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"Vill 'Hem', Men Vet ej var Hemmet Ligger": Migration and the Aesthetics of Estrangement in Verner von Heidenstam's Formative Art and Prose

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Abstract: This essay argues that Nobel laureate Verner von Heidenstam's campaign against naturalist aesthetics in late nineteenth-century Swedish literature was motivated, in part, by the sense of estrangement he developed from Swedish cultural life during his adolescent years as a migrant. It also contends that the aesthetic discontent he experienced in his early career foreshadowed a wider sense of alienation from place and nation that would accompany the rise of globalization and normalized migration in the twentieth century. While recent scholarship on Heidenstam's early oeuvre situates the writer's bibliography within the *fin de siècle*, this project refocuses the discussion on the contemporaneous artistic debates Heidenstam addresses in his polemic *Renässans*, as well as the migratory themes he explores in his 1892 novel, *Hans Alienus*. This approach illuminates how Heidenstam's youthful quest for aesthetic reinvention upended the notion that artists and writers can be tethered to singular points of origin, offering new pathways for understanding the emergence of a distinct migrant literature and visual art in Sweden. Although Heidenstam's later works took a sharp nationalistic turn and have receded from popular consciousness in contemporary times, reexamining his earliest paintings and prose as products of a migrant imagination can help scholars more firmly affix his legacy to modern and Modernist traditions, inviting fresh perspectives on his paradigm-shifting aesthetic of estrangement.

Keywords: Verner von Heidenstam; modernism; adolescent migration; visual art; decadence; migration and literature

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> *"When my mother died, and I was left alone out here as a stranger, I filled my mind with Latin words and rearranged the letters in front of "e" to come up with the name "Alienus." It is an ancient and noble Roman name, but also a Latin adjective meaning "foreign"—to belong to somewhere else. I thought the name suited me well."*
>
> —Verner von Heidenstam, *Hans Alienus* (1892, Trans. By the Author) (Heidenstam 1995)

1. Introduction

Even as a young child, the poet and novelist Verner von Heidenstam, one of late-nineteenth century Sweden's most prominent literary figures, seemed determined, both literally and figuratively, to leave his mark on the world. Several Swedish-language biographies of this decorated Nobel laureate (see Gedin 2013; Landquist 1909; Engberg 2005) recount how, as a precocious toddler, Heidenstam would parade around the manor houses of his childhood home Olshammar dressed as a flamboyant monarch, declaring everything in sight to be part of "Lajsputta", his sprawling imaginary kingdom. It was through these childish games and visions of grandeur that the young Verner would exhibit his earliest artistic impulses. As Magnus Engberg notes, Heidenstam at some point during the 1860s carved out "the world's middle point in a little church at Olshammar manor in southern Närke"[1] (Engberg 2005, p. 11) and "with childish patriotism"[2] engraved a

picture of himself sporting a magnificent crown, right in front of the altar—hardly the act of a humble ruler with modest ambitions. As Heidenstam transitioned into adolescence and hung up his childhood regalia, poor health would prompt the young Verner's father, frustrated by his son's frailty and lack of career aspirations, to force him off to the Middle East with his cousin Ernst to escape the frigid climate of Northern Europe and receive formal training as a painter. After several stimulating years sketching images of Palestine, Rome, Persia, and Egypt, and after marrying his first wife Emilia, Heidenstam eventually enrolled at École des Beaux-Artes in Paris, France in 1881 and spent several more years abroad, immersing himself in the vibrant cultural milieu of mainland Europe. In Paris, however, Heidenstam started to experience an artistic crisis. Not only did his love for writing poetry start to overtake his interest in painting, but he also "disliked the studies" because "he loathed realism in art that depicted reality exactly"[3] (Gedin 2013, pp. 49–50). This crisis deepened upon his return to Sweden in the spring of 1887. As he expressed to his colleague August Strindberg at the time (How dreadful this life of exile . . . how deadly!)[4] (Gedin 2013, p. 73), his formative years of migrancy engendered an irreconcilable sense of artistic and cultural estrangement within him, partly due to his aversion to naturalist aesthetics, which had become a fixture of the Modern Breakthrough in Sweden. As a literary movement, the Modern Breakthrough's naturalist aesthetic program had become defined by the inflexible notion that art and literature should render only an objective, "faithful, unselective representation of reality" (Britannica 2024), which reduced the writer and artist to "passive observers" and "mere spectator[s] and chronicler[s] of public life" (Sjåstad 2017, p. 35). Rather than embracing the imagination and bending the rules of reality as Heidenstam preferred in his writings, naturalist writers and artists of Sweden's Modern Breakthrough demonstrated a keen "interest in social issues" such as class struggles and feminist debates, espousing the belief that the world and human nature were "explainable and logical", that social problems could be resolved through public debate, and that reality could and should be depicted only "as it is" in both the written word and visual art (Brantly 2018, p. 2). Eventually, however, Heidenstam's adolescent migration to the Middle East, and the fantastical memories they conjured up in his mind, would serve as the primary source of inspiration for both his earliest paintings and his poems, setting him apart from his naturalist and realist contemporaries and initiating a years-long ambition to retire these modes in Swedish literature.

