *Theory, Culture & Society,* SAGE, Vol. 24 (7-8, 2007), 26.

of analysing intentional, artist-written texts attached to artworks in light of their dual effect on atmosphere and perception.

Chapter 6: Niels Hansen Jacobsen, *The Shadow* (1897-98)

Introduction

The objective of this chapter, as part of the section *Texts by the Artist*, is to provide a rigorous analysis of the dynamic between Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture *The Shadow*, and the poetic text he wrote to accompany it. The ghostly, abstracted figure implies an otherworldliness to the form, while the text makes explicit reference to the figure as the personification of death. I will also compare the text of *The Night* (1895, fig. 107) to *The Shadow* (figs. 97-102), and employ both works to demonstrate the interaction of textual narrative in the three-dimensionality of sculpture. Thus these works meet the thematic criteria of this thesis, in which representations of illness, death and the psychological self are explored. At the core is the translation of Hansen Jacobsen's idea between visual and verbal expression, and the respective effect on perception. Hansen Jacobsen was born in 1861 in the rural Jutland town of Vejen, and in 1885 began his formal education at the Royal Academy of Art in Copenhagen, under the tutelage of Carl Bloch, Frederik Vermehren and the sculptors Theodor Stein and Vilhelm Bissen.[364]

With reference to such aspects as form, content and semiotic meaning, the artist's twin modes of representation, the visual and the textual, are compared within the same artwork. The issue of examining three-dimensional form and language will also be addressed. Leaving aside relief sculpture, or works set into an architectural framework, free-standing sculpture does not possess a 'pictorial space', its three-dimensionality allows for it to exist as volume in the viewer's

[364] Niels Theodor Mortensen, *Billedhuggeren Niels Hansen Jacobsen*, (Odense: Forlaget Arnkrone, 1945), 17.

sphere; sculpture crosses the threshold that exists between the viewer and other arts, and in this sense, it embodies its subject and occupies the viewer's space.

Building on the analysis of Munch's *Scream* motif, the second chapter of Part Two Texts by the Artist examines the poetic texts written by the Danish sculptor Niels Hansen Jacobsen to accompany specific sculptures. Hansen Jacobsen appended a number of literary sketches to his works, many of which are included in contemporary exhibition catalogues. *The Shadow* was listed in the 1898 Exposition des Beaux-Arts in Paris under the French title only, *L'ombre (statue plâtre)*.[365] The text below was written by the artist, and was handwritten in the inventory catalogue of his atelier-museum at Skibelund Krat from 1914 (fig. 103), which includes a number of poetic texts written by Hansen Jacobsen to accompany other sculptures:

> Døden, snart er den usynlig, gjemmer sig i Vejens Støv, men indhenter og dukker op igen, naar vi mindst venter det, snigende sig stadig i vort Fodspor, umulig at undfly."
>
> (Death, oftentimes unseen, Hiding in the dirt and dust, Catching us to reappear, When we least expect it, Ever sneaking in our footsteps, Impossible to escape.)[366]

The inclusion of such texts in public circulation is likely contrived to supplement the viewer's reception of the work, with the result that the text is frequently referred to as explanatory of the artwork in secondary literature. Just as a title can be considered a paratext of an artwork, I argue that such poetic texts, as written by Hansen Jacobsen or by Munch, also fulfil the criteria of a paratext. As such, texts written by the artist and attached to a specific work function as

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[365] Catalogue illustré des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, et gravure, Société nationale des beaux-arts (France). Salon (Paris: E. Bernard and Cie, 1898), xlix. https://archive.org/stream/catalogueillust1898soci_0#page/48/mode/2up

[366] Henrik Wivel, *Den Store Stil: Dansk symbolisme og impressionisme omkring år 1900,* (Copenhagen: Fogtdal, 1994), 126. This text is reproduced widely in secondary literature, and is mentioned as a handwritten addition on the Skibelund Krat catalogue 1914 on "Niels Hansen Jacobsen – Skyggen", Vejen Kunstmuseum http://www.vejenkunstmuseum.dk

thresholds which must be navigated by the viewer, allowing the work to be made 'presentable' to an audience.[367] As the paratext is written and affixed by the artist, then poetic text can be considered in keeping with the artist's intentionality and an integral part of the artwork.

A number of paratexts of specific sculptures are included in a catalogue of work from Hansen Jacobsen's atelier in 1914. The text accompanying *The Dawn* (1895, fig. 105) is a quote from Psalm 139 verse 9-10; *Death and the Mother* (1892) is subtitled with the final lines of H. C. Andersen's fairytale "Story of a Mother", upon which it is based; this relation is analysed in Part Three, Literary Sources for Artworks. Equally appended in the catalogue entry of Hansen Jacobsen's *King Lear* (1905, fig. 106) is a quote from Act Three of the play. However, there are three further instances in this catalogue of poetic sketches written by the artist and inserted amidst the paratextual information of individual works. There is no other attribution for these texts, and it is acknowledged in secondary literature as the writing of the sculptor. Hansen Jacobsen also included three further poetic pieces for specific works:

The Night (1895, figs. 103 no. 3, 107)

> With bleeding wounds, for billions of years,
> he has fought against the day, with some humiliation.
> He shields his eye, and awaits the hour,
> that day is forever overpowered.[368]

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[367] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation,* trans. Jane E. Lewin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

[368] "I Aartusinder har han kæmpet mod Lyset, nedværdiget og underkuet. Dog haaber han paa engang at blive Enehersker." Niels Hansen Jacobsen, *Katalog over Arbejderne i Niels Hansen Jacobsens Atelier ved Skibelund Krat,* (Vejen: Centraltrykkeriet, 1914), no. 3. Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen.
Another version of this text is found in Mortensen's monograph of the sculptor, as follows:
"I Aartusinder har han fjælet sig mod Lysets vældige Magt, nedværdiget og underkuet; dog luer han bestandig paa sin Fjendes Afmagt for at blive Enehersker."
Niels Theodor Mortensen, *Billedhuggeren Niels Hansen Jacobsen*, (Odense: Forlaget Arnkrone, 1945), 8.

Militarism (1898-99, figs. 103 no. 9, 108)

I have seen a man, dressed head to toe in steel;

he has an aquiline expression;

he delights in the battlefield's brutality, its destruction and horror.

He ignores the cries of the wounded at his feet.[369]

Freedom in Our Time (1896-7, figs. 103 no. 10, 109):

I have seen a man, impoverished, hunched, and tired of life;

he searched for a tree to rest beneath and find shade,

but found only a rotten trunk without leaves.

That was freedom in our time.[370]

The texts of *Militarism* and *Freedom in Our Time* could be textual pendants to one another, each beginning with the same phrase ("I have seen a man…"), as the representational antagonists of war and peace, and following a similar formal structure. Niels Theodor Mortensen notes that the origin of these texts is unconfirmed, positing that they could be the words of the sculptor.[371] The text to *The Shadow* is not included in this catalogue of the artist's atelier in 1914, nor is it mentioned in Mortensen's 1945 text. However, Hansen Jacobsen added the text to the 1914 catalogue by hand,[372] and from that it has spread as the artwork's rationale. This poetic annotation is significant; while *The Shadow* may have been inspired by Andersen's fairytale of the same title, these texts are otherwise without

[369] "Jeg har set en Mand, klædt i Staal fra Hoved til Fod; / han har en Rovfugls Udtryk i sit Ansigt; / han fryder sig over Slagmarkens Brutalitet, dens Ødelæggesle og Gru. / De saaredes Klage ved hans Fod ænser han ikke."
Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen.
"Niels Hansen Jacobsen Skulpturer: Militarisme", Vejen Kunstmuseum: http://www.vejenkunstmuseum.dk

[370] "Jeg har set en Mand, fattig, nedbøjet og træt af Livet; / han søgte efter et Træ for at hvile sig og finde Skygge, men fandt kun en frønet Stamme uden Blade. Det var Friheden i vor Tid." Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen. "Niels Hansen Jacobsen Skulpturer: Friheden i Aarhundredets Slutning", Vejen Kunstmuseum http://www.vejenkunstmuseum.dk

[371] Niels Theodor Mortensen, *Billedhuggeren Niels Hansen Jacobsen*, (Odense: Forlaget Arnkrone, 1945), 42.

[372] Teresa Nielsen, "At fange det flygtige: Niels Hansen Jacobsens *Skyggen*",Vejen Kunstmuseum http://www.vejenkunstmuseum.dk

origin. It is uncertain the extent to which Hansen Jacobsen's poetic text was available to an interested audience during the artist's lifetime, though his work would have been widely known. The sculptor's atelier at Skibelund Krat, which he established in 1913, was opened to the public on 16 July 1914, where 33 sculptures, among other objects, were on display; the exhibition catalogue containing these texts dates to this time.

By comparison, Munch's *Scream* text became widely circulated and translated. Lasse Jacobsen outlines a number of publications in which the text appeared in the years following the painting's completion in Berlin, 1893. A drawing of Munch's *Scream* lithograph and a French translation of the text were published in *La Revue Blanche*, 15 November 1895, following a meeting in Kristiania between the journal editor, Thadée Natanson, and Munch.[373] The translation is poor, and thought to be by Munch himself, with the aid of some colleagues. An English translation was subsequently published in *Mademoiselle*, New York, 10 January 1896[374] and the text and drawing after the lithograph furthermore appeared in the Czech journal *Moderni Revue*, in an article by Stanislaw Przybyszewski.[375]

In what sense could text possibly disturb an artwork? Text can disturb a particular strain of thinking, contradicting the viewer, or redirecting them to alternative readings. But text most literally disturbs the visual and sensorial interaction by putting words to feelings. These feelings, or emotional responses to artworks, which are discussed at length in the Chapter 2 on atmosphere, are non-verbal and subjective, addressing the senses. Explaining and disturbing the visual with text immediately readies the artwork for argument, reason and logic; visual

[373] Lasse Jacobsen, "Edvard Munch's Own Publications", in *eMunch.no - Text and Image*, ed. Mai-Britt Guleng, (Oslo: Munch Museum, 2011), 114.
[374] *Scream* English translation by Vance Thompson in *Mademoiselle*, New York (10 January 1896) https://emunch.no/HYBRIDNo-MM_UT0030.xhtml#.WkvAi86Z4_U
[375] Lasse Jacobsen, "Edvard Munch's Own Publications", in *eMunch.no - Text and Image*, ed. Mai-Britt Guleng, (Oslo: Munch Museum, 2011), 114.

indeterminacy means this is only effectively possible with verbal communication. An artwork's title already begins this process; more elaborate texts, such as those fragments which supplement *The Scream* and *The Shadow*, firmly affix the artworks with a verbal plot.

The disruptive potential of text is also found in Munch's writings. Per Thomas Andersen compares Munch's literary fragment employed with the German Romanticist Novalis, who wrote that "all poetry interrupts the normal condition, common life, almost like slumber, in order to regenerate us and always keep our state of being *alert*."[376] While Andersen highlights the linguistically-rendered interruption experienced by Munch's persona in the *Scream* text as being suddenly disrupted from his normal state and separated from his company, the concept of disruption has validity when text is added to the sphere of the visual work. This chapter focuses on the disruptive function of text as medium, and its relation to the visual artwork, which is conventionally considered as the primary work.

Niels Hansen Jacobsen and the Fairytales of H. C. Andersen

Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture *The Shadow* is closely linked to the H.C. Andersen fairytale of the same name; providing a brief summary of the fairytale outlines the existential concept behind the shadow, as reflected in Hansen Jacobsen's poetic text. The fairytale encompasses themes of deception, identity loss and the inevitability of death. However, the text that accompanies the sculpture is not a quote derived from Andersen's work. Andersen's *The Shadow* bears a number of motifs that Hansen Jacobsen carries over into his text, namely that of the shadow following in the man's footsteps, and taking on (somewhat) human form:

[376] Per Thomas Andersen, "Edvard Munch and the Literary Fragment", in *eMunch.no - Text and Image*, ed. Mai-Britt Guleng, (Oslo: Munch Museum, 2011), 58.

> ...and as you know, I have followed in your footsteps since childhood...but a longing came over me to see you once before you die, for die you must![377]
>
> Never did I think that one's old shadow could return as a human![378]

Hansen Jacobsen's text seems to encapsulate some of the essence of Andersen's fairytale. The link between shadow and death is made explicit in the story, and like Andersen, Hansen Jacobsen titles his sculpture *The Shadow* rather than *Death*, emphasising illusion over the outcome of the plot. In the story, the shadow overtakes the master, eventually catching up with him after years, cheating the man into death. The futility and inevitability of escaping death in the poem is mirrored in the story as the shadow unexpectedly re-appears, but has been following him since childhood; death is a predestined moment.

The story begins with a young Northern European man on a sojourn in warmer climes, when his shadow disappears into the neighbouring apartment. Curious to know who lived there, the man lightheartedly sends the shadow to investigate the rooms. The shadow does not return, and soon the man notices a new, smaller shadow starts to grow from his form. Years pass, and one day the man's shadow appears at his door. Andersen personifies the shadow in the fullest sense of the term; the shadow is an exceptionally finely dressed man of considerable stature, with boots and black clothes, wearing diamond rings and a gold chain. When the shadow left his 'master' he had discovered that Poetry lived in the neighbouring apartment, upon entering he was made into flesh and had

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[377] "...og jeg, det ved De nok, har fra barnsben trådt i Deres fodspor. [...] men der kom et slags længsel over mig efter engang at se Dem, før De dør, De skal jo dø!"
Hans Christian Andersen, "Skyggen", in *H. C. Andersens Eventyr og Historier*, ed. Sophus Bauditz, (Copenhagen and Kristiania: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1905), 373.
Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen.

[378] "...aldrig havde jeg troet, at ens gamle skygge kunne komme igen som menneske!"
Andersen, 373. Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen.

acquired all Poetry's wisdom, he had seen all and knew all. Time passes until the shadow returns again years later; the man grows weaker as the shadow increases in size. They then agree to go the baths to recover, on the condition that they exchange roles; the man becomes the shadow, and the shadow the man. At the baths the shadow falls in love with a princess, she perceives him to be human, and upon her wedding to the shadow, the man is arrested for threatening to reveal their true identities, and put to death.

The core difference between Andersen's story and Hansen Jacobsen's visual retelling of *The Shadow* is in the corporeality the shadow; in the story he becomes a fully formed man, but the sculpture depicts a malformed spirit-like ghoul, closer in appearance to a shadow than a human. The visual idiom must combine both narrative and descriptive potential, which the sculptor harnesses to expressionistic effect. It can be claimed that the stealth, form and uncanny elements of the shadow are embodied in the sculpture. Additionally, the form of the sculpture's text is a poem, and in the story it is thanks to the maiden Poetry that the shadow gained flesh and knowledge, so visually he is also made incarnate through the poetics of sculpture.

Text in the Artwork's Narrative Space

The presence of text in the narrative space of an artwork (and I define the narrative space as that which encompasses the artwork itself, along with any paratextual elements which contribute to the meaning of a work, rather than practical details of dimensions, date, etc.) is a diversion for the viewer. By this I propose that initial observations made regarding the visual are tempered by an encounter with language; the subtle, subjective conclusions suggested by personal experience are either shattered, altered or confirmed by the presence of text which appears to clarify interpretation.

The text that accompanies *The Scream* explains the visual narrative in linguistic terms. It puts words to what the viewer otherwise imagines; it clarifies, but also enforces a set narrative, ensuring that the work is 'read' according to the artist's intention. The poem written by Hansen Jacobsen for *The Shadow* explains the wider narrative into which the artist perceives the sculpture 'should' be placed, though it was published at a later date than the work's creation in 1897. The fact that the text first appeared in the 1914 catalogue could potentially indicate dissatisfaction on the part of Hansen Jacobsen with regard to general comprehension of the work, and may be owed in part to a poor reception of the work in Denmark.[379] The text is both poetic in its own right, while enhancing the visual narrative with the detail symbolised in the sculpture itself. However, such paratexts can also represent an artist's further exploration of their subject matter through another medium, one which is perhaps more readily comprehensible than the highly metaphoric visual language both Munch and Hansen Jacobsen employ.

Diagonal/Horizontal Axis

The conventional verticality of sculpture is subsumed in the context and subject matter of Hansen Jacobsen's *The Shadow*. Instead of a heroic monumentality, the shadow slithers horizontally, as though catching the feet and following the footsteps mentioned in the poem. The use of the word 'unseen' or 'invisible' in relation to a visual object seems paradoxical; the function of the text in this instance is to explicate the intangibility of death, while the sculpture visualises it.

Bachelard writes that "the phenomenology of the poetic imagination allows us to explore the being of man considered as the being of a *surface*, of the

[379] Peter Nørgaard Larsen, "Skyggen, 1897-898", Statens Museum for Kunst https://www.smk.dk/highlight/skyggen-1897-98/

surface that separates the region of the same from the region of the other."[380] Same and other, divided by a surface; the ground along which the shadow form acts as the surface between the living and the dead, the imprint of the footstep in the dirt reinforced by the deeply contoured form of the shadow. *The Shadow* takes a striking diagonal form; the shadow steals along the ground, leaning forward on bending knees, and in the left hand clasps a hourglass as a memento mori (figs. 101-102).[381] It is tethered to its base, levitating at such an acute angle that it almost appears parallel to the ground. The figure is rendered in broadly expressive strokes, similar to but more ragged than Munch's thick impasto that appears to tremble on the canvas of the *Scream*. Hansen Jacobsen demonstrates a similar emaciation of form, and erosion of humanity. The form the shadow (or death) takes is gesturally human, conjured of clouds and mist (fig. 98). The undulating wreath of shadow functions as a base support. The diagonal axis of the figure can also be likened to the distortion of a cast shadow, such as the elongated shadow cast by low evening sunlight. While the figure bears an otherworldly, sinister and from its horizontality, distinctly 'non-human' aspect, it is only from the appended poetic text, in its allusion to the personification of death, that the viewer comprehends the full meaning of the sculpture.

Horizontality is an aspect of *The Shadow,* both the sculpture and the text. This horizontality relates to the liminality or border space occupied by the death, both as a concept and embodied form. Horizontality in language relates to the linear form of written expression, but it also belongs to Heideggerian perception of the world and existence. The word 'horizon' indicates the meeting line of the earth's surface and the sky, or the circular area of the earth as seen from a particular viewpoint, and is derived from the Greek *horizon* (*kyklos*; limiting

[380] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 222.
[381] "Niels Hansen Jacobsen: Skyggen", Vejen Kunstmuseum http://vejenkunstmuseum.dk/Dansk/samlingen/skulpturer2013/skyggen.html

(circle)) but it always refers to that which is visible at a certain point, from a certain perspective; it is never refers to the fullest scope of a subject. Therefore the horizon is bound by the limits of perception, and is defined as "the limit or background against which perception or understanding is possible."[382] Heidegger uses the metaphor of horizon in *Being and Time* (1926), which can be clarified in transcendental philosophy as: "the world of our own existence is the horizon in which our everyday understanding moves, so that from it and in reference to it the things we come across are intelligible to us [...] as things that can be useful for some purpose. The horizon of our world is primarily "meaning-giving".[383] The perspective through which we see the world, and perceive our own existence, is our horizon. On the first page of his treatise, Heidegger declares his "provisional aim is the interpretation of *time* as the possible horizon for any understanding whatsoever of Being."[384] Though the translators note the difference in meaning between the English meaning of horizon as potentially 'boundless' and capable of expansion, and the intended German sense of *Horizont*, which "provides the limits for certain intellectual activities performed 'within' it."[385] It could be argued that these limits apply not only experience and understanding of e.g., an object, but to existence itself, as the ability to exist up until the point of death. The horizon is a meeting point between earth and sky, with emphasis on the singularity of the perspective. The horizontal posture of the sculpture implies this boundary between states. The virtual cube theory, further elucidated in this chapter, in which the entire sculpture is theoretically 'contained' within a regular volumetric form, supports this idea by highlighting the negative and positive sculptural tensions.[386] Virtually 'condensing'

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[382] Anthony Flew and Stephen Priest, eds., *A Dictionary of Philosophy,* (London: Pan Books, 2002), 175.
[383] Magda King, *A Guide to Heidegger's Being and Time* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 6-7.
[384] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), 1.
[385] Heidegger, 1, footnote 4.
[386] Fernande Saint-Martin, *Semiotics of Visual Language*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 152.

the sculpture into a regular, cuboid form accentuates the formal balance of volumes. If negative space serves to intensify the kinaesthetics of the positive volume, then the triangular, wedge-formed area above the sculpture acts as a weight upon the positive volume. The effect suggests an immense effort required by the figure to rise, the head straining to face upwards as spatial energy is condensed into the sculptural form. *The Shadow* may allude to the notion of a limited perspective or horizon in the Heideggerian sense. If we are 'bound by the limits of perception', then the poetic text attached to the sculpture provides the viewer with another sphere (horizon) of potential perceivable material. The limits of perception are tested in the visual work. Hansen Jacobsen's highly individualised visual style is not bound to the naturalistic convention that governs the poetic text; linguistic convention means that this falls easily into the viewer's horizon of perception. Visual communication lacks this precision. It opens up possibilities of interpretation in relations to *The Shadow*; in the three dimensional space the sculpture occupies the horizontal plane; the ephemeral nature of the shadow suggests a dynamic fluidity, for shadows are not permanent, but evolve into new forms with the fluctuating light source.

Semiotic Analysis of *The Shadow*

If the artwork as a material object is the representamen, it is initially comprehended in terms of its material, the bronze verdigris in which it is rendered, and the elongated, roughly oblong form of fluidly gouged surfaces. It is from this standpoint of Peircean firstness, before the embodiment of qualisigns into meaningful forms that the atmosphere of the artwork is first experienced. Firstness, or the representamen, is characterised by its indivisibility from a whole and

association with emotional reaction.[387] Before the sculpture is read in terms of a figure, it is initially perceived as a three-dimensional composition, in which the arrangement of forms has a direct link to the viewer's perception, determined as atmosphere. The qualisign is the material quality, but the artwork as a thing in space, is also a sinsign, being a one-off. It becomes embodied once it is perceived as a series of qualisigns combined into a unique object. However, both the title and the text that accompany the artwork can be regarded as legisigns. The title of *The Shadow* is reproduced alongside the artwork and in exhibition catalogues as a replica of conventional linguistic usage, but without the artwork to qualify it, it is meaningless.