As Heidenstam pursued his charge—to reintroduce a spirit of fantasy in art and literature and establish a new aesthetic "home" to suit his idealistic vision—he would introduce the Swedish public to renewed modes of literary expression, based in subjectivity, imagination, and romanticized scenes from distant places. His literary and pictorial depictions of unfamiliar landscapes and settings from the Middle East and Asia would widen the insular Northern European nation's concept of space, geography, and beauty. As a burgeoning poet, Heidenstam looked beyond the confined interiors of European domestic life and the popular social struggles and political debates of his day for inspiration. Rather, he derived inspiration "from within his fantasy world"[5] (Gedin 2013, p. 50), where memories of Cairo, Jerusalem, and Rome served as backdrops for his earliest literary sensations, some of which, like *Hans Alienus*, span multiple far-flung destinations and transcend millennia of human civilization. Heidenstam would become one of the first of many nineteenth-century Scandinavian literary elites whose body of work was influenced by the normalization of migration and the lengthier travels facilitated by the mobilities brought about by industrialization. Although he was not a refugee or exile in the definitional sense but rather compelled to migrate to recover from illness and placate his impatient father, Heidenstam nonetheless spent his formative years as a migrant immersed in the quotidian life of distant lands, which undoubtedly molded his aesthetic point of view, similar to how "long-term migration has had an impact on literature and writers since time immemorial" (Březinová 2022, p. 46). As Březinová also points out, notable Scandinavian "authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries", including August Strindberg, Henrik Ibsen, and Hans Christian Andersen, "were not necessarily migrating less than their colleagues today" (p. 46), spend-

ing years in forced or voluntary exile, due to scandals, public excoriation, or disdain for Scandinavia's provinciality. However, what differentiates Heidenstam's migrancy from his contemporaries and forebearers is the duration, distance, and diversity of his travels, which prompted him to experience what he describes in a letter to August Strindberg as an inescapable estrangement from 'home', an irreconcilable sense of geographic displacement (Want 'home' but do not know where home is)[6] (Heidenstam 1999, p. 172). His lengthy time away from Sweden, which far exceeded that of a casual traveler seeking leisure or a change of pace, would impact his development both as an individual and an artist, alienating him from Swedish writers and artists whose artistic visions had been shaped by the Modern Breakthrough's fixation with social concerns. For Heidenstam, the resulting sense of displacement he experienced due to his migration would serve as the thematic underpinning of his earliest poems and novels, the characters and speakers of which embark on similar searches for beauty and belonging.