We know that the figural sculpture is a personification of death from the title that is attached, leaving aside the extended text for the moment. But that is only because we associate the word shadow, together with the eerie and inhuman appearance of the sculpture points to something that is otherworldly; these aspects are indexical of death, as is the shadow of the title. The artwork is not iconic of death because death is an abstract concept, a state of being we do not empirically experience but can only perceive in others. Therefore, as a state of being there is nothing to *resemble* the experience of death. Its object, that which it represents, is death, but it does not exactly resemble death as a biological process. It instead resembles an index of death, which is referred to by the title but fully explicated in the poetic sketch.

Text

Hansen Jacobsen renders visible two named concepts which are in themselves intangible and to an extent, invisible: a shadow, and death. These

[387] Nicole Everaert-Desmedt, "Peirce's Semiotics", *Signo*, ed., Louis Hébert, (Rimouski, Quebec, 2011) http://www.signosemio.com/peirce/semiotics.asp

abstract concepts are embodied, firstly through the sculpture, and secondly, the poetic text; the invisibility of death in the text is counteracted by its manifestation in bronze. The artist's desire to put words to his three-dimensional forms underlines the importance he places on language as instructive and integral to the work. The artistic handling of invisibility addressed in *The Shadow* is furthermore revealed by Hansen Jacobsen in a letter addressed to the brewer Carl Jacobsen in 1901, in which the artist writes:

> I hope to have your recognition that I have achieved my aim of producing the plastic in *The Shadow*. I wanted to create death through the shadow's fantastic and earthly appearance, it appears more appropriate to me that using the absolute human form; it is not merely mankind, but everything in the universe that is subject to transience.[388]

The artist's intention was to 'ground' death as a living, not merely human, being, and thus encapsulating all life on earth. The 'absolute human form', as he states, is not sufficient, for only a trace of humanity remains in the figure. The universality of the shadow as a concept therefore seems ideal to convey the global transience of life. There are three elements at play in *The Shadow*; the artwork as a material object, the title, and the short poem. If we first briefly examine the nature of the relation between the artwork and its title, the significance of the literary sketch is revealed. The artist makes explicit the link between the form death has taken and the choice of title for the work, and this grotesque form is a being lurking in the shadow of life.

The low, horizontal nature of the sculpture mirrors the 'shadow' of the title, suggesting that this form is not a real being, but the residue of another unseen

[388] "At jeg i "Skyggen" har naaet min opgave at fremstille den plastisk, haaber jeg maa have Deres Anerkendelse. Jeg har villet fremstille Døden ved Skyggens fantastiske og jordbundne Udseende, dette forekommer mig mere berettiget end at ville benytte den absolut menneskelige Form; det er jo ikke alene Mennesket, men alt i Universet, der er underkastet Forgængelighed." Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen. "Niels Hansen Jacobsen: Skyggen", Vejen Kunstmuseum, http://vejenkunstmuseum.dk/Dansk/samlingen/skulpturer2013/skyggen.html

object or form, just as a shadow cannot be cast without an originating object and a light source. The word 'shadow' therefore implies a projection from another form, a trace element that an original has undergone some manner of transformation. Shadows also have negative connotations as being oppressive, signifying a darkness or stalking. The lingering, stalking connotation of 'shadow' is later reflected in Hansen Jacobsen's text, in which he specifies the devious, insidious character of death as following footsteps. 'Invisible', 'concealed', 'unexpected', 'sneaking' and 'inevitable' are the approximate adjectival descriptions the artist attaches to the artwork through the text.

The Poetic Text of *The Night*

A forerunner of *The Shadow*, Hansen Jacobsen's *The Night* was completed in 1895 (fig. 107). This work bears a similarity to *The Shadow*, both in terms of his formal qualities, and in that the artist also wrote an ekphrastic text which concretises the visual narrative. The text aligns the sculptural personification of the night with a dark force that is as sinister as the Shadow, situating both works within broadly the same context. *The Night* was exhibited at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and in the Charlottenborg exhibition in Copenhagen the following year, where it was accompanied in the catalogue by this short poetic text:

> With bleeding wounds, for billions of years, he has fought against the day, with some humiliation. He shields his eye, and awaits the hour, that day is forever overpowered.[389]

That this text was printed in the catalogue of its second exhibition is noteworthy, as it highlights the significance Hansen Jacobsen placed on such

[389] "Med blødende Saar / Milliarder af Aar, / Han mod Dagen har stridt, / Ydmygelse lidt. / End skærmer han Øjet Og venter Stunden, / Da Dagen for Evig / Er overvunden." Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen. "Niels Hansen Jacobsen: Natten", Vejen Kunstmuseum, http://www.vejenkunstmuseum.dk

verbal representation. The sculpture was further exhibited under two further titles, and another version of the poetic text was included in the 1914 atelier catalogue from Skibelund Krat, in which *The Shadow* text is also found:

> For millennia he has struggled against the light, demeaned and enslaved.
> He still hopes sometime to be ruler.[390]

These poetic texts were not translated for inclusion in the Paris exhibition, as Munch's texts, and so were limited in their exposure to a Nordic audience, despite the fact that Hansen Jacobsen exhibited internationally. The central narrative of both versions of *The Night* is essentially the same, in which the personification of the night (or darkness) is in combat against day, humiliated and endlessly awaiting the victory of dark over light. The devil-like representation of the night, with bat-like wings is a precursor to *The Shadow* both in terms of visual representation and the poetic text which accompanies it. The horizontal form the figure takes, similar to that of *The Shadow*, is outstretched under the protective shield of wings, and crawling close to the ground. This unnatural pose differentiates the being from humanity, though it retains human-like features, and sets it in a different reality, just as *The Shadow* (personifying Death) appears to hover above the surface of the earth. Stylistically, *The Shadow* and *The Night* personifications share the same non-human aesthetic as Munch's *Scream* figure.

Hansen Jacobsen revisits the text, though it is unclear when the revision took place, as only the time of publication can be confirmed through the catalogues mentioned. At a separate exhibition in 1901 at Den Frie Udstilling, Copenhagen, it was exhibited under the title *Mørket (Darkness*). The title was also extended in the 1914 atelier catalogue, as *Natten, der Rejser Sig* (*Night Rises*, fig. 103 no. 3). This drives the viewer to a different implication for the narrative of the

[390] "I Aartusinder har han kæmpet mod Lyset, nedværdiget og underkuet. Dog haaber han paa engang at blive Enehersker.", Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen. "Niels Hansen Jacobsen: Natten", Vejen Kunstmuseum, http://www.vejenkunstmuseum.dk

sculpture, one in which the darkness of night is not merely existing, but growing, extending and taking over, and it plays into the sentiment of the poetic text which accompanies it. However, the notion of eventual, inevitable conquest remains.

Though both texts written by Hansen Jacobsen to verbally illustrate *The Night* convey a similar linguistic message, there are subtleties of difference between the two texts. In the first text, the first four lines consist of five syllables in rhyming pairs. The poem closes with two lines of ten syllables, also a rhyming pair. The steady slow beat produced by such a structure differs in genre and style to the Munch fragment, which appears as a stream of consciousness, a frantic and unedited version of events, as recalled by the persona. With Hansen Jacobsen's first poem, the reader is guided through the narrative which is calculated and refined, as evident in the rhyming scheme, to succinctly convey by verbal means the 'essence' of the sculpture.

Locating the essence of a work, is that perhaps the function of a text when appended to an artwork? This appears to be an accurate appraisal of the text/image dynamic in the works by Hansen Jacobsen and Munch analysed in this study. As outlined in the chapter on atmosphere, it is perhaps fair to assume that artists who attach specific texts to an artwork prescribe and direct the viewer towards the 'correct' ('intentional') interpretation; the viewer is 'told' by the artist how to read the narrative of the presented visual content, and by extension, how to react. The artist thus dispels the infinite narrative possibilities their work can suggest, and restricts the viewer's imagination to a blinkered gaze. The text therefore becomes the filter through which the work is interpreted, and all aspects of the work's visuality, its form, content, and scale must add up to the textual counterpart.

Comparing Texts - *Night* and *Shadow*

There are five narrative texts at work in Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture *The Night*; the 1896 text, the 1896 titles, the revised 1914 text, the 1914 elaborated title, and finally, the sculpture itself. The nuanced linguistic aspects of the sculpture add layers of potential meaning to the work, and hold some influence over the viewer's interpretation. Mieke Bal defines a narrative text as that which communicates "a story in a particular medium [...] A story is the content of that text, and produces a particular manifestation, inflection, and 'colouring' of a fabula [which is a] series of logically and chronologically related events."[391] The narrative text is not limited by medium either, and may consist singularly or in combination of visual, verbal, and architectural parts.[392] The division of the sculpture into five individual yet interrelated narrative texts allows the viewer to comprehend something of the extent to which textual and visual elements associated with the same motif interact. As the narrative text is a bound by medium, the textual elements of *The Night* can be grouped together (both the poems and the titles), while the sculpture remains the sole visual representation and primary art object, and thereby can be regarded as a benchmark against which the verbal can be assessed. When the visual is intended as an illustration of a verbal text, then the opposite may be the case. However, because the textual interpretations are not integrated on the physical surface of the sculpture, I argue that they demand to be regarded as separate narrative texts. Considering *The Night*, or indeed, *The Shadow*, the viewer is not confronted with text but the purely visual, three-dimensional artwork; instead, the associated textual elements must be actively sought out, either through a museum label, exhibition catalogues or scholarship. The fabula is the plot, and the story is the manner in which it is made

[391] Mieke Bal, *Narratology*, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2009), 5.
[392] Bal, 5.

stylistically presentable to the viewer, i.e., linguistic tone and the selection of terms, as well as the visual treatment in the sculpture. Focalisation is a concept Bal further examines, originating in Genette's theory, which corresponds to narratival perspective and as it determines the fabula, it is therefore a crucial component in defining the viewer's interpretation of a narrative text. Bal defines focalisation as the relation between "the story represented and the concept of narrator to its (material) representation."[393]

What is the perspective (or focalisation) of a work of sculpture? Perspective with regard to the three-dimensional is primarily a spatial issue, due to a work's embeddedness in the viewer's spatial reality, rather than the two-dimensional picture plane. The perspective is the viewpoint from which the viewer interprets the work. As a general point, the embeddedness of a sculpture in reality is an arguable point, and dependent on the nature of the work; in the context of Hansen Jacobsen, the diagonal aspect of *The Shadow* and *Night* suggests the figures' emergence from their sculptural materiality to puncture the viewer's reality. The viewer can adjust their physical position in relation to a work; in the round they can examine it from all angles, to the extent permitted by the artist. The process of walking around a sculpture can unravel the work's narrative; moving from point to point as physically allowed by the dimensions of the sculpture is a method of reading the work and interpreting the narrative. In this sense sculpture is read with the entire body, its materiality engages the viewer on a sensory level, the totality of which is beyond the capabilities of the two-dimensional, either verbal or visual.

The fabula is the narrative conveyed to the viewer as they circumnavigate the sculpture, and the story, in Bal's terminology, is therefore the aesthetic treatment of the fabula. The relation between the narrative text(s), the

[393] Mieke Bal, *Narratology*, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2009), 165.

story and the fabula can be further demonstrated in *The Night.* The sculpture is the primary narrative text, but the artist embeds the visual narrative with linguistic texts which elaborate on the visual by providing such additional aspects as colour, temporality, spatiality and emotion to a work made of plaster (and later cast in bronze after the artist's death). In the 1896 text, *Night* is mentioned to have 'bleeding wounds', a graphic detail that is added to the visual, prompting the viewer to imagine the colour red in the monochromatic work. Temporality is also expressed in the text, in a sense that the sculpture does not imply, as both texts refer to the eternal struggle through 'millions of years' and 'millennia'. The defensively-poised wings are not referred to in either text, but from the line that *Night* 'shields' his eyes one can surmise that the wings provide protection, thereby the text and the visual complement each other without overlap or direct representation. The choice of words in both versions of the text furthermore indicates the emotional tone of the sculpture. Both texts refer to humiliation and subjugation of the Night, enabling the viewer to comprehend the cowering pose as both a sinister and degraded symbol. Neither the 1896 nor the 1914 text contain reference to the sculpture's subject of 'Night', though the text suggests this antithesis in the ensuing struggle against light and day. That contextual information is contained within the title, hence underlining the importance of the title text in the relaying of narrative. The difference in title also bears some significance in the reading of the work; the alternative title *Night Rises* implies movement and dynamism associated with an empowered, victorious being. The earlier title of *The Night* is more allegorical in tone, placing greater focus on the personification of the Night as a figure, rather than narrative action.

We are aware of ourselves and our presence in the world, and perceive our own perception. Merleau-Ponty writes that the body "sees itself seeing; it

touches itself touching; it is visible and sensitive for itself."[394] To what extent is the sculpture *aware* of its text, and vice versa? Conventionally, an artwork consists of a primary visual work, in which textual elements such as the title are subsumed within the artwork as a whole as 'descriptors' or labels of the work. This ensures that it is readily identifiable and distinguishable from other works. If an artwork is considered as a perceiving 'body' in itself, as per Merleau-Ponty, the addition of intentionally poetic texts suggests an artistically-rendered self-awareness within the entire artwork that 'sees itself seeing'. I argue that this communication between textual and visual components betrays the atmosphere of the work; analysing the translation of this core 'feeling' is one of the central objectives of this thesis. The atmosphere evoked in the viewer is based on their perception and subjectivised by the viewer's individuality. Emotionally, the poetic text and sculpture of *The Night* are complementary, yet the text is not a verbal transcription of the visual work. The text provides an elaborated narrative that cannot be found within the visual confines of the sculpture, and as such, each element retains a degree of independence from the other. The 1896 text specifies the figure's shielding of his eyes ("end skærmer han øjet"), yet the figure's sight is unobstructed in the sculpture. The distinct distaste for light and diurnality is suggested in the sculpture by the zoomorphic wings and ears, modelled on the nocturnal bat.

In the case of *The Shadow*, there is a greater sense of self-awareness shared by the sculpture and the text. *The Shadow* is aesthetically reflective of the text. It is a visualisation of invisibility and concealment, and Hansen Jacobsen has created this illusion by abstracting the human form into inhumanity. There is a more cohesive atmosphere transmitted by the text and the sculpture in *The Shadow* than in *The Night.* This deeper level of self-awareness is due to the narrowing of

[394] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind", in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, eds., Galen A. Johnson and Michael B. Smith, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 124.

the text's narrative field, so that it is focused more clearly on visual aspects of invisibility, hiding, reappearance, and sneaking. *The Shadow* is a work of free-flowing, dynamic movement; great cascading swags envelop the figure as it progresses close to the ground. Its neck fully extends, the head, slightly askew, the hand below ready to grasp, and gouged-out hollow eyes are penetrative (fig. 99). It is the verbs from the text that find their visual equivalents, such as 'gjemmer sig', 'indhenter', 'dukker op', 'snigende', and 'at undfly' [translated as: hiding, catching up, reappear, sneaking and to avoid.] Verbs progress the narrative of the sculpture, and they are also the mode through which the stylistic visual treatment of the subject finds most common ground.

The Czech Structuralist Jan Mukařovský describes a number of aspects of the text and image overlap in literature an art. For instance, while one art may seek to imitate another, "a word remains a word, and by copying painting, literature attains only the discovery of a new possibility (in some cases, a new configuration of possibilities) of the artistic exploitation of a word."[395] In this sense it is language that 'learns' new ways by expressing the visual form. Hansen Jacobsen's poetic writings seek to describe the conditions of night falling, and of death claiming lives in as poetic means as possible, using conventional poetic devices such as rhyme, personification (in both the sculpture and the poetry) and metaphor. The example Mukařovský gives is the translation of visual aspects such as colour and light into text, which demands broad and varied linguistic description, and so he claims that "the differentiation of expressions signifying colours and lights can also be achieved through unusual derivations, and derivation is therefore elevated to a means of poetic effect."[396] Therefore the choices to be made through language in order to convey the visual are enormously varied due to

[395] Jan Mukařovský, *The Word and Verbal Art*, John Burbank and Peter Steiner, trans., eds., (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), 208.
[396] Mukařovský, 208-09.

the differences in individual perception. An inherent difference between the *Scream* text and Hansen Jacobsen's poems is that the *Scream* is supposedly rooted in memory, a motif recollected through visual and verbal representation. In *The Shadow* and *The Night*, however, a different text function exists; these are allegorical representations, and as such, the text which accompanies them is poetic and metaphoric, moving from the perceived 'realism' of Munch's almost confessional recollection to Hansen Jacobsen's grand poeticisation of Death.

Dimensions of Vision

Two-dimensional and three-dimensional art are inherently different forms, but in terms of the type of perception they demand of the viewer, do not differ to that great an extent. It is tempting to suggest that sculpture is a tactile surface while painting is a visual one, but Fernande Saint-Martin argues against Riegl's claim that three dimensional forms cannot be grasped by sight alone (which can only perceive two-dimensional surfaces at a time) but through the sense of touch.[397] The argument for hapticity over ocularity is in my opinion a convincing one, and can be illustrated using *The Shadow*. Visual language is not restricted to the representation of the perceptibly visual; rather it can be deemed appropriate "because its spatialising character is directly suitable for the modelling of a reality which is deployed simultaneously in three dimensions but across different sensory spatial levels."[398] The shadow as a perceivable 'thing' in reality is a visual phenomenon, creating by a light cast on an object. However, in the context of this artwork, the shadow becomes symbolic of death, a state of being which is intangible and unknowable, yet through visual language it is effectually made

[397] Fernande Saint-Martin, *Semiotics of Visual Language*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 151.
[398] Saint-Martin, 152.

'real'. Though *The Shadow* clutches an hourglass as a memento mori, it is not solely by visual language that our understanding of the visual form takes place. The text, both the title and the supplementary poem concretise these ideas. How much of this information would be knowable to the viewer without the assistance from the text, as deemed necessary by the artist? When the artist repeats a motif across different media, is it truly a repetition, or is it an entirely new artwork that is being created?

The Poetic Narrative of *The Shadow*

The literary form used by Hansen Jacobsen in writing supplementary texts is furthermore significant in addressing these issues. Of all the literary arts, poetry is perhaps the most closely aligned with the visual. Shklovsky somewhat refutes the idea that poetry is "thinking in images", claiming that it is rather the recollection of images that have passed through time,[399] while imagery is "intended to bring together heterogeneous acts and objects, explaining the unknown via the known".[400] If the objective of poetry as an art is to clarify an idea, and make the incommunicable clear, then its function in direct relation to the artwork which has presumably sparked it, by the same artist, appears to be no different. The textual clarification of an artwork therefore becomes a question of purpose whereby the sculpture poeticises the images set out in the poetic text, and the concept is collated in the title.

What is perhaps jarring is the disparity between the style of the textual narrative, and the sculptural treatment. The attenuated form of *The Shadow*, which appears to swirl like wisps of smoke is highly expressive, demonstrating the artist's

[399] Viktor Shklovsky, "Art, as Device", trans. Alexandra Berlina, *Poetics Today*, Vol. 36, No. 3, (2015), 158.
[400] Shklovsky, 157.

visceral, non-naturalistic response to the subject matter. Hansen Jacobsen approached the treatment of this work with a painterly effect, the undulations of the form corresponding to a sweeping brush-stroke, while fully exploiting the inherent qualities of sculpture by gouging deeply into the form to high contrast, tenebristic effect. The illusionism of *The Shadow* is such that it seems impossible to represent it through the medium of sculpture; the painterly effect does not render it two-dimensional, but as taking on the qualities of air or gas in the atmosphere, and as such, corresponds with invisibility expressed in the poem.

The poetic text, however, is regularly ordered in terms of rhythm and rhyme. The opening word, 'death', immediately summarises the narrative meaning of the sculpture, functioning as a type of subtitle to the work. The tone of the language is formal, yet precise and grammatically correct. Hansen Jacobsen's use of language does not demonstrate the liberal, abstracted expression of his sculpture; it is conventional, yet intensely and visually evocative. Therefore, it is not through the non-conventional use of language that Hansen Jacobsen 'illustrates' his sculpture with this text, but via the evocation of a series of images within the poetic text which function as verbal supports to the visual form.

The visual images described in the text are to some degree equally embodied in the sculpture. The poem is series of verbal iterations, as derived from the same visual source. The poem is as follows; I have numerically indicated the verbal imagery for which can be found visual correlates in the sculpture, while alphabetically noted are lines which situate *The Shadow* in a wider narrative:

A. Death, oftentimes unseen,

1. Hiding in the dirt and dust,

2. Catching up to reappear,

B. When we least expect it,

3. Ever sneaking in our footsteps,

C. Impossible to escape.

Lines A, B, and C relate to the viewer's perception and reaction to *The Shadow*. Lines B and C relate to the object of the text, those whom Death is stalking, and for such aspects a visual correlation in the sculpture cannot be located; these lines are designed to prompt the viewer's imagination. That which can be identified as having both visual and textual presence in *The Shadow,* are lines 1-3. These images are particularly visual. Though it can be argued that the invisibility of death is merely an absence of perceptible visibility, the presence of death relates to the perspective of the viewer; the potential invisibility of a three-dimensional, visual object is paradoxical. Read in isolation from the sculpture, lines 1-3 evoke a mental image. These verbs describe physical movements: to hide, to catch up, to reappear, to sneak. This relates to Saint-Martin's examination of sculpture as having kinaesthetic qualities, that is, "the projection of possible movements in reality or the felt awareness of the results of apprehension and manipulation of certain parts of a sculpture."[401] The sculpture anticipates these movements through its dynamic form. The illusionistic, diaphanous layer which cloaks the back of the figure implies an emergence from hiding, its unconcealment from darkness into light, in a similar narrative arc to *The Night*. The sense of stealth and the unexpectedness of the figure is further enhanced by the figure's diagonally elongated posture, close to the ground as though stalking prey. The posture is both streamlined and elevated from a single point in the sculpture's base. Taking in the entire sculpture as a volume, the positive space of the sculpture occupies a wedge-shaped mass, with the feet as the axis, and this form echoes the motion of opening, like the raising of a lid from a box. The raising effect enhances the notion of emergence and dynamic movement, forging an illusion of the figure lifting from the ground, as per the text.