When Heidenstam returned to Sweden and made his literary debut in 1888 with the poetry collection *Vallfart och Vandringsår* [*Pilgrimage and Wandering Years*], he would go "from having been exiled, isolated and uncertain about the future" to becoming "the center point of literary circles"[7] (Gedin 2013, p. 77). This slim volume of poetry, which contains a series of vignettes about his memories and exploits abroad, offers readers sensationalized snapshots from the everyday lives and environments of Arab peoples, as well as vivid descriptions of Heidenstam's most captivating cross-cultural encounters during his time in the Middle East. The unconventional subject matter, which was so distant and far-removed from the average Swede's daily experience at the time, became a critical and commercial success, especially for a first-time author, and launched the young poet from complete obscurity to becoming "admired, read, and quoted"[8] by his contemporaries (p. 77). *Vallfart och vandringsår* exoticized and appropriated the cultures and landscapes of the historic Middle East, but the book's originality of subject in the Swedish context would catalyze profound aesthetic shifts within nineteenth-century Swedish literature, away from the moribund realism of Zola, Brandes, and other proponents toward an imaginative literature that extolled adventure, the suspension of reality, and the blending of cultures. Another innovation of Heidenstam's debut collection is its deliberate centering of cultural outsiders and their peripheral voices, focusing events through these observers instead of the dominant local culture. The speaker, or "diktjaget", of these poems is oftentimes a pilgrim donning a pilgrim's cape who assumes the role of a "seer and prophet"[9] (Järnegard 2009, pp. 288–89) and describes rituals, processions, sceneries, and celebrations in historic locations, such as "Betlehem", "Damaskus", and "Döda havet" [The Dead Sea], among other Middle Eastern sites (Heidenstam 1888). Because the content of *Vallfart och vandringsår* transgressed borders and obscured the boundaries among poet, place, and nation, this essay argues that Heidenstam's earliest work signaled the formation of a nascent form of Swedish migration literature, especially if, as Soren Frank explains, "the concept of migration" is construed "broadly as change, movement, and process" (Frank 2014, p. 44). In line with this definition, the book's subject matter is decidedly unprovincial and centers the observations and experiences of a migrant voice, who moves between Middle Eastern worlds and customs as both a spectator and participant, as a nomad far from home and a wanderer drawn in and transformed by the mysterious allure of his foreign surroundings. Moreover, Březinová draws on Frank's characterization of migration literature, expanding it to include any type of writing that "reflects . . . being between two or more cultures" and contains a "foreignness of voice" and a general notion of "inconclusiveness" (Březinová 2022, p. 56), all of which are, in one way or another, thematically represented in *Vallfart och vandringsår* and Heidenstam's later novel, *Hans Alienus*. As trains, boats, and, later, automobiles became a perfunctory aspect of modern life across Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, concepts of space, distance, borders, and 'home' would gradually dissipate, and the need for stories, images, and perspectives that represented cultural "in-betweenness" became more widespread and in vogue within the Nordic region. These perspectives not only accentuated the interconnected nature of modern civilization but

also highlighted the need for artistic innovations, like Heidenstam's, that could speak to this growing phenomenon of estrangement and distance from one's point of origin. Reading and analyzing Heidenstam's formative visual art and literary works as products of migration holds great utility when tracing the historical development of modernist literature in Sweden. If approached as migrant literature, Heidenstam's earliest writings become "endowed with extraordinary explanatory powers" as they relate to Sweden's modernization (and its aesthetic consequences for both art and literature) and possess "meaningfulness in relation to" our understanding of the emergence of "(contemporary) literature" (Frank 2014, p. 44) as a whole.

Verner von Heidenstam's adolescent travels present an especially intriguing case in the study of migration literature not only because of the unusual, privileged, and involuntary auspices through which he was forced to migrate but also because of the unfamiliar exilic expressions his extended absence from Sweden engendered within his artistic work and development. Traditionally, fields like migration studies and the literature of migration have been concerned with historical developments in the twentieth century and the stories and realities of refugees—those expelled from their native countries either forcibly through colonization or through conflict, environmental collapse, or economic crisis. Postcolonial theorists, such as Edward Said, have conceptualized this process of forced migration and its ensuing state of exile as "the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place" that results in "the crippling sorrow of estrangement" (Said 2002, p. 137). Migration is a consequence, as Said puts it, of "modern warfare, imperialism, and the quasi-theological ambitions of totalitarian rulers", which can irrevocably separate entire people groups from "the nourishment of tradition, family and geography" (p. 138). While this conceptualization holds tremendous benefit to understanding the horrors of colonization, forced migration, and the countless lives and identities they sunder, migrancy and migrant literature have also, in contemporary scholarship, come to encapsulate broader cultural phenomena and themes that emerge because of an individual's extensive and prolonged movement between two cultures, irrespective of the circumstances or causes of migration. Homi Bahba's concept of "hybridity", for example, has dominated the discussion of many fields and subfields of cultural studies in the past decades. This idea refers to how the minority status of a migrant in their new homeland "re-describes" their identity and creates "conditions of contingency and . . . contradictoriness that . . . attend[s]" upon them, conquering the "power of tradition" over their past lives and reforming their identity into something blended, something new (Bahba 1994, p. 2). This process of hybridization is evident in Heidenstam's earliest writings. Mentions of Sweden, both its cultural life and its customs, are sparse in his debut works, aside from the language in which the text is written. Instead, Heidenstam's poetic voices and nomadic protagonists undergo and illustrate their process of hybridization by fully engaging the experience of "cultural in-betweenness" in their new surroundings, embracing these "processes of intermixture" between "two or more cultures or two or more systems of significations" (Moslund 2010, p. 4). Although the process of migration initially intrigues and entices Heidenstam's protagonists, such as Hans Alienus, their movement between different mental and geographic spaces also destabilizes their identities and sense of rootedness, revealing "the fragmentation of the self and the generating of feelings . . . ambivalence, alienation, excitement and joy . . . that can be stirred up by migration" (Pourjafari and Vahidpour 2014, p. 688). In that sense, Heidenstam's earliest creations can be understood not as generic contributions to travel literature, where a casual European sojourner merely records his impressions of faraway lands and exoticizes them for local audiences back home. They depict a modern phenomenon of encountering and enduring displacement and feeling estranged and transformed by feelings of rootlessness and disconnection. His works record and foreshadow the twentieth century condition of many migrants and illustrates how "migration acts as a conduit and a catalyst for . . . re-conception of our sense of self and our relationship with others (Jacobs 2011, p. 142).