[401] Fernande Saint-Martin, *Semiotics of Visual Language*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 152.

Positive and Negative Space

The virtual cube, which theoretically 'envelops' the extremities of the sculpture in a volumetric form, highlights the perception of kinaesthetic energy as a tension between positive and negative space.[402] By applying this theory to *The Shadow*, the long rectangular volume which would incorporate the entire sculpture reveals the positive and corresponding negative volumes which define both the sculpture and its reception. The acute angle of the sculpture as it rises from its base creates a wedge-like, positive form; the negative space mirrors this form, occupying the 'empty' triangular volume of the virtual cube. The role of negative space in the production of atmosphere cannot be understated; I argue that negative space is the site of atmosphere in an artwork. The convention of language dictates a certain structural sequence; sculpture has no such dictation. In sculpture, the multiplicity of angles from which the work can be perceived means that from the viewer's perspective, the spatial energies are in a constant state of flux and cannot be reduced to a single frontal plane, such as that of a painting.[405] In claiming this point I do not ignore the fact that sculpture is often created with an optimal viewpoint to maximise visual or narrative impact, or that a sculpture may be framed or anchored by its built environment so that it cannot be freely circumnavigated. Even in such conditions, sculpture offers the view a multiplicity of perspectives that exceeds two-dimensional art.

By creating a volume of its own, negative space serves to highlight the spatial dynamic between areas of positive space. Negative space demonstrates the effects of kinaesthetic movement in sculpture, absorbing it like a mould. Language can be considered a positive space of its own, but when appended to a specific

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402 Fernande Saint-Martin, *Semiotics of Visual Language*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 152.
405 Saint-Martin, 180.

artwork by the artist, it functions in a similar way to negative space; by emphasising the kinaesthetic relation between visual parts, language 'fills in the gaps', as it were, with narrative detail. Such gaps in an artwork are not exactly spatial, yet they are visible as narrative omissions which the viewer must fill for themselves. They are aspects which suggest a story, the remainder of which is supplied by the viewer through their own subjective filter and emotional response. An example of such a narrative gap in *The Shadow* is the treatment of the figure's head; the features of the elongated, cuboid cranium are deeply cut and broadly delineated. This is an expressionistically, subjectively rendered form, and as such, requires greater mental processing than a naturalistic representation. The rationale behind this artistic treatment is in turn revealed by the text; the otherworldly representation is clarified by its textual identification as the figure of Death, and as a non-human entity, its appearance and suggested movements are equally non-naturalistic.

The sculpture furthermore provides visual representation of suggested ideas in the text. The hourglass in the figure's left hand is not mentioned explicitly in the text, but the idea it symbolises, the irrevocably finite existence of the individual, is alluded to in the closing line "...impossible to escape." The iconographic significance of the hourglass is a long-established in art history as an attribute of both Death and Time, and becomes a visual metaphor for the line "impossible to escape". The notion of concealment, as noted in the text as hiding in the dirt, sneaking up on individuals and tracking footsteps find their visual equivalents in the acute angle of the sculpture as it rises from its base. The boundary of forms between the base and the figure is largely indistinguishable, a further elaboration on the concealment and stealth alluded to in the text. However, as the sculpture was completed in 1897-98, and the text is first published in 1914, the date of the text cannot be ascertained; however, its later appearance would suggest a later date of creation, so that the visual forms the basis for the textual,

and therefore, can be considered as an ekphrastic text. Mitchell claims that a text can "refer to an object, describe it, invoke it, but it can never bring its visual presence before us the way pictures do."[406] However, it is not necessary to perform any of these functions in relation to the Hansen Jacobsen sculptures, because the visual works are of primary importance. The raises the question of what purpose describing, invoking or referring to an object bears, when the work is positioned before the viewer. The function of text in *The Shadow* functions as the enforcement of a set narrative, so that the viewer is unequivocal in their interpretation. The text serves to underscore certain visual qualities in the work, and therefore, it can be claimed that the text and the visual convey a similar feeling of atmosphere to the viewer. However, the treatment of the sculpture is of such visual impact that verbalizing its form and meaning could equally subtract from the implicit suggestiveness of the form, tightening the range of atmospheric feelings the viewer can perceive of the work.

The concept of a positive-negative dichotomy in the casting of light upon an object also has narratological resonance with Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture *The Shadow*. The concept of death and that of the shadow are the same; one can easily interchange the word 'death' for 'shadow' in the opening line of the poem, and the remaining lines would be equally relevant. A shadow is only embodied when formed from an object or being, it ceases to exist without a light shining on this originating object. The text, when read with the angle of the shadow in mind, suggest that the shadow is thereby an extension of the self. And equating the shadow with death permits the thought that death is inherent within all beings.

[406] W. J. T. Mitchell, "Ekphrasis and the Other" in *Picture Theory,* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 152.

The Concept of Shadows

The sculpture is recognised as a representation of Death, clutching its hourglass attribute, and the title *The Shadow* is metonymic of death. A shadow is a mark, an impermanent stain subject to adjustments of light. It is a negative result of light being cast over a positive form. The shadow is in some respects quite similar to the tache, which Sjåstad describes as "the true mark of paint (the proof of the reality of paint) and the opposite of language."[407] The tache is a blot, blemish or mark, but shadows have an ephemeral quality that is absent in the tache. Furthermore, the shadow is not a mark born "from chaos, chance, and hazard"[408] but a result of light cast on an object, its form dependent on the angle of the light source, and so is subject to the laws of physics. Yet it still takes the form of a dark impenetrable blotch, imprinting the object from which the shadow is cast onto another surface; in a shadow there is nothing, but still it is visible consequence, and it is in this manner that the shadow mimics death. It is also interesting that Sjåstad suggests the tache is "the opposite of language"; rather than being structureless, for it can be argued that a shadow bears the structure of its original object, shadows oppose language as the visual articulation of their object's form. Yet the sculpture still bears as its title *The Shadow*. The work itself is painterly in execution, and must be compared in both structure and narrative to some degree with the formlessness of the tache.

Shadows in themselves are "absences of light", yet they still "require light sources plus transparent or translucent regions where light would have entered were it not for objects that block the source."[409] Another way of looking at the

[407] Øystein Sjåstad, *A Theory of the Tache in Nineteenth-Century Painting*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 19.
[408] Sjåstad, 19.
[409] Roy Sorensen, *Seeing Dark Things: The Philosophy of Shadows*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 26-7.

textual appendage to an artwork is its potential to function as a light source, which clarifies and illuminates the visual aspect. If the text illuminates the object, the cast shadow must be the Peircean interpretant, formed in the viewer's mind as the sum of perceived parts. Therefore, the text is the representamen, and the artwork the icon in this triadic scheme. However, if the 'shadow' in this formula is equated with the artwork, the object upon which the light source is cast is the text, with the viewer's perceptual powers acting as illumination. To summarise the analogy: the viewer casts their perception over the textual object, and the resulting shadow, or negative space is the visual representation. This suggests that the textual component has primacy over visual representation, and that the artwork in fact originated from this. This can be the case in illustrations, but in Hansen Jacobsen's *The Shadow*, the text is most likely ekphrastic. This may be a significant point in determining which came first, the text or the image; however, it is irrelevant to the present reception of an artwork, in which the viewer (and in the case of *The Shadow*) is very frequently confronted with both the visual and verbal aspects of the same artwork simultaneously, either in museum literature or secondary scholarship. In this instance, the viewer must navigate between the artwork as a sculptural volume, and the semantic content of the poem in a sequence that lacks predetermination.

Title, Text, Artwork: A Semiosis

I intend to demonstrate that text and image, when associated with the same artwork, function in the same sense as negative and positive forms. While text and image can *physically* occupy the same space, because of the fundamental differences in visual and verbal communication they cannot function on the same terms. The result is that in Peircean semiosis, the boundaries between the representamen and object become blurred. The representamen, the thing that stands

for another thing, can be validly understood as the legisign, the poetic text (which represents the sculpture) or the sinsign, the sculpture (which represents the poetic text). As the poetic text is linguistic and ruled by the conventions of grammar, it is a legisign; the sculpture is a spatio-temporal thing and therefore a sinsign. The object in turn can be either the poetic text or the sculpture as the thing that is being represented, and in a sense, is the originating sign of the semiosis. However, there is a difference in secondness between the verbal and the visual; the poetic text, as a legisign, is a symbol of sculpture as it is governed by conventional use of language. Consequently, with the sculpture as the object, it functions as an icon of its representamen the poetic text, as it resembles the text to some degree; these similarities have been already outlined in this chapter. There is a subsection to the textual component however, and that is the title; the title bears the qualities of a legisign, both in terms of its linguistic medium, and the function of a title as the identification and narrative summation of an artwork. In and of itself, the title represents nothing, but instead 'points' to the sculpture as a thing; by extension, *The Shadow* is then considered the title of both the visual and verbal aspects of the artwork. This leads to the interpretant, the third trichotomy in which infinite ideas are sparked by interpretation of the representamen, which continues to set off the process of semiosis in an endless cycle. The interpretant is regarded as the translation of the sign from representamen to understanding, allowing for the complex interpretation of meaning.[410] The interpretant(s) will naturally differ, depending on whether the sculpture or the poetic text is considered as the representamen, i.e., the starting point for interpretation.

The translation of the idea or artistic intention between sculpture and literature is made clear in *The Shadow*. What links the visual and verbal representation on the same subject is the mental image, but it consists of two parts;

[410] Albert Atkin, "Peirce's Theory of Signs", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, (Summer 2013) https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/peirce-semiotics/

the intention on the part of the artist, and the mental images perceived by the viewer. Artist intentionality is manifested in their resulting artworks, though the driving aesthetic behind their creation can be also gleaned from statements made by the artist; such a letter from Hansen Jacobsen to the patron Carl Jacobsen is quoted earlier in this chapter. Intentionality differs from the artist's state of mind. The mental images sparked in the viewer by what is represented in both text and image is the interpretation of material presented, and thus forms the basis for this study. That the translation of ideas is central to the thesis, and the Peircean interpretant is the translation of the sign's object is not without significance; ideas are not merely actualised and embodied, but granted depth of meaning through their aesthetic, artistic treatment. The translation of ideas from theme to artwork is the artist's interpretant of their object, and subsequently the subject of semiotic inquiry from the viewer. The work of art is a translation in itself, "designed to serve as an intermediary between its author and a collectivity."[411]

[411] Jan Mukařovský, "Art as a Semiotic Fact", in *Structure, Sign, and Function*, eds., and trans., John Burbank and Peter Steiner, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 82.

Part Three: Literary Sources for Artworks

Introduction: Literary Sources for Artworks

Having examined the artwork-title relationship, as well as texts written by the artist, this final section examines the text and image dynamic in a third category, that of the literary text which is used as the source idea of an artwork. Belonging to the literary genre, this type of text differs from those evaluated in preceding chapters as one in which the artist interprets a pre-existing work of literary art in their visual idiom. The themes of illness, death and the psychological self are prevalent throughout the works evaluated here, and should be viewed as the thread which links the artworks throughout this thesis. The concept of translation also lies at the centre of this study, whereby an eidetic idea or experience is translated between visual and verbal media by the artist; the various effects of this translation is the subject of this study.

This section will analyse the literary sources of two specific works by Niels Hansen Jacobsen and Ejnar Nielsen. In addition to the texts written by the sculptor to accompany works, Hansen Jacobsen explicitly based a number of his works on literary texts, namely the fairytales of Hans Christian Andersen. This chapter will examine the sculpture *Death and the Mother* (1892, fig. 110), which, unlike *The Shadow*, is explicitly based on Andersen's *Story of a Mother* (1847). The second chapter of this section explores Ejnar Nielsen's four illustrations of Karl Larsen's short story *The Old Man's Child* (1900, figs. 123-130), each of which contain a quotation from the story in a cartouche.

The extent of interactions between text and image is evident in the varied media included in this research, comprising of painting, sculpture, print and illustration. At the core of this text and image study is spatial relations, narrative

and atmosphere, and semiotic analysis. Thematically, Nielsen's illustrations and Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture are closely linked; both depict the agony and anguish brought by the death of a child. Both works specify particular portions of text as the basis of the work, which are then reproduced either in an exhibition catalogue, or in the case of the illustration, within the work itself. Levinson's allusive title, which refers to something beyond the work, can be applied to *The Old Man's Child*, as it bears the same title as the story it illustrates and to Hansen Jacobsen's amended title, which simultaneously distinguishes and connects it with Andersen's *Story of a Mother*.[412]

The point of origin for both *Death and the Mother* and *The Old Man's Child* are established literary works, written externally, separately and prior to the artworks concerned. Therefore, both the sculpture and drawings can be categorised as illustrations. Illustrations feature prominently in Nielsen's oeuvre and take the conventional form of pen and ink drawings; sculpture is not usually termed as an illustration, yet when it takes an established literary text as its thematic basis I maintain that it possesses some of the characteristics of an illustration. Genette lists illustrations as iconic paratexts of a text, in which the visualisation of a verbal text can be said to resemble that text. This means that a similarity must exist between two media, that (in this instance) the sculpture or drawing must look like the content contained in the originating linguistic text. Generally, an illustration transposes the narrative of the linguistic text into visual terms, so that it is rendered clear and legible to an audience. Illustration is both ornamental and supplementary to a text, pictorialising the central idea of a text in full or in part. The literary texts which serve as sources to both Hansen Jacobsen and Nielsen were conceived of separately to their illustrations, so that the artwork follows on from the text in a type of ekphrasis, one in which the visual provides detailed description of the

[412] Jerrold Levinson, "Titles", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 44 no. 1 (Autumn 1985), 37.

textual. A visual ekphrasis could exist; mimesis, or imitation, is illusionistic representation of an object or scene, literal or contrived, and an illustration is not a mere visual imitation of verbal representation. The artistic technique of faithfully imitating an object, resulting in mimetic visual representation, can be likened to the grammar of language: both technique and grammar provide a structure upon which to base representation. The word ekphrasis, derived from the Greek meaning 'description', implies an artistic (re)interpretation from one art form to another, and I argue that this term is not limited by its etymology (perhaps only by convention) to only refer to visual to textual description. As the illustration directly correlates with the narrative text, it performs a narrative function by creating a 'visual presence' of the written word. It can therefore be claimed that illustrations must distil some essence of the original verbal representation as an inherent part of their own existence, and the translation of this essence is what imbues a literary text and illustrative artwork with a shared atmosphere. Atmosphere in the context of this thesis refers to the feeling that permeates a work and affects the viewer. In the case of illustration, the artist shares the perspective of the reader in reading the literary work, so that the artist interprets the literary work as the reader would, and the latter must additionally interpret the artist's interpretation. This continuity of feeling transferred from the text, to the artist, and to the reader/viewer is the atmosphere of a work. In this thesis I evaluate the relation between text and image by examining the atmosphere created in the literary text, and compare it to that evoked by the visual representation.

An illustration externalises the mental images evoked in a text, it enlivens them and functions as a pictorial representation of a specific portion of narrative, and is frequently tagged with the quote from the text to which it directly refers. Illustration can be considered as a secondary element as its existence is based on the literary text which it illustrates. However, this attitude demeans and devalues the integrity of an illustration, or indeed any visual art which takes as its

origin a literary text. The viewer, however, is presented with two versions of a text; one that was created by the author of the literary text (which may naturally include intertextual elements in itself, and may not be wholly original as a text), and that of the artist who illustrates it, for the artist interprets the writer's interpretation of an idea and translates it into visual language. Sculpture can be regarded as illustrative as narrative conveyed by visual means, in the same sense as two-dimensional representation which has a strong textual basis; examples of such include sculpture depicting figures and scenes from classical mythology, or ecclesiastical sculpture, in which the Final Judgement and other biblical stories are represented in low relief on the tympanum. However, illustrations are conventionally interspersed amidst the text of a book, and in such a format they become secondary to the literary text, rather than artworks in their own right. However, when the same principles apply to *Death and the Mother*, insofar as the text from the story is attached to the artwork title in printed matter (exhibition catalogues, scholarly texts, etc.), and it is recognised as being linked to the Andersen story, then it too becomes an unconventional form of illustration, one that has wrested itself free of the secondary standing of most illustrations on paper.

Chapter 7: Niels Hansen Jacobsen, *Death and the Mother* (1892)

Niels Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture *Death and the Mother* secured his international reputation among contemporaries like Auguste Rodin at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts Champ-de-Mars exhibition in 1893; Hansen Jacobsen was admitted as a member, which allowed him to submit two works per year to the exhibition.[413] In the following year, the sculpture's entry in the exhibition catalogue of the 1894 Charlottenborgs Forårsudstilling (Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition, Copenhagen) included the final lines of Andersen's *Story of a Mother* (*Historien om en Moder*, 1847).[414] This indicated to the audience that the denouement of the story served as the central motif of the sculpture. The significance of the text is further indicated by its inclusion in Hansen Jacobsen's 1901 exhibition catalogue, where a photograph of the work is reproduced (fig. 104). While the texts written by Hansen Jacobsen for *The Shadow* and *The Night Rises* are not included in the 1901 catalogue, two other works which are explicitly linked to H. C. Andersen stories, *The Sea Witch* (1893, fig. 117) and *The Little Mermaid* (1901, fig. 118) are both listed as such, though without quotation from the respective stories. Like *The Shadow,* the relevant lines from *Story of a Mother* also appear in the 1914 catalogue from the sculptor's atelier at Skibelund Krat, which describe the loss of a child, as stolen by a personified force (fig. 103 no. 4):

> She bent her head to her lap, and Death left with her child to the unknown land.

[413] Niels Theodor Mortensen, *Billedhuggeren Niels Hansen Jacobsen*, (Odense: Forlaget Arnkrone, 1945), 33.
[414] Hans Christian Andersen, "Historien om en Moder", in *H. C. Andersens Eventyr og Historier*, ed. Sophus Bauditz, (Copenhagen and Kristiania: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1905), 399-405.

(Hun bøjede sit Hoved ned i sit Skjød, og Døden gik med hendes Barn ind i det ubekjendte Land.)

The original text in the Andersen story differs slightly, beginning instead with the conjunction 'og ('and'), and splitting the phrase into separate sentences at the comma. The repetition of 'og' and its use at the beginning of both phrases in Andersen's story has biblical allusions. An example is found in the creation narrative of Chapter One of Genesis. The last lines of the fairytale are especially reminiscent of verses 1:30-31, in which the conjunction 'and' is used twice at the beginning of a sentence: "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."[415] The Danish version also includes similar use of 'and'. Furthermore, there are religious overtones in the Andersen story: in the immediately preceding lines, the mother of the story begs God not to listen as she denies His will, hence the biblical writing style resonates with the content. Additionally, combining two sentences into one phrase allows for the text to be read with a flowing, poetic quality. In Andersen's story, this phrase is expressed as two separate sentences; the effect is one of quiet finality, and sombre in tone as the child is carried away by Death to the 'unknown land'

Og hun bøjede sit hoved ned i sit skød.

Og Døden gik med hendes barn ind i det ubekendte land.[416]

415 "Og Gud saae alt hvad han havde gjort, og see, det var saare godt, og der blev aften og morgen sjette dag."
Biblen, eller den Christne Kirkes Hellige Skrifter, trans. Jacob Christian Lindberg, (Copenhagen: Iversen, 1854), 3.

416 Hans Christian Andersen, "Historien om en Moder", in *H. C. Andersens Eventyr og Historier*, ed. Sophus Bauditz, (Copenhagen and Kristiania: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1905), 405.

Narrative of H. C. Andersen's *Story of a Mother*

As mentioned in Texts by the Artist with reference to texts written by Munch and Hansen Jacobsen, text included in exhibition catalogues or other published material can be regarded on one level as a paratext of the artwork with which it is associated, performing a commentary on the work itself, as determined by the artist. The final lines appended to *Death and the Mother*, as slightly amended by Hansen Jacobsen appear in such catalogues, and thus can also be termed paratexts. The narrative of Andersen's text, which is rich with visual imagery, reaches a crescendo in these final lines. Hansen Jacobsen's representation focuses on this precise moment by depicting two antithetical figures: the mother, collapsed in a heap of resignation, and Death, in flight with the child. A brief summary of Andersen's story is useful at this point to contextualise the narrative of the sculpture, which had greatly influenced Hansen Jacobsen since childhood.[417]

The fairytale text is written in the third person, in the past tense imperfect, indicating that the action has already taken place. The implication for visualizing the story is that the action has taken place. Hansen Jacobsen depicts that precise moment when Death turns and departs from the mother. The narrative begins with a mother who, while caring for her sick child, is visited by Death; exhausted, she rests her eyes and in that moment, Death, personified as an old man, departs with her child. In desperation the mother tries to find her child, and along the way she is met by Night disguised as an old woman, a hawthorn bush in the forest, and a lake, all of whom communicate to the woman their wish for some part of her in return for their help. She sings for Night, thaws the hawthorn with her blood and forsakes her eyes to the lake. Finally, she reaches the greenhouse of Death, where every plant represents a human heart. An old woman exchanges her

[417] Niels Theodor Mortensen, *Billedhuggeren Niels Hansen Jacobsen*, (Odense: Forlaget Arnkrone, 1945), 32.

white hair for the mother's long black locks, and tells the mother, now blind, to find her child's plant and shield it from Death as they await his return. Death arrives, and she threatens to disobey God's will by uprooting two plants if he fails to release her child. Death cannot disobey God, but instead shows her the destiny of the two lives she threatens to uproot: one is filled with joy, the other, a miserable existence. One is these is the fate of her child, but Death refuses to tell her which. Upon hearing this, and to spare her child from misery, she beseeches Death to take the child, to forget her pleading and release it from the potential suffering she foresaw. Thus Death departs with the child in his arms, leaving a shell of a woman behind.