By centering Heidenstam's adolescent and young adult years as a migrant, this essay surveys the young writer's formative art and prose to reveal how his meticulous render-

ing and reification of his sense of estrangement from place and nation helped mobilize a pivotal aesthetic turn in Swedish literature, one that facilitated the rise of modernist modalities and techniques in the twentieth century. Susan Brantly theorizes that one of the defining features of Nordic Modernism is its pervasive sense of "isolation and anguish" and its notion that "the world is fragmented", thereby commissioning the artist—not the scientist or objectivist as the naturalists preferred—to "provide coherence" (Brantly 2018, p. 3). Heidenstam's rejection of realism early in his career thus set the stage for other Swedish authors, such as future Nobel laureates Pär Lagerkvist and Harry Martinson, to experiment with "irrealities"— "subjective realities which do not conform to the rules of this world" (p. 4)—as sites for aesthetic and philosophical exploration. An analysis of Heidenstam's foundational paintings and his earliest literary innovations, therefore, reveals how migration, which fundamentally rearranged and hybridized his cultural episteme, precipitated the development of Heidenstam's signature "irrealities" and his "aesthetic of estrangement." This aesthetic manifests in Heidenstam's most significant early prose work, *Hans Alienus*, in several ways: the storyline features characters and poetic voices who feel anachronistic or estranged from the aesthetic ideals of their time; it contains narratives and poems that focus on events from the perspective of cultural outsiders, conveying a sense that, in order to achieve or find beauty, reality and objectivism must be challenged, rewritten, or suspended; and it fashions a protagonist and supporting characters whose extensive migration only serves to deepen their sense of isolation, alienation, and fractured identity. This article conceptualizes alienation and its related term estrangement as the "basic form of rootlessness" and the individual "loss" of personal and national "identity" that would become "a major theme of the human condition" in the twentieth century, as voluntary and forced migration expanded and severed individuals' sense of belonging to their homelands, communities, and points of origin (Saleem 2014, p. 67). Although Heidenstam's popular readership and salience in scholarly discussion has waned over time, recasting his legacy as that of an early migrant author in Sweden can help scholars recapture a glimpse of what made him, at the time of his Nobel announcement, "the leading representative of a new era in" (Verner von Heidenstam—Facts. NobelPrize.org 2024) Swedish literature—an author and migrant whose globetrotting and aesthetic transformations inspired a distinctly Modernist turn in Swedish letters.

2. Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: Heidenstam as Pilgrim and Painter