Furthermore, Hansen Jacobsen amends the title of Andersen's fairytale for his sculpture. Instead of *Story of a Mother*, the sculptor emphasises the central figures equally in the title *Death and the Mother*. However, the character around which the narrative is wound, the sick child, is omitted from both titles, highlighting the suffering of the mother in the Andersen title, and the failed challenge of the mother against death in the Hansen Jacobsen title. In both instances, the child is subsumed into this narrative duel.

Visual Analysis

Before examining the interaction of text and (three-dimensional) image in this work, I propose a visual analysis of the sculpture to determine the extent of narrative conveyed by Hansen Jacobsen, prior to incorporating analysis of the textual element. Typically, illustrations are embedded in the primary text of printed matter, but as the textual element is separate from the artwork (in exhibition catalogues, and the Andersen story in editions of his fairytales), then the artwork can be said to gain visual independence from its textual source.

The plaster sculpture of *Death and the Mother* is a clear precursor of *The Shadow*; many elements in *Death and the Mother* evolve in Hansen Jacobsen's later sculpture, namely the ragged, inhuman face of Death (which is later personified as a 'shadow') and the diagonal composition. The sculpture is balanced by two distinct volumes which are linked frontally by two narrow pillars, i.e., the figure of Death's legs. The base consists of the mother of the narrative in a crumpled mound upon a plinth. The sculptor's wife Gabriele Hansen Jacobsen served as model for the mother; she had given up her career as a painter to assist her husband in his studio, and for this piece it is claimed she modelled for hours at a time on the ground, so as not to disturb the drapery folds (fig. 114).[418] Looming above on lean legs is Death in flight, as suggested by his striding step and ragged drapery blown by a swift departure. The child is tucked carefully into the figure's chest amid the rags. The separation of forms is also indicative of a conflict in the narrative, a duality of good and evil, the living and the dead, the earthly and the celestial. The strong diagonal axis runs from Death's head, along his body and left leg to the feet of the mother. The overreaching arm of Death holding the scythe in the left hand further extends the sculpture beyond the core volumes to demonstrate dynamic movement and progress beyond the sculptural plane. The scythe adds verticality and balance to the composition, without which the diagonal lean of Death would be too acute. The negative space encased in the triangular form between Death's back and the scythe also ensures that verticality is attained without additional weight pressure upon the top-heavy structure.

The mother's individuality is concealed from the viewer, so that her form comes to embody the anguish and pain demonstrated in her actions, and known from the text. That the faces of Death and the sick child are revealed in great detail, and in such close proximity to one another creates a focal point for the

[418] Niels Theodor Mortensen, *Billedhuggeren Niels Hansen Jacobsen*, (Odense: Forlaget Arnkrone, 1945), 33.

viewer, as the eye is drawn to facial expression to comprehend the tone of the narrative. In contrast to the naturalistic depiction of the figures, the drapery and the scythe, Death's face demonstrates a tentative beginning at an abstracted human expression Hansen Jacobsen later extends to the entire form in *The Shadow*. The face is rendered in painterly terms, with broad and raw gestures denoting the flesh as if in thick impasto (fig. 115). The gouged furrows in the skin, particularly around the eyes and forehead create a sorrowful, rather than malicious expression. The pupils and eye sockets are deeply carved, and this depth forms dark shadows. The cowl that flutters in the wind has the appearance of skin clinging around the figure's lower jawline; when viewed frontally, the cranium appears to be shedding its flesh. The delineating cowl partially covers the mouth, a gash-like wound parted in anguish. The trailing end of the cloak, along the horizontal plane, has the texture of driftwood or bone, in terms of the yellowed coloration and dry, cracked consistency (fig. 116). Thus there is a contrast in the depiction of drapery; what appears as smooth and clinging, almost inhaled around the nose and mouth of the figure is contrasted by the thickness of the fluttering cloak, which takes on an organic, shell-like quality. Hansen Jacobsen embodies Death as a oneness of material and being, of flesh, skin, and bone. Around to the figure's back, Death's hand clenches the cloak, which puckers and hangs in loose folds like skin, ensuring a secure grasp of the sick child. There difference in texture on the left arm holding the scythe between skin and cloak is barely perceptible.

The object of the story is perhaps the least perceptible; the sick child rests peacefully, cradled by Death. Having stolen the child, Death adopts a nurturing role; the baby is not held callously, but gently, close to his chest, and wrapped in his cloak as a sling. The sick child, sleeping or already dead, is either way unaware of the unfolding narrative. The figure of death, specifically the facial expression becomes the visual focus; the mother's identity is concealed by her pose, and the infant is carried away in a state of passivity.

The optimum viewpoint is frontal, in which the twin volumes, that of the mother and Death, are fully displayed. A number of visual devices are employed to lead the eye around the composition, and thereby convey narrative significance. The eye is directed first to Death's face, whose gaze directs the downwards, first to the child and following the line of his leg to the mother at his feet. The curve of the scythe also ensures the gaze is kept within the sculptural space and does not progress beyond its scope. The figure of Death, despite his forward strides and dynamic pose, contains the narrative to the immediate sculptural space. While the body's posture suggests mid-movement, the backwards glance of Death retains the viewer's gaze (and therefore, the narrative focus) within the sculptural space, pushing it back to the mother; together with his gentle grasp of the child, this gesture becomes touching and poignant rather than sinister. Hansen Jacobsen's representation reveals an empathetic figure of Death, one who, in the Andersen narrative, does not act out of his own malevolence but instead merely obeys God's will. Though ghastly in appearance, he becomes a benevolent force that offers redemption to a child that was potentially destined for a life of suffering. This reading on the destiny of the child is only made possible through familiarity with the fairytale, but the sculpture makes clear the tenderness of Death's gaze and expression.

The directed, oppositional tension between the two figures is located in the sculpture itself, rather than an imagined perception on the viewer's part.[419] The figure of Death appears to stretch from the 'grounded' mother, who functions as a visual and physical anchor as the sculptural base. Death pulls away from the plinth with elasticity, as though truly animated due to the illusory manipulation of medium (figs. 111-112).

[419] Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception,* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 416.

Sculpture and the Textual Narrative

Having conducted a visual analysis of the sculpture, it is now pertinent to examine the work in relation to its textual origin. Andersen's fairytale, published in 1847, represents Death as an old man, cloaked in what resembled a horse cloth. The cloth on the sculpture is rendered in varying thickness, less so around the face and more so, to give a three-dimensional effect elsewhere. Also, the scene is noted as taking place in the winter, amid snow and wind; the seasonality is somewhat suggested visually in the dramatically sweeping drapery. The benevolent aspect of Death, as discussed in the sculpture is evident also in the story, as he returns to the mother her eyes, which she had willingly donated to the lake to trace her child. Furthermore, by revealing the potential destinies of the child, presents her with a choice that is the cruellest kindness of sparing the suffering of an innocent child.

The base of the sculpture consists of two parts, one containing the mother, and the other, Death and the child. The sculptural narrative is also conveyed as a duality, corresponding to the final lines of the text: the resignation of the mother, "hun bøjede sit Hoved ned i sit Skjød", as a self-contained aspect, and separately, "og Døden gik med hendes Barn ind i det ubekjendte Land". The two are linked by the viewer's perception of Death's directional gaze. This gaze, which grants humanity to the work, is possibly derived from Death's surprise at the mother's unexpected and paradoxical decision in the text, in which she insists the child be taken from her. The entirety of the story is weighted on this final phrase. Death's stride indicates the 'unknown land' to which he takes the child with great haste. The lines Hansen Jacobsen chose as the basis for this work are short and concise as the denouement of the story, shorter than the poetic texts he writes for other works, such as *The Shadow*. Unlike *Death and the Mother*, his other sculptures based on the fairytales of H. C. Andersen do not have quotations from

the text attached to them in the 1901 Den Fri Udstilling exhibition catalogues. In this instance, the text indicates that the child is carried into "the promised land" rather than the "unknown land", as per the original Andersen text. The 1914 artist's atelier catalogue at Skibelund Krat includes the latter version. Therefore, the significance of the portion of text should be underscored.

Motifs from the Text

The visual imagery of Andersen's fairytale is very rich, and would provide much material for visual translation. The opening description of Death presents the dishevelled figure of an old man amidst the winter wind so cold that it cuts the face: "alting udenfor lå med is og sne, og vinden blæste så at det skar i ansigtet."[420] The motifs of winter, coldness, wind and cutting are directly related to the visual treatment of the figure of death. The carving of Death's facial features is at once crude and rough-hewn, particularly in contrast to the smooth face of the dead child he carries; the delicacy of the mother's treatment is also inferred from her flowing hair, graceful folds of drapery that mould her form, and the smooth 'human' skin of her bare arms. The 'cutting' of the face in the text resonates with the surface detail of Death's face. The sculptor's tools clearly cut and carved into the plaster, there are pock marks, gouges, and in some instances, such as under the right eye, the treatment appears as deep lacerations in the skin. These subtractive actions also forge the deep shadows, enhancing the contrast in texture, but it also indicates the unity of textual narrative detail and sculptural materiality. Further, Death is described by the old woman, personifying the Night, as travelling faster

[420] "…everything outside was covered in ice and snow, and the wind blew so strong as to cut one's face."
Hans Christian Andersen, "Historien om en Moder", in *H. C. Andersens Eventyr og Historier*, ed. Sophus Bauditz, (Copenhagen and Kristiania: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1905), 399. All H. C. Andersen translations from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen

than the wind with the child: "han går stærkere til end vinden."[421] Thus Death is classified as an emanation from the natural elements, which is visualised by Hansen Jacobsen through the figure's windswept drapery. The prevalence in the story's narrative of wintry conditions is perhaps another reflection of Death's presence in the landscape, as though the coldness heralds his arrival at the woman's door: the hawthorn is covered in icicles, to be thawed by the mother's blood and embrace, while the lake she encounters is partially frozen, a cold wind precedes his entrance in the glasshouse, and his touching the mother, she feels his hands colder than the cold wind. The association of coldness, winter and death is reminiscent of Enckell's *Death's Walk* (1896), as discussed in the thesis Introduction. This chilling effect of Death is naturally associated with the cold lifelessness of the corpse. This aspect is imbued throughout the narrative of the story, translated into visual terms by Hansen Jacobsen with fluttering robes indexical of wind, and the haggard face of Death as symbolic of the biting, cutting cold. However, the motif of death and coldness is counteracted in the story by Death's dwelling place in the glasshouse, tending to plants of human souls. The stifling heat of a glasshouse in which growth is fostered and life thrives is in direct polarity to the coldness outside, implying that death exists constantly among the living, until striking to drain all verve.

In her search for Death and the child, the mother encounters a number of characters, all of whom offer her information on his direction in exchange for some part of her self; the old woman Night asks for her singing, the hawthorn for the heat of her heart, the lake as collector of pearls asks for her eyes, and the old woman at the glasshouse exchanges her white hair for the mother's beautiful black tresses, a symbols of strength and vigour. Each time she willingly weakens and

[421] "he travels faster than the wind" Hans Christian Andersen, "Historien om en Moder", in *H. C. Andersens Eventyr og Historier*, ed. Sophus Bauditz, (Copenhagen and Kristiania: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1905), 400.

erodes her material being out of exemplary maternal devotion. The loss of the eyes as a motif bears similarity with the Freudian uncanny in relation to E. T. A. Hoffmann's story *Der Sandmann* (*The Sandman*, 1816). In this story, the child conflates his father's associate with the myth of the Sandman, who sends troublesome children to sleep by throwing sand in their eyes until they bleed in their heads: "Das ist ein böser Mann, der kommt zu den Kindern, wenn sie nicht zu Bett gehen wollen und wirft ihnen Händevoll Sand in die Augen, dass sie blutig zum Kopf herausspringen, die wirft er dann in den Sack und trägt sie in den Halbmond zur Atzung für seine Kinderchen; die sitzen dort im Nest und haben krumme Schnabel, wie die Eulen, damit picken sie der unartigen Menschenkindlein Augen auf."[422]

Further to this, H. C. Andersen wrote a version of the Sandman tale, entitled *Ole Lukøje* ('Ole Closed-Eye'), based on the same principle as the Sandman in which Ole Lukøje throws milk into children's eyes and blows air on their necks, sending them to sleep. Over the good children he places a colourful, illustrated umbrella bringing wonderful dreams, while the naughty children sleep restlessly beneath a plain umbrella. As the story closes, Ole Lukøje mentions to the child Hjalmar that he has a brother whose name is Death. The image of Death described in *Ole Lukøje* differs greatly to that of *Story of a Mother*: rather than looking like the old, dishevelled man, or as specified in the story, the Grim Reaper, Death's rides a horse in a silver embroidered hussar uniform with black velvet cape, in similar resplendency to his depiction of the Shadow. Considering Ole Lukøje (or the Sandman) as the brother of Death strengthens the link between sleep, death, and children. Thus the sleep the mother of *Story of a Mother* falls into

[422] "He is a wicked man who comes to children who don't want to go to bed, and throws a handful of sand in their eyes, until they bleed from their heads. He then throws their eyes in a sack and takes them to the crescent moon as food for his children, they sit in their nest with twisted beaks like owls, with which they peck the naughty children's eyes."
Translated from German by Kerstina Mortensen.
E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Der Sandmann,* (Stuttgart*:* Philipp Reclam, 2010), 5.

after caring for her ill child opens the threshold for Death to enter her home and take the child. The eye motif is picked up again in that she must then 'cry out' her eyes to the lake. In the sculpture, the mother has cast herself in sorrow on the ground, and though her eyes have been restored by that point in the narrative, her face nevertheless remains obscured from the viewer.

While I do not claim the link between fear of blindness and a castration complex has any traction with the blindness of Andersen's mother, as per Freud's psychoanalytic interpretation of *Der Sandmann*, there are some other theories in his essay *The Uncanny* (1919) that have some relevance to *Story of a Mother*. Freud denies that fairytales possess any element of the uncanny because "the uncanny can arise only if there is a conflict of judgement as to whether what has been surmounted and merits no further credence may not, after all, be possible in real life."[423] The reader assumes such fantastical or frightening aspects are present in the fictional narrative of the fairytale, and Freud even specifies that despite the animation of household objects, H. C. Andersen's fairytales are certainly devoid of the uncanny. I argue against this fact, maintaining that there are elements of the uncanny in Andersen's work which have bearing on Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother.*

The uncanny is described as a category of the frightening in which "the boundary between fantasy and reality is blurred, when we are faced with the reality of something that we have until now considered imaginary".[424] Freud pinpoints wish fulfilment as an uncanny event,[425] e.g. that an individual may wish someone dead, and in the event of it coming true then that individual associates some superstitious complicity in the death. The mother's wish of giving anything she can to find her child which, as mentioned, she gladly proceeds with the various

[423] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny,* trans. David McLintock, (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 156.
[424] Freud, 150.
[425] Freud, 146.

characters she encounters, is fulfilled in the closing lines in that to 'save' her child she releases him to Death. Ultimately, the mother's wish is fulfilled in the cruellest sense with the death of her child.

The *Doppelgänger* becomes uncanny as a marker of "mirror-images, shadows, guardian spirits, the doctrine of the soul and the fear of death."[426] The motif of the double is found in *Ole Lukøje,* in which the character reveals his brother to be Death, but he also states that they are both named 'Ole Lukøje', as though they are a split consciousness, or perhaps deceitfully share the same existence; is there a real Ole Lukøje, and are their roles ever exchanged? Both 'Oles' tell stories, but Death has only two renditions, depending on the character and rather than a nightly visit, this alternate-Ole Lukøje pays individuals but a single visit in their lives. The closed eye is thus a symbol of both death and sleep. The ambiguity of these characters' identities impresses upon the reader a deep uneasiness at the realisation that sleep and death can be so inextricably linked as to be almost indistinguishable: that which is familiar, sleep, shares sinister properties with death, is a return of a repressed idea that is categorically uncanny.

There is a repetition of the twin motifs of sleep and death in Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture *Death and the Mother.* The figure of Death is connected to the death of the child, but also to the deep sleep the mother slipped into which allowed him to flee with the child in the textual narrative. The dead child is cradled closely by Death with care, as though asleep. The final lines of the story, as appended to the sculpture read: "She bent her head to her lap, and Death left with her child to the unknown land." With the death of her child, this final gesture of resignation by the mother is symbolic of her own life ending, which Hansen Jacobsen represents as her tragically cowering body, which cannot bear to see her child's departure. Thus she enters into a sleeping position, as she did at the

[426] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny,* trans. David McLintock, (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 142.

narrative's beginning. Her hands appear to cover her eyes which once more highlights their significance of sleep, blindness, and death. Departing with the child into the 'unknown land' also has parallels with the dream-world brought by Ole Lukøje, as it implies both distance and difference from what is *known.*

Motif of Death and the Mother

The motif, while it is derived from the Andersen story, is also part of wider trope of death and the mother, the antithetical figures of birth and decay. There is however, a role reversal in Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture; the mother's sacrificial rejection of the child is countered by Death as he cradles the child with maternal tenderness. Hansen Jacobsen is not the only artist to approach this Andersen fairytale at this time; Fritz Syberg (1862-1939, Danish) illustrated *Story of a Mother* with eighteen pen and ink images, accompanied by handwritten text of the story in its entirety.[427] Syberg provides an example in which the illustrations correspond to the text with exactitude, following the narrative sequence linearly, and presenting to the viewer the private world of motherhood, domesticity and ultimately, grief.[428] The final scene, *"Da vred Moderen sine Hænder, faldt på sine Knæ…"* ("The mother then wrung her hands and fell to her knees…", 1895, fig. 119) from which Hansen Jacobsen extracts his quote, is depicted in less dramatic visual dynamism. The principal figure in the right foreground is the kneeling mother, praying to God; to the left middleground, Death departs from the scene inconspicuously, his form a tall cloaked male, and the tiny child resting against his shoulder. The departure is peaceful and quiet, as though the burden of child's fate has been lifted; thus God's will prevails. Syberg separates the narrative in two, the

[427] Henrik Wivel, *Den Store Stil: Dansk symbolisme og impressionisme omkring år 1900,* (Copenhagen: Forlaget Palle Fogtdal, 1995), 172.
[428] Wivel, 173.

mother's prayer, and Death's departure, allowing a large negative space in the illustration between the figures as they turn in opposition to one another. Hansen Jacobsen, by contrast, combines the narrative action into one dynamic scene, in which the emotion of the mother, and of Death whose directed gaze connects the forms is almost overwhelming.

The mother and the dead child, with or without the allegorical figure of Death, as a theme is reflected in other Symbolist works. Gallen-Kallela's *Lemminkäinen's Mother* (1897, fig. 120) is based on the Finnish national epic, *The Kalevala*. Elias Lönnrot travelled the Finnish countryside recording oral folk tales and mythology, compiling the text which was first published in 1835.[429] The slain hero Lemminkäinen is mourned by his mother, who gathers his dismembered body parts to resurrect him, with the aid of a bee's divine nectar.[430] She stitches "bone to bone and flesh to flesh and limbs to their limbs" so that he may live again.[431] The outward appeal of Lemminkäinen's mother is in direct contrast to Hansen Jacobsen's maternal figure, but both demonstrate the infinite lengths each will go to to save their children; one remakes her child's bodily form, while the other sacrifices it to avoid a lifetime of misery and suffering.

The Belgian Symbolist sculptor George Minne (1866-1941) also worked with similarly attenuated forms seen in Hansen Jacobsen's work. An early piece by Minne entitled *Mother Grieving over her Dead Child* (1886, fig. 121) depicts a seated mother clinging to her lifeless child, whose head hangs limply forward. In Hansen Jacobsen's work, the figure of Death has taken the place of the mother figure as seen in both Minne and Gallen-Kallela; he clutches the child tenderly, while the mother is left an empty shell. The position of Hansen

[429] Vibeke Waallann Hansen, "National Mythology" in *The Magic North: Finnish and Norwegian Art around 1900*, ed. Timo Huusko, (Oslo and Helsinki: Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design, Finnish National Gallery, and Ateneum Art Museum, 2015), 128.
[430] Timo Huusko, "Legends and Myths" in *Northern Stars and Southern Lights: The Golden Age of Finnish Art 1870-1920*, ed. Adriaan E. Waiboer, (Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland, 2008), 75.
[431] Elias Lönnrot, *The Kalevala,* trans. Keith Bosley, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 178, lines 375-76.

Jacobsen's suggests she has thrown herself upon something (i.e., her child) protectively, as in Minne's *Man Weeping for his Wounded Doe* (1896, fig. 122). Both the mother and Minne's figure display self-enclosure and isolation from the surrounding environment, and in the case of *Man Weeping for his Wounded Doe,* man and animal mesh as almost indistinguishable forms.[432] Thus the mother's pose serves to accentuate her loss.

Text as Virtual Cube

In the previous section on Texts by the Artist, I outlined Saint-Martin's theory of the virtual cube as a method of understanding the kinaesthetic qualities and positive-negative dynamics in sculpture. The virtual cube permits the comprehension of relational sculptural volumes;[433] I propose that this theory can be transposed and utilised as a method of analysing the relationship between a sculpture and its external literary source, in this case Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother* and Andersen's text *Story of a Mother*. To summarise: the text upon which the work is based functions as a framework from which the sculpture can be comprehended; the positive and negative volumes are regarded within this virtual (textual) cube, which moulds the energies and hence the viewer's perception of the visual, plastic work. The visualisation is therefore in a constant state of comparison with its textual origin, specifically that final portion of text from the story which is frequently affixed to the title. Due to Hansen Jacobsen's concretisation of the narrative in selecting those lines and by openly aligning the sculpture to the story, I argue that the textual narrative then becomes the governing narrative of sculpture; the plastic is read in the context of the verbal.

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[432] Lynne Pudles, "The Symbolist Work of George Minne", *Art Journal,* vol. 45 no. 2 (Symbolist Art and Literature, Summer 1985), 124.
[433] Fernande Saint-Martin, *Semiotics of Visual Language*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 177-180.