Tracing the origins of Heidenstam's "aesthetic of estrangement" and situating its features within both concurrent and future Modernist traditions first involves a deeper analysis of the author's earliest visual works and an explication of their historical and biographical significance. In 1939, Albert Bonniers reprinted many of the sketches and paintings Heidenstam created during his formative period of migration in the retrospective *Verner von Heidenstams Skissbok: Reseminnen 1876–1877* [*Verner von Heidenstam's Sketchbook: Travel Memories 1876–1877*]. This eclectic volume, which serves as a sort of time capsule of pencil drawings, ink sketches, oil paintings, and watercolors, scrupulously catalogues Heidenstam's aesthetic evolution as a visual artist, anthologizing his depictions of daily life among Arab communities and exhibiting the burgeoning artist's trademark flair for embellishment and fantasy. In the introduction of this commemorative collection, Sven Hedin, who was himself an accomplished Swedish geographer, a seasoned traveler, and a friend of Heidenstam, describes the arduous two-year trek the young artist made to the Middle East. According to Hedin's timeline, "his path led through Copenhagen and Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden and Vienna, Venice, Florence and Rome and finally over Naples and Alexandria to Cairo"[10] (Hedin 1939, p. 7). From there, Heidenstam journeyed "in the spring of 1877" to "Piraeus, Athens, and Corinth . . . and in the fall of the same year, to Egypt, wherefrom he extended the journey to Palestine and Syria, and visited, among other cities, Jerusalem and Damascus"[11] (p. 7). Although his years of migration were laborious and the sites he visited were far removed from the purview of most Swedes in his day, it is important to note that Heidenstam was not the first migrant in his family to traverse

the vast desertscapes and historic metropolises of the region. Decades earlier, members of his father's family, who had become ensconced in Sweden and France's diplomatic and military elite, were among the first to sojourn south of Sweden as part of their official duties. Bahram Sohrabi notes how "very few Swedish travelers ventured to visit Persia before the twentieth century", but Heidenstam's great-great uncle "Carl Peter von Heidenstam (1792–1878) was an officer in the Swedish army" and was "the younger son of Gerhard Baltazar von Heidenstam, the former Swedish Minister in Constantinople" (Sohrabi 2005, p. 645). Carl Peter, who was raised in France, spent considerable time among the inhabitants of Persia throughout his career and took a keen interest in documenting the military customs of the Persian people, largely for imperialistic and strategic purposes. As Sohrabi points out, he even preempted his future Nobel Prize-winning nephew in writing about the region in 1825, publishing the pamphlet *Några underrättelser samlade under en resa ifrån Turkiet till Persien af en Swensk Officer* [*Some Intelligence Gathered during a Journey from Turkey to Persia by a Swedish Officer*]. The contents of this report, however, unlike the young Verner's vivid poetry, sought to portray the region factually, without "without fantasies or playing with the truth"[12] (CP von Heidenstam 1825, p. 2). When Verner von Heidenstam later set foot in this region himself, it quickly "became for a while both an inspiration and a projection screen for his aesthetic ideas"[13] (Sarrimo 2008, p. 17). The Middle East saturated his imagination with foreign subjects, which at the time could only be known by Swedes through scattered written accounts, translations of famed story collections, such as *A Thousand and One Nights* (of which Heidenstam was quite fond as a child), or prolonged migration. As Sohrabi further notes, the "very few Swedes who ventured to visit" the region before the twentieth century did so as "birds of passage" who "out of curiosity or for pleasure . . . went as private individuals at their own initiative and expense" (Sohrabi 2005, p. 632). They typically did not stay long, and none were as artistically engaged or inspired by the lands of the Middle East as the young Heidenstam. In fact, the stimulating scenery would lead Heidenstam to become "among the first Swedish writers who chose oriental themes for his novels and poetry", filling his literary works with "the fables of the southern lands and the philosophy of the East" (Sohrabi 2005, p. 646)—one of the contributing factors to *Vallfart och Vandringsår's* glowing reception and its perceived originality among the Swedish public.

The paintings and sketches Heidenstam produced during this period, though distinctively regional in their character and subject matter, utilize techniques that reflect the more modernistic attributes of his earliest literary works, foreshadowing the eventual convergence between Heidenstam's artistic, migratory, and literary visions. Take, for example, one of his most famously reprinted paintings of "Heliga grafven" [The Holy Grave] in Jerusalem, dated 1877 (Figure 1) (Heidenstam 1887). With its dramatic chiaroscuro technique, its somber depiction of faceless strangers concealed by cloaks and turbans, its shadowy backdrop, and its decontextualization from any identifiable location, this image evinces the sense of "isolation and anguish" that Heidenstam, his contemporaries, and his literary successors would articulate through literature in the following decades. Although human figures foreground the painting, and a tomb with an identifiable, albeit murky, edifice dominates the composition, the image's mood nevertheless facilitates a departure from reality, creating a rueful dreamscape within an estranged and isolated world, situated elsewhere. While Heidenstam might have found inspiration in an existing tomb (likely Christ's Grave in Jerusalem), in this specific painting, his disinclination toward dogmatic modes of realism becomes palpable. The composition experiments with nascent forms of "irreality", alternative worlds liberated from the confines of logic, enveloped in mystery, and focalized through an outsider's perspective. Not all of Heidenstam's sketches and paintings from the Middle East resist the application of realist techniques, however. In "Österländsk fantasi" (Figure 2) (Heidenstam n.d.), a touch of "realism's conventions meet those of Orientalized romanticism"[14] (Sarrimo 2008, p. 49). Through this fanciful watercolor sketch, Heidenstam depicts crumbling ruins, the aftermath of an altercation between local populations, as well as throngs of jeering, indistinguishable bystanders, all