The text is not a physical anchor for the sculpture. It does not appear in the immediate space of the work, and thus one cannot be held in material relation to the other, as is the case in conventional illustration which is faced against or embedded in columns of text, or when text invades the pictorial space as previously discussed in this thesis. Thus the motif-link between Andersen's story and Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture is not overtly apparent (not least due to Hansen Jacobsen's alteration of the original story title, as though to differentiate the works) is one created by the viewer's active participation in engaging with the sculpture and its origins. The change in title from 'Story of a Mother' to 'Death and the Mother' is a further hallmark of the story's translation from written medium to a sculptural volume. The term 'story' implies a set narrative structure, which is arranged and resolved within linguistic confines of text, a broader and nuanced narrative which, as is evident from the summary of Andersen's story, reflects both the detail of the textual narrative, but also its genre. Removing this structure for the title of the sculpture would seem to suggest that visual art does not convey a 'story' in the linguistic sense, but rather, is a 're-presentation' of a narrative.

The sculptural narrative consists of the final lines of the fairytale, making no reference to the preceding lines which in fact make up the entire narrative of the text. However, if the objective is to convey the motif at the very core of the Andersen's narrative, that is, the heartbreak of a mother and the victory of death, the remainder of Andersen's narrative becomes unnecessary to the visual field. These emotions are communicated by Hansen Jacobsen with absolute poignancy. The extraneous details, which lead the reader to those final attached lines of the story, are in themselves somewhat redundant because the sculpture so clearly demonstrates, in visual terms, the essence of Andersen's story. Thus I argue that the atmosphere inherent in the story is equally present in the sculptural representation.

As the final two lines of the text are specifically quoted in literature by Hansen, Jacobsen, they can be viewed in conjunction with the sculpture, and thus the combined visual and textual elements can be analysed as a single unit that combines visual and verbal rhetoric. The two lines quoted by the sculptor are metonymous of the broader context of Andersen's story. Although the textual and visual elements were not conceived to be exhibited in the same space, the fact that they are put together in exhibition material by the sculptor suggests an intended co-presence of text and image to be assimilated in the viewer's perception.

With regard to visual imagery, the eye movements of the viewer focuses on identifiable facial features as readable markers of expression, as also discussed in Chapter 2 Atmosphere with respect to the Yarbus study;[434] Bateman further notes the selectivity of such movements, meaning that the eye looks to find visual or textual information that is "potentially useful" for the process of interpretation, but that this is subject to the interests of the individual.[435] In the case of *Death and the Mother*, the eye is automatically drawn to the facial features of the three figures to determine the relational dynamic. With the presence of text, the eye can be focused to find correspondences or 'acknowledgement' of the Andersen text in the sculptural form as the visual work succeeding the textual. The sculpture is a literal depiction of the attached lines, as follows, and as represented by the mother and Death, respectively:

> She bent her head to her lap, and Death left with her child to the unknown land.
>
> (Hun bøjede sit Hoved ned i sit Skjød, og Døden gik med hendes Barn ind i det ubekjendte Land.)

[434] Alfred L. Yarbus, *Eye Movements and Vision*, trans. Basil Haigh, (New York: Plenum Press, 1967), 175.
[435] John A. Bateman, *Text and Image,* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 244.

This, the eventual outcome of the textual narrative, has been selected for visual representation by the sculptor, and is followed through with keen accuracy to the text. As the crucial ending of the story, Hansen Jacobsen has chosen to take this as representative of the entire story. The sculpture is mimetic of these two lines, which are narrated heterodiegetically in the third person by a voice not 'present' in the unfolding narrative, thus the viewer of the sculpture adopts the same position as the reader of the story – we are spectators to the scene. Neither figure appeals to anything outside the volumetric space: Death faces the mother, while she conceals her face, denying interaction. This enforces the high level of correspondence between textual and visual narrative.

Atmosphere

Upon discussing the textual and visual aspects of Death and the Mother, the issue of atmosphere is raised. The translation of the idea, from Andersen's story to Hansen Jacobsen's three-dimensionality is a question of spatial transition, one that is perceived by the viewer. Artworks based on literary texts (or any other sources external to the artist and pre-dating their artwork) present to the viewer a double layer of perception; firstly, as a representation of a literary work, or portion thereof, and secondly, as an artistic work in its own right. Illustrations occupy a grey area, in that they are usually directly 'attached' to their point of origin, but certainly in the case of *Death and the Mother*, the motif should be understood from the sculpture, and secondly, in the context of Andersen's story, which Hansen Jacobsen explicitly references.

The element involved in creating atmosphere is the viewer's response to artistic formations, that is, deliberate choices in treatment made by the artist for aesthetic reasons. Spatiality (positive/negative space), colour, treatment of material and scale may be included as comprising such artistic formations. The nuances of

these formations may go unperceived by the viewer, but nevertheless their effect impacts the overall feeling of an artwork. Spatiality is one such issue. As discussed in Texts by the Artist, the virtual cube is a useful theory by which to gauge the spatial energies of an artwork. Without repeating the definitions here, encasing the extremities of the sculpture within the volume of a virtual cube heightens the dynamics of positive and negative space and the reveals the effects of the sculpture's kinaesthetic energy. Firstly, the virtual cube reveals the planar, linear aspect of narrative in this work, which has as its optimal viewpoint a frontal position. The frontal face of the virtual cube extends along the frontal length, so that the full form of the mother and Death in flight is visible. The narrative is fixed in this position and does not progress or change as one moves around the sculpture. When viewed from the perspective of Death's head, the virtual cube becomes narrow, so that the negative volumes diminish, creating a scene that is compacted and foreshortened, with the twin volumes of the mother and Death overlapping, yet the child is obscured from view. Therefore, this sculpture provides the viewer with numerous viewpoints on the same instance evoked solely by those two lines, without further reference to other aspects in the textual narrative. The scythe itself acts as a framing device of the composition, extending the reach of Death and encasing the forms. With the virtual cube in place the formal balance of volumes becomes apparent. A figure of eight is formed by the scythe and Death's legs. This both balances the volumes, and guides the gaze of the viewer along each part of the composition.

I argue that Hansen Jacobsen has achieved a sense of atmospheric unity in the *Death and the Mother* and the fairytale *Story of a Mother*. Atmosphere occupies the liminal space between the work of art and the viewer, between production and perception. The artist defines the aesthetic choices of a work in order to accentuate certain feelings, such as the mother covering her face in both shame and horror at her decision; this emotional gesture, as perceived by the

viewer, evokes in them a highly subjective and ambiguous response. The conflation of these aspects contribute to the atmosphere of a work.

Semiotic Analysis

The representation of Death in this sculpture is, as stated, a precursor to *The Shadow*, but in *Death and the Mother* the figure is depicted along more conventional iconographical means as a Grim Reaper figure. Death has been represented throughout the artworks analysed in this thesis: as a premonitive state of existence in Ejnar Nielsen's *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* (1897); as an abstracted human-like shadow in Hansen Jacobsen's *The Shadow*, and here as an allegorical personification, and servant of God. *Death and the Mother* can be situated in the wider collection of Nordic Symbolism works which represent death, as discussed in the Introduction of this thesis. However, Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture is just one interpretation of Andersen's story, which has been distilled to its final lines, and thus is the sculptor's interpretant of the story (combining representamen and object), and so the process of semiosis is demonstrated by its ability to trigger further interpretants in the viewer. Conducting a semiotic analysis of *Death and the Mother* may render the relationship between the sculpture, its title and the Andersen text in some clarity.

There are a number of angles to the text and image dynamic in the context of Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother*. Firstly, there is the sculpture as an independent work of art and its title, as granted by the sculptor. Secondly, is the portion of Andersen's story which is attached to the sculpture, and lastly is *Story of a Mother* in its entirety, which forms the contextual setting and basis for the sculpture. The work can be said to be an illustration of the text, as it is deliberately appended to the sculpture by the artist in exhibition catalogues. I argue, however, that the text need not be present in the physical space of the

sculpture in order for it to function as an illustration. Thus I will analyse the abovementioned according to the Peircean Division of Signs to bring clarity to this knotted relation. As we are essentially dealing with two signs, the sculpture *Death and the Mother* and the fairytale *Story of a Mother*, each is governed in isolation by the Peircean triad of representamen, object, interpretant; but because the two works are inextricably linked, they are also joined in a separate semiotic process.

The representamen begins as the thing that represents another thing; in this sense, the sculpture is the representamen of final two lines of Andersen's story, which is thus the object. But the lines are taken as representative of the entire story, so there is a broader context in which to situate the sculpture. The interpretant must therefore be the viewer's perception of the sculpture in the context of the story. However, the quoted portion of text taken by Hansen Jacobsen becomes a symbol of its own wider narrative.

The sculptural work is iconic of the textual, descriptive content, i.e., the position and gestures of Death and the mother resemble their description in the text, yet they are also symbolic of the wider narrative, representing the two protagonists of Andersen's story. The story was published in 1847, so naturally it precedes Hansen Jacobsen's sculpture; however, because of the isolation of the final lines of the story from the wider narrative and their transposition as a paratext of the sculpture (separate to the title, and not a subtitle yet remaining in the textual 'realm' of the sculpture), these lines can be regarded as dicent symbol legisign. Thus, the text and the sculpture can be regarded as 'contemporaneous' insofar as they exist concurrently in the viewer's perception. The titles of the works are both indexical of the works, because of the titles function to point to an artwork, and symbolic of it, because usage of the title is a presumed reference to the sculpture or story in its entirety, thus the part represents the whole.

The Function of Text and Sculpture

There are dual, oppositional dynamics at play in *Death and the Mother*: rising and falling. The mother falls to the ground, becomes rooted to the base, unmoving in her solid grief, while Death and the child rise with the lightness of flight to depart the scene. As such, there can be claimed to be horizontal and vertical axial energies. Death leans forward with a diagonal incline, vibrant and fluid in motion, yet the mother as unmoving. Thus there is a role reversal, whereby Death is imbued with maternal vibrancy, while the mother succumbs to Death's paralysis. The mother's form is reminiscent of tomb effigies, but instead of perpetual repose, she lies in eternal torment, her covered face suggesting suffocated sobbing.[436] Her form also bears similarity to plaster casts of the dead at Pompeii made by Giuseppe Fiorelli in 1863.[437] This correspondence between the living torture of individuals dying from noxious smoke and gas inhalation in 79AD, and the mother's unquenchable torment is testament to Hansen Jacobsen's deft sensitivity in representing raw and real gestures of emotion. The foetal position she adopts seeks consolation and security, like a child curled up in sleep. Sleep and death are inextricably linked, particularly in tomb effigies as mentioned, and this link is furthermore underscored in the beginning of the story as the mother falls asleep while Death is in the house, granting him the opportunity to flee with her ill child. Thus the beginning and the end of the narrative are linked by the motif of isolation from the conscious, waking world.

Curtis writes on the aspect of closed sculpture as that which "juxtaposes exterior with interior, entailing the idea of content, or that which is enclosed. Proposing that something is inside a sculpture usually suggests that it is

[436] See survey of tomb effigies and 'horizontal' sculpture in Penelope Curtis, *Sculpture: vertical, horizontal, closed, open,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 50-85.
[437] Penelope Curtis, *Sculpture: vertical, horizontal, closed, open,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 90-91.

protecting something precious."[438] Thus, Death and the Mother can be described as a closed sculpture on a number of levels. Firstly, the directional gaze of Death and the collapsed mother point inwardly at one another, ensuring the viewer's gaze is retained within the sculptural volume, in spite of the evident, imminent movement of Death 'away' from the sculptural site. Secondly, the exterior, being the physical resemblance, and interior, the content, can be likened to the materiality of the sculptural representation versus the linguistic content of the Andersen story. The suggestion that the sculpture 'contains' something, and that it is by extension precious and protected ascribes significance to the integrity of the verbal narrative upon which it is based. Thus the text can be regarded figuratively as an armature supporting the visual representation, particularly in the case of *Death and the Mother*, as the text precedes the visual representation to which it is explicitly linked by the artist. Appending the final lines of the story to the sculpture, which are separate to the title yet integral to the paratextual information means that the text and the sculpture are mutually ekphrastic, in that each recounts the narrative of the other in its own medium. These lines also perform as an armature, the precisely worded 'internal' content that is granted external, physical form through the sculpture. That is not to claim that text underlines all visual work as a form of structural or semantic clarification, but when the artwork in question can be described as a form of illustration of a literary work, then the literary work must be at its core. The change in name from *Story of a Mother* to *Death and the Mother* implies a change of media, and a shift from a (linguistic) narrative tableau in which there are many occurrences to a single moment of time, as is permitted in visual representation, thus demonstrating the translation of the idea from the verbal to the visual medium.

[438] Penelope Curtis, *Sculpture: vertical, horizontal, closed, open,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 114.

The virtual cube that encompasses the sculptural volume and defines the kinaesthetic energy of the three dimensional form is somewhat distorted in *Death and the Mother*. While the virtual cube incorporates all extremities of the sculpture, Death visibly over-stretches from its foundational plinth in a symbolic gesture of narrative progress. Thus despite Death's back turned gaze at the mother, the sculpture bears an outward relation to the surrounding space as it actively breaks through the perceived virtual cube that rises from its plinth. It is this dynamic motion that enlivens the verbal narrative and gives the impression of kinesis. This is further enhanced by the large open areas between the scythe and the body, and the striding legs of Death.

Chapter 8: Ejnar Nielsen, *The Old Man's Child* (1900)

Introduction

This final chapter of Part Three Literary Sources for Artworks examines the four illustrations Ejnar Nielsen created for Karl Larsen's 1900 short story, *The Old Man's Child* (1900, figs. 121-130). In Part One of this chapter, Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother* is described as having some of the features of an illustration as it is accompanied by a specific quote from Andersen's *Story of a Mother*. Nielsen illustrates Larsen's short story *The Old Man's Child* in the conventional sense of the term, in which the images are published alongside the text, and here the specific aspects of this relationship are analysed. As the illustration is primarily attached to a literary work, the terms 'reader' and 'viewer' will both be used in this chapter, but should be understood interchangeably.

The illustrations are described as *billedfantasier*, or 'picture fantasies', and published alongside the story in the 1900 edition of *Juleroser,* a seasonal compendium of writing which included various literary and artistic contributions. The term *billedfantasi* captures something of the essence of the illustration, in that it must generally embody an artist's mental image of a primary text, in this case a short story. The series of drawings was executed shortly after the *Dance of Death* illustration and bears to it many stylistic similarities. The narrative of the text is enlivened through the illustration, with this visualisation actively engaging with the narrative progression of the story. Nielsen completed various other illustrations during the course of his career. Also on the subject of death, an illustration for Johannes V. Jensen's story *Kirstens Sidste Rejse (Kirsten's Final Journey*, 1901, fig. 131) accompanied the story in 1901 in *Julealbum*, a similar seasonal periodical as *Juleroser*, in which *The Old Man's Child* appears.

Larsen's short story centres around the theme of death, and as in the case of Nielsen's paintings, this is illustrated through absence and symbolism. All four images refer to death by virtue of the pictorial setting in a graveyard, and one image contains the corpse of the infant around which the story is based. The illusory nature of the dead child in the old man's arms imparts a deep poignancy to the work. Larsen's story revolves around the intrinsic peacefulness and comfort of the graveyard, specified as Vestre Kirkegaard in Copenhagen. The narrator describes his history of visiting graveyards as a child, accompanying his grandfather to his parents' graves - a tradition he continues into adulthood, to the present moment of the narrative. The motif of the child and the old man runs throughout, from the narrator's recollection and into the present narrative he conveys. Nielsen's innovation is in conveying the narrative of *The Old Man's Child* within each image in a non-linear fashion. The text quoted from the story in each successive illustration follows the sequence of events in Larsen's story, yet Nielsen manages to encapsulate several narratival elements into one scene, specifically in the third illustration. The narrative structure of these four illustrations is examined individually, taking into account the selected quotation from the short story that Nielsen illustrates. Secondly, the illustrations' positions within the context of the short story as a whole are analysed.

How does Nielsen translate the short story into visual language? Discussed in this chapter are a number of issues within the general sphere of text and image tensions. Firstly, the commonalities shared by both the story and the illustrations must be determined. This furthermore calls into play the relationship between a piece of literary writing, and its visualisation by an artist. The short story is an original self-contained literary work. The text subsequently provides the artist with a source pool of information which can be extracted and utilised to form the illustration of this literary text. As the 'original', the artist must derive his aesthetic choices from the short story. The illustration is inherently different from other

works based on or inspired by literary writing, such as Hansen Jacobsen's sculptures, because their ultimate function is publication alongside the written text; *Death and the Mother*, for example, was created 45 years after H. C. Andersen's *Story of a Mother* was first published in 1847. The literary work is not merely a prompt or inspiration for the artist; deviating too far from the text makes the illustration's purpose redundant. There must be continuity between textual and visual narrative in order for it to function as an illustration. The artist is not only dependent on the text's visual imagery as a visual transcription/description of the work, but must also take into account the issue of narratival perspective to ensure the seamless conversation as the reader transitions between text and image. Illustrations are frequently subtitled by a quotation from text, which locates the image's position within the narrative. Nielsen's four illustrations are all subtitled with phrases from the short story; here the text is not integrated with the visual, but is included in a rectangular band along the bottom of the image, in a separate pictorial space which also frames the illustration, creating a sense of unity across all four images. The sans serif typography employed is iconic of tombstone inscriptions; it is both capitalised and shaded as through carved in stone. In terms of area, the space devoted to each in the publication is largely equally, though the visual impact of the illustrations dominates the page. The text of the story is set in two columns below. The illustration typically should not contribute additional detail to a narrative that is not located in the text, but that is not at the expense of artistic licence or creativity. An illustration enlivens the written word, and encourages the reader to oscillate between the dual logics of reading and looking. However, perhaps more than other genres in the visual arts, the illustration demands the reader's interrogation of the visual image precisely because of the assumption that it directly corresponds with the literary text. Nielsen's illustrations are both complementary to the text, yet highly innovative in conveying the narrative.

To consider an illustration as a paratext, that aspect which posits itself on the threshold to mediate between a work of art and its viewer, is to follow on from Genette's *Paratexts* (1987). In his conclusion, Genette outlines three aspects which demand attention as paratext, but which warrant attention beyond the scope of his text: translation, illustrations, and serial publications. The former two aspects are dealt with explicitly in this thesis.[439] Genette highlights the potential of illustration as "commentary", and adds to that the author's responsibility to accept or decline visualisations of their work.[440] The conditions of the commission or potential editorial issues within *Juleroser* have not come to light during the course of my research; neither have I thus far located any disparity between Nielsen and Larsen over the perceived appropriateness of the illustrations. However, such issues are beyond the remit and concern of the thesis objective, that is, the relationship between the story and illustrations, as published in *Juleroser.* Both translation and illustration are at play in this case; the short story is translated into visual terms, and secondly, the work is illustrated. To think of illustration as a threshold, or something that must be crossed places enormous significance on visual expression, as though the essential message of the work cannot be conveyed without the visual. In this sense, the illustration becomes integral to the literary work, yet it retains a high degree of independence as in this instance, the artist is not the author of the text.

I have drawn some parallels between sculpture and illustration in the preceding chapter of Literary Sources for Artworks, outlining that the medium of sculpture does not usually lend itself to illustration. Illustrations generally take the same format as the text they accompany, frequently published alongside the text or

[439] I employ the term 'translation' to describe the transposition of material from one medium to another, i.e., the translation of ideas between textual and visual expression, beyond its usual application in converting text from language to another.
[440] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 406.

are interspersed in the pagination. They are often monochromatic, pen and ink drawings rather than paintings, as in Nielsen, and this frequent lack of colouration equates them visually to the linearity of text, while simultaneously making them more accessible and less distracting from the story. In the case of illustration, the artwork becomes secondary to and derivative of the literary work. That is perhaps why a monochromatic scheme can be read as somewhat restrictive. Conversely, many illustrations act on the meaning of the term and illuminate the textual content; colour is one manner in which illustrations further enliven a literary work, allowing for the visual demonstration of what text can only suggest.

The concept that illustrations are secondary to a literary work is not meant in a belittling sense, rather it is an attempt to elucidate the integrated function of image and word. An illustration has a symbiotic relationship to its originating literary text; the text is a self-contained work which pre-dates the illustration and can exist without it, while the illustration depends upon the textual narrative for its content and context. Given that in this context the word takes precedence over the visual, an illustration could be termed a paratext to the literary text, as discussed in an earlier section Titles as Paratexts. Genette's term takes as its definition a textual elements extraneous to the main literary work, such as title, preface, author, publishing details, aspects which make the work presentable to a reader, and included in this list is illustrations. While not a necessity, an illustration also assists in the interpretation of a literary narrative by presenting the reader with a visual tableau. Considering the illustration as a paratext is useful as a means of evaluating its function in relation to the literary text. Furthermore, the quotations Nielsen extracts from the story become the titles of each illustration, so that the literary content is transposed into paratextual function through its inclusion in the illustration.

Nielsen's Four Illustrations

The quotations included from Larsen's story in each of the four illustrations are as follows:

Illustration 1 (figs. 123-124)

> Han sad bestandig paa en ganske lille Grav.
>
> *He sat continuously on quite a small grave.*

Illustration 2 (figs. 125-126)

> Ja, De forstaar maaske ikke mig som ældre Mand og gaar og nurser om saadan et lille Barn.
>
> *Yes, maybe you don't understand how an old man like me can go and care for such a little child.*

Illustration 3 (figs. 127-128)

> Men hvis Du skulde have levet her, saa skulde Du have kommet til mig og levet hos mig.
>
> *If you had lived, then you should have come to me and lived with me.*

Illustration 4 (figs. 129-130)

> En Skat og en Gave.
>
> *A treasure and a gift.*

Narrative

Narrative is a method by which the perception of time can be organised.[441] Time is organised firstly through the textual narrative written by Karl Larsen, and is retold visually by Ejnar Nielsen's drawings. Larsen extends his representation of time from past to present by beginning the narrative with the sentence "My familiarity with cemeteries stems from my childhood years."[442] The image of the narrator and his grandfather sitting beneath the ash tree in a cemetery mirrors the image of the narrator as adult visiting Vestre Kirkegaard, only to be invited by another elderly man to join him at his child's graveside. Larsen thereby creates a link between the narrator's present and past narratives, and this repetition of narrative action reveals to the reader the significance of the graveyard to the narrator's character. The story is introduced by the first person narrator, but upon entering conversation with the old man, the majority of the narrative is conveyed in direct speech, interspersed with questions or response from the narrator, guiding, as it were, the old man's recollection of the circumstances leading him to that point. The conversational nature of the story implies a twofold diegetic narrative structure, in which the first person narrator (illustrated as the away-turned man) gives way to the sub-narration of the old man, becoming a metadiegetic level of narration.

Nielsen's first illustration, which is associated with the opening paragraph of the story, does not refer to the narrator's past, but instead visualises time with the aid of a quote: "he sat continuously on quite a small grave".[443] This

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[441] H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3.

[442] "Fra mine Barneaar stammer en Fortrolighed hos mig med Kirkegaarde."
Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen.
Karl Larsen, "Den Gamle Mands Barn", *Juleroser,* Copenhagen, 1900.
http://www.vejenkunstmuseum.dk/Dansk/samlingen/vaerker/den_gamle_mands_barn_af_karl_lar.htm

[443] "Han sad bestandig paa en ganske lille Grav." Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen.

denotes the repeated action of the old man over time, and the narrator's repeated observation of him. Thus the first illustration represents a repeated action whose frequency is only made clear by the use of the adjective 'bestandig' ('continuously') in the quote. Without this quote the narrative of the illustration is unclear. The quotations alone do not reveal the function of the man with his back to the viewer as the narrator, this is only revealed through Larsen's narrative. In this illustration, his intention is toward the distant figure, and the relationship between the two is yet uncertain. The location as a cemetery is suggested by the box hedges in the immediate foreground, and is further cemented by the inclusion of 'grav' ('grave') in the quotation.

In the second illustration, the old man is visible to the viewer, and in the quotation, which takes the form of direct speech, makes explicit reference to the self as an elderly man. Nielsen illustrates the man with tightly closed lips. Speech is not visualised in the drawings, rather, the old man's intense stare at what is established in the text as the narrator implies a mode of silent communication between two; the narrator's response is however unseen. Without the clarification of the quotation, the two figures appear to sit as statues upon the graves. The positions of the men mirror each other, visually suggesting that the narrator too has his hands informally clasped. The old man's pose is also reminiscent of Nielsen's sitter in *And in his Eyes I Saw Death*: the slouched shoulders, black clothing, and the joined hands, the right held in left, with his body cropped below the knee by the hedge in the illustration all seem to echo Nielsen's earlier painting. However, the intent of the gaze in these figures differs: the old man's eyes are sharply focused on the narrator, while Erik Kjærsgaard's are dejected and abstracted, his gaze falling

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Karl Larsen, "Den Gamle Mands Barn", *Juleroser,* Copenhagen, 1900 http://www.vejenkunstmuseum.dk/Dansk/samlingen/vaerker/den_gamle_mands_barn_af_karl_lar.htm

beyond that of the viewer. The quote included in the illustration further reveals the text belongs to the old man's speech, and that he is visiting the grave of a child. He suggests to the narrator, and by extension the viewer, that they perhaps would not understand the interest or concern of an elderly man for caring for such a young child. By placing the narrative action at the foreground, on the very cusp of the pictorial space, Nielsen both heightens the depth of the drawing and the intensity of the men's exchange. The trees are delineated as regular, organic curves, and among the graves on either side of the illustration there is a plaque and tombstone, the accoutrements of the cemetery adding further visual detail.

The second illustration is still firmly placed in the narrative present, as described by the narrator who approaches the old man, only to be offered a seat in the neighbouring grave. This intimate gesture is offered by extension to the reader, who is invited into the story. With the third illustration, Nielsen folds narrative time by visualising the content of the old man's conversation and transposing it onto the present scene in the cemetery. The inclusion of the dead child redirects the realism of the visual narrative too, allowing it to take on a wholly illusionistic dimension that does not occur in the story. The words of the text enliven the deceased, and in Nielsen's drawing she becomes an embodiment of her father's (textual) account, his grief and his memory. Regarding this image without the assistance of the quotation becomes a surreal experience. The dead are invisible in cemeteries. Burial sites are marked by tombs and marble plaques, as mentioned in the short story, and come to symbolise the deceased. Therefore, the presence of the dead is a physical sensation in the living individual, the mourner, the dead become intangible yet their remains are actively present in the cemetery space. So the presence of a body, unconcealed, un-buried or un-cremated, is startling. It cannot be said with certainty that the child is dead at this point in Nielsen's representation. The textual narrative describes the moment of her death, as the old man held her in his arms, as per Nielsen's illustration, and she died after uttering the words

included in the illustration. It is likely Nielsen depicts the child on the edge of death, as he did at Gjern with *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* and *The Sick Girl.*

The old man's mouth remains shut again, despite the implied speech of the quotation; communication in these illustrations is silent, taking place in the form of visual expressions and body language, supplemented by the textual quotations. This accompanying text is a quotation of the old man's last words to the child; by depicting the deceased child in the cemetery, Nielsen has overlapped narrative time that is otherwise perceived as several layers of representation. Firstly, there is the presence of the old man and the narrator in the cemetery, secondly is his retelling of the child's death and the words he spoke, and thirdly is the mental visualisation that takes place in the mind of the viewer upon reading this text, which Nielsen has chosen to overlay to compress the visual narrative of this poignant moment into a single scene. The narrator, however, appears privy to the apparition, as he moves from an upright position to lean over the hedge slightly, as though to get a better look at the child. This visual device further aligns the narrator with the perspective of the viewer and aids the communication of the narrative. Nielsen's compression of narrative time into a single scene is a visually engaging interpretation of the text, one that serves to enliven the narrative for the reader. These visual innovations render the illustrations as distinctly separate entities from the short story, yet by replicating the same setting for illustrations 2-4, Nielsen forges visual continuity within the imagery.

Time is once more condensed in the final illustration, in which the narrator now stands, while the old man gazes up at him. The narrator adopts a similar stance to the first illustration, though his body is positioned to face the old man frontally, thus reaching the viewer's line of sight at a diagonal. His standing position bookends the narrative, here intimating his departure from the scene, and the end of his narrative. The old man resumes his position from the second illustration, resigned and affable in posture, and his gaze appears to appeal to the

narrator. This time two female figures are included from the textual narrative, the child's mother and her friend. However, unlike the previous illusionistic scene in which the dead child is made manifest, these two women are seemingly unperceived by the men. The quotation appears at odds with the visual narrative; it reads 'a treasure and a gift', a reference in the story to a message the old man writes in the Christmas card to leave at the grave. The women are present as a foil to the preciousness of the child, as underlined in the quote, their behaviour toward the child was negligent and cold. The friend cowers behind the mother, as though manipulating and coercing her actions, their mouths agape in exaggerated wailing that is both coarse and mocking. According to the story, these women manipulated and exploited men for money, and are pitted against the elderly, respectable gentleman as villainous. Their grotesque presence is a stark contrast to the earnest concern evident in the old man's face. Nielsen plays with the order of Larsen's narrative time by collaging together the women, the two men and the Christmas card inscription. The inscription conveys the sincere loss and love felt by the father for his child, while the mother and her friend appear as unworthy trespassers to the scene. The mother's negligence is reinforced by the quote in the third illustration, in which the old man insists the child should have lived with him had she survived. The inscription on the card is noted by the narrator on 25 December, when Christmas trees are erected on the graves of children. The narrator conveys the card's inscription to the reader, which is employed in the final illustration as the heart of the story. The object of the phrase 'a treasure and a gift' is not present; rather, Nielsen forms this tableau of contrasts, between good and evil, moral and immoral, men and women, the dead and the living, old age and youth, past and present. The treasure and the gift is made all the more precious by its absence, both in the narrative and in the illustration.

A Moralistic Undertone

The clear moralistic stance of the narrative appears as a warning: beware of female trickery and financial exploitation for gain. The story serves as a framework of castigation of women and prostitution, preying on what is depicted in the narrative as a sincere and honest man. The narrative is driven by the innocence of the child and the exploited man on one hand, and the deviousness of the mother and her friend on the other. Publishing the story in the Christmas periodical *Juleroser* furthermore emphasises the upholding of moral and spiritual standards at this time of year.[444] The story also functions as a moralising reminder to readers to remember the dead, further emphasised by the narrator's textual presence in the cemetery on Christmas Day. Nielsen condenses time, summoning the forms of the women, alongside the meeting between the old man and the narrator at the cemetery. Lastly, Nielsen folds narrative time so that the Christmas message can be read simultaneously in this scene. The success of such an illustration in deftly combining various textual elements within a drawing is testament to the artist's skill in visual communication. However, to read the illustration out of the context of the story would suggest a representation of the child's funeral; it could equally depict the narrator imparting a message to the old man, as he is now standing, the women perhaps respond to his words. Neither does it contain any visual allusion to the Christmas card, or seasonality of the story. The space of this final drawing becomes crowded with four figures, which suggests their simultaneous interaction. But Nielsen embeds a number of 'unseen', recounted textual elements into this final illustration, creating what could be termed a retrospective scene. The only aspect which takes place in the narrative 'present' is the quotation from the text,

[444] Ulla Sjöström, *Maleren Ejnar Nielsen*, (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers' Forlag, 2000), 31.

which is found in the final lines of the story, and which the narrator recounts to the reader long after his meeting with the old man.

Visual Narrative

The short story is a first person narrative, and rather than visualising the scene as described by the story's first person narrator, Nielsen instead incorporates the narrator into the scene in the form of the man to the right of the pictorial space, with his back to the viewer. His identity is concealed in each of the illustrations, the most that is revealed is the left portion of his face. His presence, however, acts as a conduit through which the narrative is conveyed to the viewer. But it also creates a scene within a scene, and thus becomes a meta picture. The visualisation of the first person written narrative through the representation of this speaking figure creates another layer of meaning through Nielsen's visualisation. The figure turns his back on the viewer, and thus his expression cannot be read; neither does his body express or convey any meaning that could possibly direct the viewer in reading the image. In fact, the man's hands are decidedly inactive; in two images they are clasped behind his back, while in pictures three and four they are entirely unseen amid the folds of drapery. He does not assist the viewer by conveying the narrative, rather he represents the literary device used by Larsen. The viewer thereby observes a scene as the narrator sees it, rather than an integrated experience which directly appeals to them. Yet it is this figure that excites most interest in the viewer, precisely because he is unseen. He appears in the illustrations initially as a somewhat passive figure, yet his subtle movements and changing positions in relation to the old man suggest his narrative-guiding function in the text, with the same perspective, as the viewer.

The geometrical construct of the scenes makes for a solidly structured composition, which is furthermore anchored in the foreground by the monumental

figures whose forms are loosely delineated beneath sweeping robes and coats. All foreground figures, including cypress trees and box hedges are rendered in deeper saturation than the background to create a balanced composition on two parallel planes. The monochromatic scheme, like grisaille paintings, can be likened to stone carvings and sculptures associated with death, cemeteries and tombstones. Though no tombstones are visible in the illustrations, in Danish cemeteries, plaques are usually embedded in the ground to mark the grave. Thus the gradation of shade is indicative of atmospheric perspective, as well as mathematical perspective employed by the artist. The man is described in the story as "low-browed, aged, clean-shaven, and wrinkled face with small eyes and gaunt cheeks."[445]The illustrations are executed with extraordinarily precise detail, from the wrinkles on the old man's face to individual leaves on the box hedging.

Visual Analysis

The first image illustrates a line taken from the opening paragraph of the story, in which the narrator has seen the old man of the title tending carefully to a grave. The perspectival axis from the narrator's head leads the eye along a diagonal axis directly to a distant figure, framed between two tree trunks. The foreground figure, as the narrator, dominates the viewer's attention, yet in this first illustration the function of this turned figure could be read as the subject of the scene, as referred to in the quotation.

Nielsen employs the structural regularity typical of Danish graveyard design and Vestre Kirkegaard described in Larsen's story as a perspectival device.

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[445]"Jeg saa' ind i et lavpandet, ældet, glat barberet og rynket Ansigt med smaa Øjne og magre Kinder."
Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen.
Karl Larsen, "Den Gamle Mands Barn", *Juleroser,* Copenhagen, 1900
http://www.vejenkunstmuseum.dk/Dansk/samlingen/vaerker/den_gamle_mands_barn_af_karl_lar.htm

The steps, rows of symmetrical box hedges and tall cypresses create horizontal and vertical axes of recession. This creates an intense spatial depth, that is offset by the heavier saturation of colour on the foreground figures against the graveyard backdrop. Furthermore, the hedging creates a visual threshold between the picture plane and the pictorial content. In the first image, the hedge divides the viewer from the narrator, who stands outside the grave. In the subsequent illustrations, the figures are placed within the hedging on the graves. The hedge therefore comes to represent the liminal space between the narrative and the viewer, but also between the dead and the living. By sitting inside the hedging, it becomes possible for the old man to once more hold the dead child in his arms, as described in the text. Nielsen visualises the old man's account of his last moments with the child, something that is described in direct speech, as a historical event, making it present so that two strands of narrative are depicted concurrently. In this sense the barriers between memory, speech, and reality are negated within the hedging, as though their presence on the grave permits such liminal illusion. Such layering of imagery is not part of Larsen's story, but it is Nielsen's innovation to represent the narrative, still using the visually cohesive backdrop of the graveyard, which is where the old man's account takes place.

In the second image we encounter the elderly man who is tending the grave, its composition an enlargement of the background in the first illustration: here Nielsen has depicted the old man seated on the grave, within the box hedging, looking directly at the narrator figure sitting on the adjacent plot. The third illustration repeats the composition of the second, but this time the dead child is included in the arms of the old man. He holds her carefully, his gaze tender as the narrator figure leans in slightly closer. It is a solemn yet illusionistic scene taking place among the graves. In the final image, the old man at the centre of the composition holds a similar pose once again on the box-hedged grave, his eyes raised to meet the now standing figure of the narrator. To the left Nielsen

introduces two female figures, their faces distorted in mockery, yet the old man and narrator do not acknowledge their presence. Their exaggerated expressions of the child's mother and her friend convey the insincerity of the woman's grief, and her lack of interest in the child as explained in the text by the old man. The text here reads 'En skat og en gave' ('a treasure and a gift') in reference to the deceased child. The quote is found in the text on a Christmas card addressed to the child Anette Marie, placed at the base of a Christmas tree by her grave, decorated with candles, red and white paper flowers and topped with a golden star. 'En skat og en gave' is described in the story as written on a new line by the old man, and heavily underlined twice. The significance of the line is highlighted twice, both as part of the textual narrative, and separately in the illustration. However, Nielsen extracts 'en skat og en gave' from the context in the story of a Christmas card inscription to create a composite scene as the final illustration. The quote is employed as the textual descriptor in what is supposedly the scene of the child's funeral, in which the mother and her friend are dressed in mourning. The story makes reference to the mother's request for money from the old man to dress well for the funeral. Yet the old man still sits on the grave, his closed mouth does not suggest speech but silent communication to the narrator, who is now standing again amid figures of a telescoped chronology.

The text itself in Nielsen's illustration is copied in bold, block capitals making it clearly legible, similar in style to the title *And in his Eyes I Saw Death,* and inscribed, as an epitaph on a tombstone, on the lower portion of the pictorial space. Nielsen's selection of quotations to illustrate communicate the old man's devotion to the child above all else; his constant tending to her grave, his reference to the narrator of his own concern for the child, his lament of how she should have lived with him, had she survived, and the poignant and endearing message he writes in her Christmas card. The last quotation makes no reference to the presence of the two women, the mother and the friend. In the story, the old man informs the

narrator of their actions, but they are no more present in the cemetery at that moment than the dead child he bears in his arms in the third illustration. In these illustrations, Nielsen represents death through the simultaneous absence and presence of the dead child.

Translation into Illustration

Which textual elements does Nielsen use in his visual translation of the short story? First is the setting of the cemetery, Vestre Kirkegaard in Copenhagen, which opened in 1870 and remains today the largest cemetery in Denmark. Larsen describes the cemetery as situated high on a hill, leading to the beach. The hilliness of the terrain is suggested by the tiered terrace in the first image and the hill along the horizon in the subsequent illustrations. Nielsen's regularity of compositions, with solid composure and monumentality is in keeping with the peace and calm that surrounds the narrator when visiting a cemetery, which he had done since childhood with his grandfather. Nielsen also follows with exactitude Larsen's description of the old man, his physical appearance as short, with well-kept yet comfortable clothes, as indicated by the soft folds in the sleeves and waistcoat. Larsen's description of the box-hedged graves as tiny squares in the cemetery's chequerwork is furthermore highlighted in Nielsen's composition.

Aspects omitted by Nielsen include the flowers adorning the grave, and the child's headstone. However, the gravestone is somewhat visualised and integrated as part of the text; the inscription on the marble plaque is printed in block capitals as follows:

HER HVILER MIT
KJÆRE ELSKEDE BARN
ANETTE MARIE

HENSOVET I HERREN

EFTER SINE LIDELSER

*3 JAN. 1895

† 4 AP. 1895

GID VI MAA SES IGJEN

P. ANDERSEN.[446]

To include the inscription in this manner can be likened to a verbal collage, in which the typographical and visual layout of the text on the page, including the central alignment, capitalisation, and typical gravestone inscription goes beyond quotation. This close visual correlation within the short story means that further visualisation of it in the illustration would be somewhat redundant. By portraying the narrator from behind, his gaze directed at the old man, he encapsulates the narrator's self-confessed curiosity at the man lingering at the grave.

Symbolism

The recurring image of the grave surrounded by a low and neat box hedge draws many parallels with the nest, not merely in terms of its foliate nature, but in a deeply symbolic manner related to the narrative. The nest is a construct providing warmth and safety, much like the enclosed grave, which demarcates the

[446] Here rests my dearly beloved child Anette Marie, died in the Lord after her suffering. 3. January 1895 - 4 April 1895. Wishing we will meet again. P. Andersen" Translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen.
Karl Larsen, "Den Gamle Mands Barn", *Juleroser,* Copenhagen, 1900
http://www.vejenkunstmuseum.dk/Dansk/samlingen/vaerker/den_gamle_mands_barn_af_karl_lar.htm

burial place of the deceased for their mourners. The hedging shelters the grave, separating the individual from their deceased neighbour, and thus offers the mourner a precise location for their grief. The enclosed hedge is a sanctuary for the old man; he tells the narrator that he visits three times a week, tending to the roses, and at Christmas brings a tree and card to celebrate with his child. He invites the narrator to take a seat in the neighbouring grave, and so the pair sit in ironic comfort among the dead. The difference between the abandoned nest and the inhabited nest must be noted.[447] The inhabited nest is full of life, yet the abandoned one is cold and redundant. The nest type created in Nielsen's illustration encompasses a dichotomy of emptiness and refuge. Bachelard pinpoints the comfort of small spaces, claiming that "a human being likes to "withdraw into his corner," and that it gives him physical pleasure to do so."[448] Thus the old man seeks solace within the confines of the grave-nest. A nest is constructed by birds to rear their offspring, a nurturing cocoon. Yet the child is dead in the nest, buried on the site, and the old man occupies the vacant space. The nest is therefore abandoned, and its function as a safe home has failed. In the third illustration, the physical appearance of the child cradled in the old man's arms offers a glimpse of the nurturing safety of the nest. This image is simultaneously negated by the textual narrative, in which the final moments of the child's life are revealed, along with the knowledge that she is now dead. The nurturing quality of the grave-nest is further underscored by the quotation from the story Nielsen includes in this illustration. The quote is the old man's direct speech, in which he addresses the little girl in her dying moments of how she should have to come to live with him if she were to live, he would feed her, clothe her and walk around the gardens with

[447] See Bachelard for the phenomenology of the nest as an intimate space.
Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 90-104.
[448] Bachelard, 91.

her each day. The grave-nest now protects the child's remains and has become her home.

The grave bears resemblance to the nest in both form and function, but unlike the organically formed roundedness of a nest, the grave is manmade and regular, consisting of the pruned box hedge which is trained in boxes. Boxes contain corners, and these are represented in Nielsen's illustration, as well as mentioned in the story. Such a design is widely recognisable in the layout of Danish cemeteries. Bachelard's writing on intimate spaces extends from nests to corners, and it is in the corner that the individual senses the security of immobility, in which one is bound on either side.[449] However, the nest is a naturally constructed curvature, a warm embrace that "incites us to possession, it is a curved "corner," inhabited geometry."[450] While it retains the enclosed quality of the nest, the grave in Nielsen's illustrations is characterised by its square geometry, the hard right angled corners which immobilise and trap the individual. The child is trapped in her coffin, which itself is an enclosed, intimate box, and so the box hedge becomes symbolic of the old man's stasis since her death, underlined by his thrice weekly visit to the grave.

In the first illustration, the narrator is positioned outside the grave, while in the subsequent illustrations the figures are placed within it, feeding into the inside/outside dialectic further discussed by Bachelard. By inviting him to sit in one of the hedged graves, the old man takes over the narrator role and commandeers the telling of the narrative. Furthermore, the narrator's description of these box hedges like squares on a chequerboard cements the notion that their positions are fixed like chess pieces.

The representation of death in both the story, and in Nielsen's illustrations, is one of delicate grief, remorse for a life barely begun but one which

[449] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, (Boston: Beacon Press,1994), 137.
[450] Bachelard, 146

is still tenderly cared for by the old man. In an interview Nielsen stated that he did not understand how people can see the beauty in life but not in death.[451] It can be claimed that Nielsen's depiction of the dying individuals at Gjern are hard hitting, unmitigated in their despondency and hopelessness, while *Dance of Death* is an overwrought production bordering on the carnivalesque. *The Old Man's Child*, as the illustration to a work of fiction, instead allows for a more romanticised depiction, in which Nielsen allows the dead child to return for a fleeting moment to her father's arms.

Nielsen's Visualisation: Translation, Transposition or Mimesis?

Nielsen's four illustrations for Larsen's short story *The Old Man's Child* have been examined side by side in terms of communicating the story's narrative, as well as the perception of narrative as isolated within each illustration. This analysis thus raises further questions about the nature of illustrations in a broader sense: how should illustrations be categorised in relation to the originating story, and how are the motifs and messages of the story transferred into visual terms? In short, this section will examine the nature and function of the illustration in contrast to texts written by the artist and the paratextual artwork title to deliver another aspect of the text and image dynamic, within the contextual framework of this thesis.