painted with a saturated color scheme, rich with earthy terracotta tones, sandy beiges, and vibrant shades of blue. An experimental sketch that embodies Heidenstam's early attempts to reconcile realist and romanticized modes, this piece preserves a certain level of fidelity to reality (proportional figures, recognizable scenery, natural color schemes, etc.) while also capturing and augmenting the scene's emotive and adrenalized action. The blurriness of the crowd accentuates the viewer's role as a distant spectator, a culturally estranged observer, and the vivid world Heidenstam relishes in sketches like this one helps explain why, upon permanently returning to Sweden nearly a decade later, his aesthetic vision would clash so sharply with the insular realism of the Modern Breakthrough, suggesting he had undergone some form of cultural hybridization. These examples from Heidenstam's Middle Eastern portfolio illustrate just how necessary his efforts to retire realism would become to the execution of his aesthetic ideals and the formation of his new aesthetic "home", where his migrant imagination could flourish.

Figure 1. *"Heliga Grafven"*.

Figure 2. *"Österländsk fantasi"*.

Heidenstam's romanticized visions of the Middle East would stand in sharp contrast to the works he produced in the next phase of his artistic career. After returning home

to Sweden briefly, the young dilettante resumed his extensive migration by spending a short stint training with Julius Kronberg in Rome in 1880 and then by formally enrolling at Paris's École des Beaux-Artes in 1881. In France, under the tutelage of Jean-Léon Gérôme, Heidenstam endured two years of listlessness and boredom, withering under the aesthetic and technical scrutiny of his instructor. The faculty of the school, which enshrined naturalism in its curriculum, discouraged the imaginative landscapes and experimental techniques Heidenstam preferred, deepening his sense of aesthetic estrangement. In fact, it was inside the stuffy aristocratic halls of this traditionalist institution that Heidenstam realized that . . . "tidens konstnärliga realism med sitt trogna verklighetsstudium tilltalade honom icke . . ." [the times' artistic realism did not appeal to him], so, as a form of artistic resistance, he "sought expression for his artistic desires through fantasy pictures . . . instead of patiently depicting nature, he loved goldsmith's work, shimmering fabrics, and naked flesh"[15] (Schück and Warburg 1932, p. 291). Before long, he "became a stranger among his young artist companions in Paris"[16] (p. 291), spotlighting the vastly different styles and tastes in art that had been impressed upon him during his extended migration to the Middle East. Finding himself swimming against the creative currents of his environment, Heidenstam began to balk at his teachers' instruction and created his own vocabulary of techniques during lessons, while also experimenting with writing poetry. During one particularly tense period of his studies, Heidenstam recalled that his mentor Gérôme once "criticized a foot he painted", declaring "if you paint a candlestick, a foot or a Christ, it is all the same, so long as you paint it well"[17] (Gedin 2013, pp. 50–51). When Gérôme left the room, Heidenstam defiantly "shouted . . . after him . . . 'Idiot!'"[18] (p. 51), illustrating how pronounced—and contentious—these aesthetic differences had become. Though his time in France taught Heidenstam more about who he was not than who he was as an artist, "during these two years, 1880 to 1882, [he] developed both as a person and poet in an increasingly radical direction"[19] (Gedin 2013, p. 47), making it, in some respects, one of the most consequential chapters of his career. After immersing himself in the cultural landscapes of worlds so unfamiliar and imperceptible to his European contemporaries, it became increasingly clear that Heidenstam's migrancy and the impact cultural hybridization had on his artwork had reached a fever pitch, fueling his desire for aesthetic transformation.