Nielsen's illustrations in this instance have been published alongside the short story, and so have a direct and unambiguous relation to Larsen's text. The illustration is reliant upon the literary text, from which the visual expression is derived. Text can potentially provide context and precise levels of verbal detail that cannot be as precisely transcribed in visual terms, yet an illustration can potentially

[451] As quoted from a 1927 interview with the artist in Steffen Lange, *Eneren - Maleren Ejnar Nielsen*, (Herning: Poul Kristensen Forlag, 1998), 53.

convey the emotional and tonal aspects of a written work, the atmosphere, that should not or cannot be verbalised. In this latter manner, the visual performs a crucial function in relaying emotional information to the reader/viewer concerning the text, capturing in it the negative space left by the positive expression of language. Thus, it can be claimed that text and image as two aspects of an illustrated literary work co-exist symbiotically, each contributing a particular expressive aspect to the reader/viewer's experience.

However, before proceeding to evaluate the illustration's transmission of the text's atmosphere, the nature of the illustration must first be established. To do so, the example of Nielsen's illustrations will be assessed as belonging to various categories of textual to visual transformation, namely translation, transposition and mimesis.

Translation has been discussed with regard to Munch's *Scream* text, as well as Chapter 2 on Atmosphere. Genette writes that "no translation can be absolutely faithful, and every act of translation affects the meaning of the translated text."[452] This can also be said of illustration, for Nielsen in many respects plays the part of the translator of Larsen's story into visual language. Not everything verbal can be found to have equivalent meaning in the visual sphere, and vice versa. To illustrate is to accompany text with a picture, either in an explanatory capacity, but etymologically, illustration has its Latin roots in *illustrare*, or illuminate.[453] The idea that the visual 'sheds light' demonstrates the ability of visual art to dispel the perceived 'darkness' of linguistically-rooted reason, and appeal directly to the senses. Emotion is the result of sensory reaction to a stimulus. Thus the illumination of illustration provides feeling to text. To read the old man's narrative of his last moments with his child is a tragic report, and Nielsen makes visible the

[452] Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 214.
[453] Oxford English Online Dictionary, Definition of 'illustrate', https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/illustrate

dead child cradled above her grave; this is a scene that could not possibly exist, and for this very fact its emotional power is significantly intensified. Translation within the same medium, typically language, is naturally not immune to semantic shifts, as Genette correctly states, but greater scope is accommodated in translation between media. By this, I mean as illustrations apparently show rather than tell (mimesis over diegesis), the space for ambiguous interpretation is expanded and so space is made for the viewer to step in and engage with a work. I argue that the viewer's sensory reaction, which is subsequently processed as emotional response, can be termed the perceptible atmosphere of an artwork.

The question is raised of when to consult and examine the illustration, in relation to reading the literary text: should it be considered as part of the text, or is it to be handled as a separate yet connected component? The inclusion of text within the pictorial space suggests an independence from the literary text it illustrates, allowing for its self-explanation. Very often illustrations, when regarded as a series, highlight the crucial moments in a textual narrative, typically picking the most exciting or for visual representation. Thus as a series, illustrations function as a summary of the text's primary events. Translation aims to change the language, keeping the meaning of the original intact. Nothing extraneous to the original should be added by the translator, the activity is derived from the Latin *translat-*, 'carried across'; yet for the illustrator, the scope of translation is too narrow an ascription.

Layers of Narration

On a very basic level, visual and verbal narrative can be categorised as mimesis and diegesis, respectively. Without wishing to repeat points made in Texts by the Artist (Munch), mimesis and diegesis can vary in performance depending on their context. In the case of Nielsen's illustrations for Larsen's short story, text and

image are intertwined, with the textual component considered as part of the visual representation, and included on the picture plane to indicate the portion of text it represents. Mimesis as the performance or 'showing' of an action is thus often associated with the representational arts,[454] while the 'telling' of narrative is associated with textual diegesis. However, these narrative devices can take a mixed form in visual representation. 'Telling' versus 'showing' is widely discussed in narratology.[455] Genette, drawing on Platonic writing, highlights the difference between diegesis, being the narrative conveyed by the narrator without their presence in the narrative through indirect speech, while mimesis, as imitation, takes the form of direct speech. This is notably the case in the dramatic arts, in which actors imitate characters through direct speech and thus the narrative distance is greatly reduced. Diegesis dilutes the immediacy of mimesis, and thus distances the reader's engagement with the content.[456] Genette proceeds to point out that the visual aspect thus derived from mimesis in the literary context cannot exist as anything more than the "illusion of mimesis", as "narration, oral or written, is a fact of language, and language signifies without imitating."[457] Thus Genette differentiates the illusion of mimesis with the narrative of events as "a transcription of the (supposed) non-verbal into the verbal."[458] Based on Genette's writings, language can never truly imitate and so its mimetic function in language is non-existent, though certain aspects such as direct speech are mimetic insofar as the appear as immediate utterances from a character. However, Larsen's *The Old Man's Child* is composed of two conversations, as it were; one taking place between the homodiegetic narrator and his assumed listening audience, and

[454] Karol Berger, "Diegesis and Mimesis: The Poetic Modes and the Matter of Artistic Presentation", *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 12, no. 4 (Autumn 1994), 407.
[455] Tobias Klauk and Tilmann Köppe, "Telling vs. Showing", in Peter Hühn, et al., *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press. http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/
[456] Gérard Genette *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 162-163.
[457] Genette, 164.
[458] Genette, 165.

secondly, the dialogue unfolding between this homodiegetic narrator and the old man. The narrator's voice is light and conversational in tone in both instances, which gives this narrative the mimetic quality inherent in direct speech. This distinction operates on the assumption that diegesis is more closely aligned to language than visual arts, and vice versa in terms of mimesis. Considering the showing versus telling dichotomy in relation to Nielsen's illustrations, it becomes clear that the narrative processes of both diegesis and mimesis are active in the pictorial space. Firstly, the narrative is told through the quotations, which also control the sequence of events that are illustrated. The position or posture of the narrator is nowhere mentioned in the short story, aside from the old man's invitation to him to sit on the adjacent grave. Yet he guides the narrative forward, and this diegetic function is transposed into Nielsen's figure of the narrator. The demeanour of the narrator in the illustration is entirely Nielsen's invention, and thus he cannot be imitating anything within the narrative text. Therefore, he serves a diegetic function within the series of illustrations.

Larsen's story encompasses a number of narrative levels. It opens with the first person, homodiegetic narrator who exists in the narrative world[459] and introduces the subject matter by telling the reader of his childhood trips to the cemetery. This feeds into the present actions of the narrator, who finds himself in Vestre Kirkegaard, observing the actions of an old man. The narrative shifts then to 'en skønne dag' (one beautiful day) when he approaches the old man, who proceeds to engage him in conversation. This conversation forms the main body of the text, thus overtaking the narrative direction from the narrator and into the first person direct speech of the old man, as reported by the narrator. The old man's reported narrative falls into what Genette deemed as the most mimetic narrative of words, as it provides direct access to the thoughts and motivations of the character

[459] H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 75.

without the frequently unnecessary accoutrement of narrated or transposed speech.[460] The old man's direct speech introduces his own narrative, of which he tells of his child, her mother and the circumstances of the former's death. The narrator interjects in the conversation, so he leaves his own narrative level to enter that of the old man, returning to the original level to tell the reader the old man's actions. Despite it being 'told' by the old man, the conversation and thereby its contents are *shown* to the reader, rather than relayed by the narrator using reported speech. The conversation is subsumed into homodiegetic narrative, but shifts intermittently to the narrator's telling of the story to the reader, linking passages of the old man's speech, e.g. "The old man looked out above the small grave.[461]

Metalepsis

A form of metalepsis occurs in Niesen's illustration with the invasion of the child and two women from the old man's narrative. This does not occur in Larsen's story, as the succession of events recounted in the narrative fit together congruously. Metalepsis is the interruption "by the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe (or by diegetic characters into a metadiegetic universe, etc.)".[462] Genette describes metalepsis as "a boundary *that is precisely the narrating (or the performance) itself:* a shifting but sacred frontier between two worlds, the world in which one tells, the world of which one tells."[463] This convergence of two realities occurs in Nielsen's illustrations, so that parallel narratives that are temporally and spatially remote, linked only though the old man's telling, find form in the same pictorial space. The effect is an overlap in the

[460] Gérard Genette *Narrative Discourse*: *An Essay in Method*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 172.
[461] "Den gamle Mand saa' ud over den lille Grav"; translated from Danish by Kerstina Mortensen.
[462] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980),234-5.
[463] Genette, 236.

viewer's and artwork's spheres which heightens the involvement of the viewer in the work.

Thus in the third illustration, the interruption is the child held by the old man. The child is already dead, existing only in the old man's account to the homodiegetic narrator. Thus she is effectually an extradiegetic character who is mentioned by name, but does not in any sense *perform* in the textual narrative. However, she is present in a sense, buried on the site of the unfolding narrative, and acknowledged by both the old man and the homodiegetic narrator. She is a point of reference, and does not fulfil a narrative performative function. In the third illustration, Nielsen includes the body of the child to represent a scene which does not exist in the narrative text. This illustration is not mimetic of the text, as it presents an event which has not occured in Larsen's story. The child has visually infiltrated the narrative as presented by Nielsen. Instead, the illustration shows the convergence of narrative levels in one image; the homodiegetically expressed narrative, whose proponent is the man present in the right of the pictorial space, and the child, who is made manifest by the direct speech of the old man. Thus the child is mimetic of the old man's speech, she shows the viewer the final moments of her life, as described by the old man, in a wholly new visual narrative created by Nielsen. The child, and by extension, the two women in the final illustration who are referred to in the text but do not interact with the old man or the homodiegetic narrator, occupy the same level of metaleptic existence as diegetic interlopers.

Text and Image: Differing Objectives?

In light of this discussion of diegetic and mimetic narrative, the narrative function of the quotations from the text must also be examined. These portions of text are extracted and reproduced in rectangular cartouches beneath the imagery to form a partial border or frame at the base of the illustrations.

One of the objectives of this thesis is to evaluate the unity of aesthetic communication as a result of text and image interactions in the same theme or artwork. Therefore, this section aims to examine the extent to which the illustrations and the short story can be considered a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or can there be unity of aesthetic intention across media, in this collaboration between the artist and the writer? To what degree can the illustrations be said to encapsulate the central message and motifs of the textual narrative?

The purpose of illustrations in a literary text is to embody and thereby enliven for the reader the major turning points in the narrative. The sequence of scenes illustrated by Nielsen roughly correspond with the beginning, middle sections and conclusion of the story. They are fragmentary in nature, in that there is a disconnect between the quotation extracted and the content visualised in the final illustration. This is not a negative comment on Nielsen's practice, rather it is the result of his absorption and processing of the textual content. Nielsen's final illustration juxtaposes the penultimate line of the story, "en Skat og en Gave", the inscription in the child's Christmas card with an assemblage of characters that do not exist in the same temporal space in the story. 'En Skat og en Gave' is read by the narrator after his initial conversation with the old man, on Christmas Day. Yet Nielsen does not choose to illustrate the Christmas scene at the cemetery, though the sight of Christmas trees on children's graves, as described in the story, would provide an artist with much material for visual reworking. Thus the quotation is de-contextualised and granted new meaning through Nielsen's outside perspective. By juxtaposing this collage of figures with the quotation, Nielsen elicits another response from the viewer; the touching line from the Christmas card underscores the old man's devotion to child, and by placing the mocking women in the frame of such tenderness, Nielsen offends the viewer. The response provoked in the viewer is one of enormous empathy with the old man, who sits helplessly on the grave, flanked by the women, facing the narrator, now standing. As the women only exist

in the old man's telling of the story, Nielsen's image is mimetic of this recollection, as is the third illustration in which the dead child is manifested, as though conjured by the old man's words. The artist visualises not merely the narrative text, but the imaginary scene that unfolds, creating a composite scene that mixes reality and illusion in the narrative world in order to convey emotion to the viewer. The text 'en skat og en gave' is symbolic of the absent child. Conveying emotion, or feeling, are terms that can be aligned with atmosphere. Nielsen forges a sense of visual harmony by repeating a similar composition in illustrations two to four, thus transmitting the same atmosphere to the viewer and thereby providing structure to the narrative.

The story communicates with precision and detail the narrative, the characters, and the resolution of the text. This is not the objective of the illustrations. One can react, and understand to some degree the narrative, or form *ideas* of the narrative that is ongoing in each of the images, without ever having read the story. Their content is further cemented by the quotations, which in turn become the subtitles of the individual images, under the principal title *The Old Man's Child*. The combination of the artist's aesthetic choices, mixed with the viewer's emotional response is what I have termed atmosphere in this thesis.

That the illustrations can be comprehended in isolation from the text is testament to the diegetic quality of the images. The captions function on two levels, firstly as quotations directly lifted from the story to 'match up' with or clarify the visual, and secondly, as titles of the individual images in their own right. Text is not always included in the pictorial space of an illustration. More frequently, the quotation may be included below the image, added in publication, but here, the continuity of the text included varies between each image. In the first, there is the narrator's diegesis, the second and third images include the direct speech of the old man, and lastly, the card inscription, the written word of the old man, as repeated 'aloud' in the story by the homodiegetic narrator. The inclusion of the text in the

picture plane, particularly the direct speech of the old man, is reminiscent of comic strips, which do not rely on a full body of text but instead convey the range of narrative through text and image within the picture plane. *The Old Man's Child* illustrations further echo a comic strip in that full comprehension of the verbal message (as included in the rectangular cartouches) can only be fully comprehended by regarding the sequence from start to finish. Without the presence of the child in the third image, the final quotation, 'en skat og en gave', cannot be deduced as a reference to the dead child. What is interesting to note is that the speaker of the quotations, which in illustration three and four is part of the old man's direct speech, is not indicated, unlike the case in comics, where speech bubbles, physical gestures or other visual devices denote the speaker.[464]

The examination of a literary work's illustration has further commonalities with the communicative mode of comics, particularly when the text is embedded in the visual narrative, as in Nielsen's drawings. Barthes differentiates between two modes of linguistic communication. Anchorage refers to text which aids the viewer in pinning down the appropriate context out of a range of possible meanings, as triggered by the image. By virtue of its emphasis on the desired, 'correct' meaning, anchorage attempts to suppress alternative interpretation, and as such is associated with photographs, advertisements and other 'documentary' images whose narrative and context require clarification.[465] The second term of linguistic communication is relay, which has direct application to the Nielsen illustrations. Barthes associates relay with comics and film, in which the constituent text and image parts belong to a more complex narrative context. Barthes underlines the significance of relay in such instances in which "dialogue functions not simply as elucidation but really does advance the action by setting out, in the sequence of messages, meanings that are not to be found in the image

[464] W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 92.
[465] Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image" in *Image Music Text*, (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 40.

itself."[466] Barthes furthermore outlines the diegetic difference between comics intended for quick reading, and those in which "verbal 'descriptions', which are entrusted to the image, that is to say to a less 'laborious' system."[467] The mode of linguistic communication found in *The Old Man's Child* illustrations can be termed overwhelmingly as relay, although anchorage also plays a role in fixing the meaning of the visual content. Here, the quoted text not only refers to the image above it, but is displaced from its original state within Larsen's story. However, the speaker, or 'originator' of the text is not indicated by the positioning of the quotations, as all are located in the same lower band of the picture plane, and neither are any visual devices employed to direct the text toward a particular figure. The distinction between anchorage and relay depends on whether diegetic significance resides in the image or in the text. Anchorage provides identification and confirmation of the visual representation (and following on from theoretical frameworks adopted in this thesis, could be included as a paratext or as self-reflective), while relay suggests a diegetic function of the text which cannot otherwise be gleaned from the image. That Nielsen's illustrations demonstrate the mode of relay is evident as they are based on Larsen's broader textual narrative. However, it would be possible for the artist to depict the text with exactitude, a realistic and truly mimetic imitation of the textual content. Instead, Nielsen allows for the imagery to communicate with indeterminacy, in which the narrative is alluded to in the vaguest terms, and conveyed across the stage set of the graveyard that is transposed in each composition. The diegetic function of the quotations is heightened, and in doing so defers to the text to 'fill in the gaps' left open in the illustration. Thus the short story controls and directs the narrative. The narrative value of the visual element in picturebooks typically exceeds that of illustrations,

[466] Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image" in *Image Music Text*, (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 41.
[467] Barthes, 41.

yet in Nielsen's illustrations, the artist imbues additional narrative material into his work, namely the manifestation of the dead child at the grave.[468]

The four illustrations by Nielsen are pictorial renditions to visually describe Larsen's short story. They are illustrations, and as such are usually termed mimetic of the text in that they imitate its content, yet the inherent issues of mimesis and diegesis have already been addressed. The quotations are extracted from the larger body of text and appended to Nielsen's imagery. These portions of text are recontextualised in the visual setting, as though the illustrations must fill in the gaps between each quotation. Nielsen's illustrations are not strictly mimetic however, and include the artist's inventiveness to convey symbolic scenes which are not described literally in the story.

Translating Atmosphere

Atmosphere is the feeling that possesses an individual while experiencing an artwork, an aesthetically-engineered work. This feeling does not disappear, but stays with the viewer and remains embedded in memory, a sensation linking feeling and memory comparable to Barthes' punctum. While this is discussed at length in Chapter 2, I pose the question of whether this feeling can be translated from text to image in an interconnected series, as in Nielsen's illustrations. As atmosphere is grounded in individual perception, I do not claim to propose a standardised, set idea of atmosphere present in the artworks of this thesis; rather, it is through my interpretation that I aim to illustrate the processes at work in the textual-visual exchange. Experiences of artworks are infinitely varied, and response is moulded by the individual's background, education, intellect, mood, and memory. Böhme's writings on atmosphere likens the concept to that of

[468] John A. Bateman, *Text and Image,* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 95.

beauty, which in the context of aesthetic objects, is constructed with the purpose of being aesthetic.[469] Therefore, it can be claimed that the artist designs an artwork with the aim of procuring a particular reaction from the viewer.

The short story begins with nostalgic memories of childhood, as alluded to by the narrator, as well as the experience of the cemetery, of which most people have unfortunate experience. This is thematic mood, which encapsulates the associated feelings of death, grief, and mourning, but in the individual, these themes will be marked by personal memory. Böhme writes that "atmospheres are comprehended as powers which affect the subject; they have a tendency to induce in the subject a characteristic mood."[470] Stepping aside from personal response, the evaluation of atmosphere or mood in relation to illustrations is to consider the transfer of mood between the original short story as a linguistically rendered work, and the illustration as visual expression created by another author (the artist) in connection with the linguistic text. By examining the manner in which the content is exchanged between the illustration and the original text, how the twin elements of text and image interact with a shared theme, and in the same physical space in publication, one can begin to comprehend the degree to which atmosphere is translated across media. This is achieved by analysing the narrative of both text and illustration, and the storytelling devices employed to communicate the same message.

[469] Gernot Böhme, *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres,* ed. Jean-Paul Thibaud, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 57.
[470] Böhme, 29.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Introduction

The objective set out at the beginning of this thesis was to evaluate the myriad of text and image interaction of specific artworks. My original contribution to knowledge is the analysis of text and image relations that exist in depictions of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self in Nordic Symbolism, examining the significance of deliberate and artistically created linguistic texts and their role in the perception of an artwork. In this thesis I have focused on Ejnar Nielsen, Vilhelm Hammershøi, Niels Hansen Jacobsen and Edvard Munch. These four artists explore the themes of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self in the case studies selected. The purpose of specifying such themes is firstly, to narrow the scope of the thesis to this subject matter, and secondly, to allow for a broader comparison of representation within these subjects, comparing like for like, as it were. Thus references to other artists, such as Magnus Enckell, Akseli Gallen-Kallela, and Theodor Kittelsen, among others and alongside other artworks from the central artists' oeuvres, are included to provide a fuller, rounded sense of representation within the subject field and cultural context.

Less well known outside Scandinavia are Nielsen and Hansen Jacobsen, and I hope that their work will be discovered by a new audience as a by-product of this thesis. While much literature, including English-language scholarship, has been devoted to Munch and Hammershøi, this thesis provides new perspectives on their art. Nielsen's inscription of the title onto the canvas is an example of the artwork title that is fixed in place by the artist, demonstrating continuity and intention between the visual work and its textual title. The origins of the phrase *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* is not located in existing scholarship, but

neither has its existence as text in the pictorial space before been highlighted or analysed in such detail. Nielsen's involved approach and value placed on the textual is offset by Hammershøi's distinct lack of interest in titling his works. The result is an oeuvre filled with titles that reflect literally what is depicted on the canvas, and this reveals perhaps another function of the title; rather than an aid to narrative interpretation, it implies that language (through the artwork title) is analogical to the reflectivity of the mirror, or the extensions of the shadow. In all, the study of the artwork title holds a multitude of revelations which affect the viewer's perception of an artwork. Through Nielsen and Hammershøi, just two of these functions are investigated, with the potential for application in other artworks, irrespective of genre, era or artist.

Munch's *Scream*, and indeed, his textual output of prose fragments, literary sketches and diaries are the subject of much scholarship, and are accessible through the rich digital database www.emunch.no, but with this thesis I aim to shed new light on the intricacies of the textual and visual communication when combined in one motif. Focusing on Munch's ocularcentric approach to both writing and painting, this chapter elucidates the fine differences between versions of the *Scream* text and their translations, examining English, French, German and original Norwegian versions of the text, and their availability to contemporary audiences. The differences in versions, as well as the subtleties between the visual versions of the *Scream* motif are analysed, reaching the conclusion that the narrative conveyed diegetically through the text, and mimetically through visual imagery differs inherently by virtue of the respective media employed. The text thus functions as a mise en abyme. The degree of self-reflexivity between the textual and visual components means that despite the nuances in representation of the motif, both text and image are inextricably and self-referentially linked. Furthermore, in this chapter I also make explicit the connection between atmosphere and the *Scream* motif, with the sound associations of the Germanic

forms of *Stimmung* and *stemning*. This highlights the significance of aurality in the perception of atmosphere; though visual art is perceived ocularcentrically, the transfer of an atmosphere from an artwork to a viewer is rooted in all senses, to which vision provides access.