Heidenstam's disillusionment with realism is not difficult to detect in his artistic productions from 1880 to 1882. When sifting through the copious still lives and figurative studies he produced during this time, observers must lean in closely to discern any trace of the future Nobel Laureate's former style: his love for fantasy. Gone are the exoticized landscapes rendered in dramatic color, depicting defamiliarized figures steeped in action and adventure. Gone are the alternative realities that create brooding moods and pensive reflection on distant lands and histories. Gone are the transportive perspectives of outsiders looking in, of cultural others becoming attuned to new, mysterious rhythms of life. Instead, the paintings introduce observers to a series of static objects and subjects with little ostensible personal relevance to the artist: unnamed models standing awkwardly or in repose; simplistic, uncluttered compositions; and muted, true-to-life color palettes. The figurative study, *Modellstudie. Man. 1881* (Figure 3) (Heidenstam 1881), emblemizes the aesthetic crisis Heidenstam experienced during this time in many ways. In this painting, a dark-haired man with pallid skin dominates a rectangular composition, his expressionless face and angular features giving no outward sign of emotion. The model's unfinished arms and hands indicate Heidenstam's possible disinterest in the project, and the awkward obliqueness of the figure's pose, which is portrayed proportionally and anatomically, departs sharply from the dynamism of his previous figurative work. While his body's contours are competently shaded and rendered, the figure arguably reflects the frustrations Heidenstam expressed at the time with the vacuity and impotence of realism as a source of beauty. Similarly, *Sittande kvinna*, (*Sitting Woman*, Figure 4) (Heidenstam n.d.) also painted during Heidenstam's Parisian studies, amplifies this feeling of artistic stagnation. A blonde woman, loosely swathed in a golden robe, slumps on a pedestal languorously, like a more

melancholic rendition of Rodin's *The Thinker*. Despite being festooned in golden bangles and opulent, sensual dress, the figure feels effete, enervated, and the composition's grey color scheme stifles any expression of joy, movement, or imagination. In a way, the woman depicted in this painting can be interpreted as a culmination of Heidenstam's disinterested attitude toward his studies in Paris. Although the woman dons a sportive, colorful gown that evokes the beauty of a Grecian goddess, the grayness of her surroundings, much like the constrictive environment of École des Beaux-Artes did for Heidenstam, negates any perception of her personality. It is as though the figure in this painting is releasing a rueful sigh of aesthetic discontent, echoing Heidenstam's yearning for creative freedom, perhaps without realizing a more global perspective.

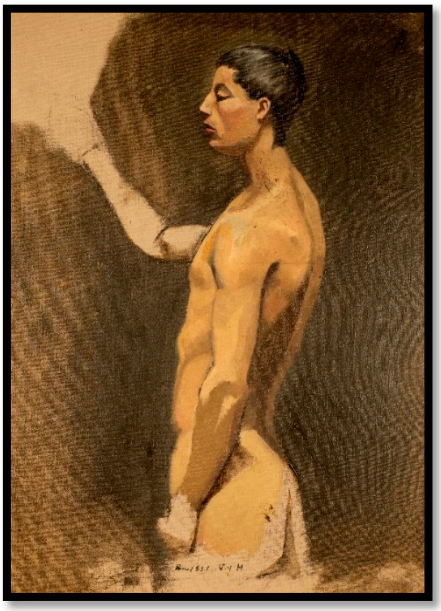

Figure 3. *"Modellstudie. Man. 1881"*.

Figure 4. *"Sittande kvinna"*.