Also part of the second category Texts by the Artist is the sculptor Niels Hansen Jacobsen, who frequently attached poetic texts to individual works. While the illustrational function of his sculptures in relation to Hans Christian Andersen's fairytales is explicated in Part Three, Hansen Jacobsen also appended many of his works with his own writing. The main focus of this chapter is *The Shadow*, to which he appended a short poem. The text itself was included in the 1914 atelier catalogue within public circulation, and today it is widely reproduced in scholarship and museum literature. Despite this, the nature of the relationship between the sculpture as a three dimensional form, and the linguistic message conveyed by the poetic text has not before been addressed in such depth. In this chapter I analyse the effects of such a text on the interpretation of the sculpture's narrative, as well as that which is conveyed by the artwork itself. The text is written by the artist, similar to Munch's texts and the titles affixed by Nielsen and Hammershøi, therefore it can be said with certainty that there is a close correlation of intention between the artwork and the text to convey a unified aesthetic message. The original contribution of this chapter is the focused and detailed analysis of narrative in *The Shadow,* both as a three-dimensional form and a literary expression. The sculpture and text relation is also compared with other poetic texts written by Hansen Jacobsen for *The Night,* as well as Munch's *Scream* text. These texts can be deemed ekphrastic; the *Scream* text first appears alongside a notebook sketch of the scene experienced by the artist, and the writing of a text after the visual intensity of the experience can be described as having ekphrastic qualities. Secondly, Hansen Jacobsen's text appears in his 1914 atelier catalogue, sixteen years after the sculpture's completion. It is possible the text appeared

before this time, but certainly from this it points to being an ekphrastic text, created after the sculpture.

The final textual category, Literary Sources for the Artwork, comprises Part Three of this thesis. In this, works by Nielsen and Hansen Jacobsen are explored as forms of illustration, mimesis and the diegetic potential of the visual image. Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother* is one of his sculptures which has a textual basis in a H. C. Andersen fairytale, in this case, *Story of a Mother* (1847). In this chapter, my objective is to interrogate the narrative of Andersen's story, to identify the elements Hansen Jacobsen isolates in his sculpture, and evaluate the extent to which the sculpture conveys the narrative of the story. In this final textual category, I argue that the artist possesses a double function: to interpret the literary work, and then represent it visually to an audience. I also argue that Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother* is a form of illustration, despite the fact that the medium of sculpture does not normally lend itself to illustration, in the conventional sense that is included and published in printed media. However, that the sculpture attempts to encapsulate the essence of the story, and that the text is included ensures that the viewer is aware of the non-visual narrative the sculpture symbolises. The change in the title differentiates the artwork from the literary work, yet in contemporary exhibitions the final two lines of the H. C. Andersen story were appended to the paratextual details of the sculpture, concretising the inextricability of this portion of text with the sculptural image.

The final chapter of this thesis deals with the relationship between the image and the text in Ejnar Nielsen's four illustrations *The Old Man's Child* (1900), for Karl Larsen's short story of the same name. This is an illustration in the conventional sense, published alongside the story in the 1900 seasonal periodical *Juleroser*. By comparison to Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother*, the link between the textual narrative, and the illustration is intensified as portions of the

text are quoted directly in the pictorial space. Nielsen positions the text in a cartouche along the lower section of the illustrations; they do not interact directly with the pictorial content, yet both elements occupy the same immediate space. The original contribution of this chapter is that it provides in-depth analysis of the narrative devices employed by Nielsen to convey to the viewer the essence of the story. Before the imagery can be analysed, however, the story itself is first be examined to reveal the narrative method. Issues of mimesis and diegesis are once more brought to the fore in text-image dynamics, and in this chapter I argue that Nielsen's illustrations are both mimetic and diegetic in character. The narrative encapsulated in each image is subtitled below, yet despite these subtitles (quotations) from the story, the visual imagery Nielsen employs is highly personal, and finds echoes in his earlier work, specifically the composition of *And in his Eyes I Saw Death*. Furthermore, Nielsen ensures there is continuity between all four images, and thus across the single narrative, by depicting the narrator with his back to the viewer as the anonymous conveyor of the plot. This innovative narrative device reflects the linguistic narrative and thus renders the visual expression diegetic. Additionally, I identify a disconnect between the visual content presented, and the text quoted; the image does not represent the quote mimetically, rather it represents a number of temporal realities that Larsen presents in the story as a single, illusionistic plane. Illustrations are part of Genette's classification of paratexts, yet he refers to them in his text only in passing, claiming that they require more attention than could be afforded at that time, so with this chapter, comprising specifically of Nielsen's illustrations, and the illustration-like qualities of Hansen Jacobsen's *Death and the Mother,* my objective is to contribute to knowledge on the subject of illustrations as paratexts.

Themes of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self

This conclusion draws together the chief arguments of the three chapters. Within this, the findings of each category of text/image dynamic are compared, and placed in the cultural context of its artistic production. The argument set out in the introduction is maintained throughout via a number of methodologies, namely text and image theory, the Peircean semiotic triad, narratology, and theories of atmosphere and perception. Visual analysis is paired with these methodologies to provide a deepened understanding of three core areas of text and image interaction.

The central themes of this thesis are characteristic of fin de siècle Symbolism, especially in the Nordic artistic milieu. From the outset my intention has been to interrogate the textual-visual dynamics presented to the viewer by the artist through the three textual categories. This has been achieved by addressing the questions set out in the introduction, which follow.

The term 'translation' suggests the existence of an original; however, the argument between original and imitation is not the objective here. Instead, this thesis has evaluated the manner in which a message is transferred between one medium and another. The division of this study into three main parts - Titles as Paratexts, Texts by the Artist and Literary Sources for Artworks - allows for the examination of key areas of interaction between textual and visual components of an artwork. The thread running through these chapters is the concept of atmosphere, the subject of discussion in Chapter 2. Atmosphere plays a significant role in the evaluation of text and image - through this feeling a twofold creation is orchestrated by the artist and perceived by the viewer. A further paratext, or aspect which possesses the paratextual quality of liminality, is atmosphere. Defined as a 'threshold' between the viewer and the work, the paratext aids the interpretation of material to a viewer, and it is in such liminality that I argue the atmosphere of a

work is located. The relationship between objects in a representational plane, either on the canvas or in sculptural three dimensions, determines the viewer's reaction and thus their overall 'feeling' of an artwork. Therefore, I propose that it is from the negative space between objects in visual expression that the viewer derives the atmosphere of work, whether or not they are conscious of the effects. However, atmosphere is not an entirely subjective response on the part of the viewer, as the artist will have arranged the composition to achieve certain effects, the reception of which is dependent on the viewer's powers of perception. Capturing the mood of a landscape in the blue Nordic twilight was the objective of many artists, whether motivated by rising nationalist sentiment, as in Pekka Halonen, or to reflect the individual's psychological landscape, as depicted by Munch. Mood or feeling is frequently associated with Symbolist landscape painting, but emotional response naturally has resonance beyond this genre, and can be equally valid in the artworks of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self upon which I have focused in this thesis.

The objective of this study is to ascertain the degree to which this essential atmosphere of an idea could be 'translated' between text and image in various aesthetic relations. Firstly, this was examined in the case of the artwork title, as selected by the artist; intentionality on the part of the artist is of utmost significance in this context, ensuring singularity of intention in both the visuality of the artwork and the textual component of the title. Questions posed include addressing the extent to which the textual appendage encompasses the visual, the analogies of shadows and reflections for the function of the title, and the effect of title on the viewer's visual perception. The weight placed on the title and its function differs enormously between Nielsen and Hammershøi; where Nielsen includes the titles as an integral part of the visual narrative, Hammershøi retains a degree of distance from ascribing the textual element to his artworks, only doing so as a necessary banality. Despite this apparent lack of interest in the verbal

communication of his work, Hammershøi's titles are representative of a self-reflective, mise-en-abyme type title. The second category is the poetic text written by the artist as a textual counterpart for a specific artwork, an ekphrastic expression that embodies the essence of the visual work. The examples taken from Munch and Hansen Jacobsen demonstrate a need on the part of the artist to express through literary means as well as their primary visual expression by accompanying an artwork with poetic writing. Similar to the title in terms of intentionality, the text written by the artist allows for the visual message to be rendered in another medium, and the degree of similitude between the artwork and the poetic message. The poetic sketches executed by Munch and Hansen Jacobsen demonstrate their further experimentation with the same motif, so that the kernel of the idea, or its atmosphere, is translated from text to image, and vice versa. This conveys the fluidity that exists between media in communicating the same idea. The final category of text/image relations addressed in this thesis is literary works as inspiration for the artist, forming the basis of a finished work of art. This category marks a break from the previous two, in which there is a unity between the text and image as two aspects created by a singular artist. The aim of this final category is to evaluate the artist's interpretation of a literary source, and how the translation the atmosphere of this 'original' work by a writer into a new form. The artist in this category is a double agent, occupying the function of the viewer who perceives a literary work, and as artist, creating a new work using the verbal art as its basis.

The artworks examined are interconnected by a number of strands. Firstly, all of the artists from the case studies - Munch, Nielsen, Hansen Jacobsen and Hammershøi - were contemporaries, working in the Nordic artistic milieu, originating from similar cultural backgrounds, and all, with the exception of Munch, are Danish. However, the emphasis on Danish artists is not to be construed as overlooking artists active in the other Nordic countries. The thematic structure of the thesis focuses on three distinct areas: Illness, Death, and the Psychological

Self; pictorial representations of these themes abound in fin de siècle Nordic art, as well as in the broader European context. Where the case studies provide rigorous interrogation of the text/image dynamic of individual works, the scope of the introduction allows for a thematic survey of depictions of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self at a broader level. The case studies, forming the body of the thesis, disentangle the interaction between the visual and the textual, but the survey of Introduction Part Two allows for these works to be placed in the context of their contemporaries who are working within the same thematics. This allows for greater comprehension of the visual vocabulary employed by Nordic artists at this time.

The arguments made in each chapter can be extrapolated from the context of Nordic Symbolism and applied to a range of works in which textual and visual elements interact. Such an approach, examining the atmosphere transmitted by verbal and visual components, would have particular resonance with nineteenth and early twentieth century avant-garde movements, from Symbolism to Dada and Surrealism, in which the boundary between word and image becomes increasingly eroded. Additionally, there is potential for further research based on the material presented in this thesis. Munch's vast literary output is an invaluable source for study, and likewise Sophus Michaëlis' ekphrastic poems, inspired directly by Hammershøi's paintings. Hansen Jacobsen and Nielsen have received comparatively little attention outside Denmark, and their work is deserving of fresh appraisal in an international context. The relation between Hansen Jacobsen's poetry and sculpture is worthy of further detailed analysis, as is Nielsen's illustration work for other projects than *The Old Man's Child.* In each case, exploring the text and image dynamic enriches existing scholarship on the individual artists, and their role in the broader context of Nordic and European Symbolism.

Chapter Outline

The following pages comprise a chapter summary, outlining the principal arguments.

1. Introduction: I and II

This chapter introduces the motivations that drive this thesis, namely the examination of text and image interplay in specific artworks centred around the themes of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self. Additionally, the introduction delves into origins of the Symbolist movement in the French literary tradition, beginning with Aurier and Moréas, and which then developed in the visual arts as an aesthetic and conceptual motivation identified among individuals rather than a manifesto-bound association of artists.

The Nordic cultural context from which these artworks emerged is also explored, namely with Johannes Jørgensen's periodical *Taarnet* (1893-94) which is credited with bringing French Symbolist ideas to Danish audiences. While this thesis explores the text/image dimension of six artworks in-depth, contextualising these works with the varying representations of these themes across Nordic Symbolism. The temporal limit of this study is the period 1890-1915, during which time the majority of such works were produced. The introduction also outlines the methodologies employed in this study, namely Peircean semiotics and narratology.

2. Atmosphere

Following on from the introduction, the first chapter addresses the concept of atmosphere, outlining a number of theoretical presentations of atmosphere, and its relevance to this thesis. It is useful to assemble a range of

definitions of atmosphere and related concepts. The close synonyms of presence, feeling and mood each suggest a shaded difference that is integral in the perception of art.

By positioning the chapter at the opening of the thesis provides the core of the three thesis sections with the theoretical filter through which the artworks are viewed.

Part One: Titles as Paratexts

3. **Ejnar Nielsen, *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* (1897)**
4. **Vilhelm Hammershøi, *White Doors* or *Open Doors* (1905)**

Titles as Paratexts examines the function of titles in varying contexts, as set up within the framework of Genette's paratext. The physical presence of *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* on Nielsen's canvas performs a different function to the titles fixed to Hammershøi's paintings, which seemingly confirm the visual narrative without further elaboration. Titles are a practical necessity for artworks, serving as identification, but they are frequently the first textual layer with which the viewer is confronted, and thus play a significant role. The title has the potential to suggest to the viewer the content of the visual work, and in turn influence reading and interpretation.

Part Two: Texts by the Artist

5. **Edvard Munch, *Scream* (1893)**
6. **Niels Hansen Jacobsen, *The Shadow* (1897-98)**

The artist's creation of poetic texts to accompany specific works with a literary sketch points to a significant creative drive to express an idea through both written and visual forms. This chapter largely deals with the type of textual visual relation of ekphrasis, and as the text is also written by the artist, the link

between the visual and verbal expression is intensified. The focus of this section is Munch's literary texts, particularly the *Scream* text, which is reproduced alongside the *Scream* motif in notebooks, as well as lithographs, and contemporary articles. This ensures that both the image and the text were circulated to the public. Therefore, it can be considered as central to the *Scream* as the screaming figure itself. The second chapter of this section explores Hansen Jacobsen's use of the poetic text to accompany his sculpture *The Shadow*. In this instance, the text is circulated in exhibition catalogues, enriching the narrative suggested by the visual form.

Part Three: Literary Sources for Artworks

7. **Niels Hansen Jacobsen, *Death and the Mother* (1892)**
8. **Ejnar Nielsen, *The Old Man's Child* (1900)**

The final category places the artist at the greatest remove from the textual component. The practical details, such as the criteria or basis upon which an artist selects a particular literary work as the inspiration for their art is relevant but not essential in this study. Rather, this section examines two artworks based on literary works as exemplary of their type: the 'inspired' artwork, and the illustration. In the former category, the sculpture *Death and the Mother* by Niels Hansen Jacobsen is a work 'inspired' by H. C. Andersen's fairytale of a similar title, *Story of a Mother* (1847). Andersen died in 1875, so there was no link or intention between the writer and sculptor to create this work, which is noted in exhibition literature as being based on this story. In the second part of this section, the qualities of the illustration are evaluated. This case differs from the Hansen Jacobsen sculpture as the short story by Karl Larsen, *The Old Man's Child* (1900) was published with Ejnar Nielsen's four illustrations in *Juleroser.* Whether there was any degree of conferring between the artist and the writer is not clear to the

author at this point in time; neither is such a detail of great significance to this study, as the intention is to evaluate firstly, the extent of correspondence in the narrative of the story and that conveyed in Nielsen's illustrations.

9. Conclusion

The conclusion draws together and summarises the main arguments of the thesis; thus the conclusions reached in each chapter can be regarded as a broader picture, highlighting the originality of the project within the scope of Nordic Symbolism.

Thematic Comparison

As outlined above, the thesis arguments are built around the methodologies of text and image, atmosphere, Peircean semiotics, and narratology. This conclusion compares the results of each chapter thematically, allowing for the cross-pollination of ideas across the textual categories of Titles as Paratexts, Texts by the Artist, and Literary Sources for Artworks.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis I argue that atmosphere adopts a dual function, which allows it to belong both to the artist (and by extension, the artwork they create) and the viewer. Atmosphere is thus a unique mode that is simultaneously produced and perceived, and the degree of compatibility between what is produced by the artist and perceived by the viewer varies between individual artworks. The primary objective of this thesis is to evaluate the degree of unity that exists between two 'produced' aspects of the artwork, visual and textual components, and whether they communicate to the viewer in unison, or whether there are discrepancies in what one medium communicates over the other. In other words: the communication of an idea or message produces different effects depending on

its medium, and its translation between media, from image to text and vice versa, is the ideal arena in which to explore such effects. Naturally, the atmosphere perceived by the viewer and that created by the artist are of relevance to this study, but frequently the intention of the artist cannot be confirmed with any large degree of certainty; writings, such as Hansen Jacobsen's *The Shadow* text and Munch's *Scream* text provide some insight into the motivation for their visual motifs. However, this is not wholly reliable as 'documentary', as *The Shadow* is a poetic and therefore artistically-engineered text; the *Scream* was written in Nice, a memory of a moment experienced by Munch when in Oslo. Though it precedes the later iterations of the *Scream* as paintings and prints, the text is accompanied by the initial notebook sketches for *Despair* and thus is artistically engineered and refined over the subsequent decades. Munch indeed writes on the *Scream* subject with some objectivity in the text *Livsfrisens Tilblivelse*, 1919:

I walked along a road one evening – on one
side the city and the fjord lay beneath me.
I was weary and sick – I stood looking out over
the fjord – the sun was setting – the clouds turned
the colour red – like blood. –
I felt as though a scream passed through nature – I
thought I heard a scream. –
I painted this picture – painted the clouds like
real blood. – the colours screamed. –
It became the picture *Scream* in the Frieze of Life.[471]

[471] Edvard Munch, *Livsfrisens Tilblivelse*, (Origins of the Frieze of Life, c. 1928, Munch Museum Oslo MM UT 13), 12. https://www.emunch.no/TRANS_HYBRIDMM_UT0013.xhtml#.Wr-KX85H06g

Munch here describes the effects he wishes to convey on the canvas, of how the colours of the setting sun and the environment along the fjord co-mingle with the artist's emotional state. By subjectivising his external reality, Munch becomes a site of intersection between inner feeling and outer appearance. This subjectivisation is translated into a sketch and the first version of the *Scream* text in the earliest versions. He replicates this experience through artistic expression. Because this text is a highly personal experience 'belonging' to the artist, the direct link between intention and product is somewhat clearer. The intense sensory experience described by Munch means that this work becomes less about the 'translation' of an idea between text and image, than the expression of a feeling or mood in a given medium. The viewer's perception is then largely moulded by Munch's personal writing on the experience, narrowing the limits of visual indeterminacy.

What would be required in order to clarify the artist's intention is a non-artistically rendered text written by the artist that specifies the underlying motivation or rationale for an artwork, the essence the artist attempts to capture. The type of texts explored in this thesis must be regarded as the equivalents of the visual artwork because of their poetic natures. The *Scream* text listed above from *Livsfrisens Tilblivelse* presents a hybrid of the two types, presenting both an immersive, ekphrastic account of the visual motif, and the artist's perspective on his conception thereof.

It has been established that an artist sets the precedent for the artwork's atmosphere through their design and presentation of the subject matter. The viewer's perception is thus based on this presentation, and the mood it evokes it them, in conjunction with the individual's own subjective filter, rooted in experience and memory. To reiterate: the atmosphere of a given artwork is therefore dependent on the artist's design, the viewer's perception of this design,

and the emotion evoked in them as derived from individual memory and experience.

So if the atmosphere conveyed in Munch's *Scream* is one of intense physical turmoil, as represented through colour in the visual examples and by name in the text, then what can be said of the atmosphere conveyed by the artwork title, or illustration of a literary work? Atmosphere is an evocation of something deeply personal such a memory residing deep within the individual, whether or not consciously recognised. Atmosphere is the feeling a viewer perceives from the artist's combination of elements. Recalling Nordström's definition of *stemning* in landscape painting, painting is by nature rooted in a vagueness of expression that other arts, aside from music, lack.[472] This sense of vagueness naturally extends to textual expression, and poses the notion that poetic (and arguably ekphrastic) texts such as the *Scream* and *The Shadow* serve the artist's desire to pin down the vagueness of their visual counterparts. The artwork title as affixed by the artist serves a similar encapsulation of the narrative, whether expansive as in Nielsen's *And in his Eyes I Saw Death,* or self-reflective in Hammershøi's *White Doors* or *Open Doors*. The illustrations of literary works analysed in this thesis, *Death and the Mother* by Hansen Jacobsen and *The Old Man's Child* by Nielsen, illuminate the textual narratives of Andersen and Larsen respectively, through innovative visual devices. Uniting all textual categories are the themes of Illness, Death and the Psychological Self. An austere rendering of space provides a visual link within Part One Titles as Paratexts between *And in his Eyes I Saw Death* and *White Doors* or *Open Doors;* the embodiment of existential angst in humanoid forms is evident in *Scream* and the personification of Death in *The Shadow*; lastly, parental anguish

[472] Richard Bergh, "Karl Nordström och det moderna stämningslandskapet" in *Om Konst och Annat*, Stockholm: A. Bonnier, 1908, as quoted in Torsten Gunnarsson, *Nordic Landscape Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Nancy Adler, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 204.

at the death of a child unites the illustrative works *Death and the Mother* and *The Old Man's Child* in the final category, Literary Sources for Artworks.

The connection between sound and atmosphere becomes more apparent in the Germanic terms *Stimmung* (German), *stemning* (Danish and Norwegian) and *stämning* (Swedish), from which the terms for 'voice', 'vote', and 'to tune an instrument' are derived. Sound, as also highlighted by Nordström, is an all-encompassing quality, and while the notes may be transcribed, the precise mood or feeling it evokes in the individual defies visual or verbal representation. Barthes's theory of the punctum could be described as the ultimate analogy of the concept of atmosphere, in that a certain aspect within an artwork stays with a viewer, either by exercising some part of their memory or by influencing their emotional state.

The motivational drive of my research centres around the atmosphere excited in the receptive viewer by the artwork and its associated text, evaluating the individual contribution of each text and image and the effect on perception and narrative. Thus the central objective of this thesis, the uncovering of the effects inherent in artworks layered with some form of text, from the title, the artist's poetic texts, to visualisations of a literary text, has been achieved. The approach to my research, combining art historical theory with elements of semiotics, aesthetics, and narratology, represents an original contribution to Nordic Symbolist scholarship, with potential application that transgresses the temporal, geographic and stylistic borders by which it is defined.

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