A cursory overview of Heidenstam's artistic education clarifies the role that modern migration played in cultivating and mobilizing his eventual campaign for aesthetic transformation in Sweden. Heidenstam's position as a cultural outsider for most of his young adulthood, both as a nomadic traveler and an aesthetically ostracized painter, informed his ambition to craft literary expressions that could articulate the philosophical implications of Sweden's rapid industrialization and the sense of cultural in-betweenness inherent in the modern age. Although Heidenstam's impulse to paint gradually dwindled after 1882, his interest in writing poetry professionally began to flourish. With the release of his debut collection in 1887, "Swedish naturalism began to show the first signs of dissolution" and, with the publication of his polemic *Renässans* in 1889, "he pushed it into the grave"[20] (Schück and Warburg 1932, p. 319). Although he had to work assiduously to reintroduce fantasy, imagination, and a sense of globality within Swedish literature, Heidenstam, through his early paintings and writings, would also, perhaps more importantly, shatter the myth that "to be human means above all to be rooted in one place, one language, and one culture" (Frank 2014, p. 39), creating polyphonic works that hybridized many distant worlds and blended genres. Not only do Heidenstam's pictures, characters, and poetic voices traverse geographic spaces, but they also make substantial "temporal and mental movements" as well, yielding "dynamic . . . strategies on the formal level" that were distinctive for his time (Frank 2014, pp. 44–45). It was in his 1892 novel *Hans Alienus*, however, that Heidenstam's aversion to having his "imagination fettered by the demands of genre" would become most evident (Brantly 1993, p. 71). Like Heidenstam, the titular hero of this novel is a restless youth who feels estranged from his homeland and time. As a result, he sets off on an imaginary quest into the ancient past to discover and immerse himself in his own vision of beauty, only to deepen his feelings of foreignness and rootlessness. Along the way, Hans—and, perhaps by extension, Heidenstam himself—begins to discern and articulate an important realization: the normalized movements of modernity and migration will render the search for a master narrative of beauty futile and forever elusive and leave nothing but a feeling of estrangement in its wake.

3. *Hans Alienus* as Early Migrant and Modernist Literature: Tracing the Origins of Heidenstam's "Aesthetic of Estrangement" Through Prose

Although Heidenstam first honed his "aesthetic of estrangement" on canvas, and then later in *Vallfart och vandringsår* and his debut prose work *Endymion* (1889), *Hans Alienus* represented in many ways the apex of his earliest stylistic innovations, which were deeply informed by his years of migrancy and helped Sweden finally put the tendentious, naturalistic literature of the Modern Breakthrough to rest. The novel's complex storyline and winding structure necessitate a brief explanation and overview to frame the work in relation to his migrant experiences.

In outline, the novel tells the story of a young aesthete Hans who labors and pines away as a librarian in the Vatican. An eccentric dreamer who lives "alone . . . as a stranger"[21] (Heidenstam 1995, p. 108) among the Vatican's stodgy clerical elite, Hans becomes afflicted with a pervasive feeling of anachronism, longing to bring his fantastical, antiquarian ideals of beauty to life within his contemporary surroundings. To realize this ambition, he finances a flamboyant parade through the Vatican's streets, featuring an effigy of "den moderna anden" [the modern spirit] (p. 176) that symbolizes the "industrial mercantilism" Hans "most despises about the modern age" (Brantly, p. 61). As Hans leads the procession and effigy through the cobblestone streets, he enacts a sweeping satire of the stale, supercilious "modern spirit" that impedes his imagination—a symbolic rebuke that echoes Heidenstam's own critiques of realism in *Renässans*, wherein he notes how "originality and youth" have vanished from the movement, leaving "the reverberations and ailments of old age"[22] to take over (Heidenstam 1889, p. 8). However, the provocative procession quickly devolves into infighting and bickering among its participants, prompting Hans to run away in frustration and embark on the novel's central quest—an extended migration to the Middle East, where he intends to live out his artistic fantasies in solitude. Clad in a white pilgrim's

cape, Hans boards a boat and sets off toward Baghdad. Among the desert dunes, he finds a wooden door leading to the illusory realm of Hades, a place where he can manipulate events through whims of his imagination. Unbound by the rules of logic, movement, and chronology, Hans migrates through time and navigates across a sort of montage of ancient capitals and historical locales, cycling through chapters of history to gaze upon their various ideals of beauty. He traverses the sandy deserts toward Babylon and weds three wives; he leads an army to the gates of the ancient Assyrian empire and engages in a sportive war of beauty with its androgenous monarch Sardanapalus, whose "life of shameless and sensual pleasure" (Siculi 1933, p. 51) mirrors ancient accounts of the decadent ruler, recorded by the Greek historian Diodorus; he travels to Rome and becomes lionized as "Caesar Alienus"; and he even ascends to Heaven and becomes God himself, until he divulges the truth of his origins within the realm of Hades, which shatters the fantasy and returns him to his banal reality. Forlorn and disappointed by his failed quest for aesthetic transcendence, Hans returns home and reunites with his estranged father to reconcile their differences, punctuating the tale. The novel's blend of magical realism and existential themes, coupled with its semi-autobiographical details, stumped critics of late nineteenth-century Swedish literature, the book's peculiarity disrupting and defying prevailing sensibilities. Although "the reception of the voluminous and hard-to-label work . . . was marked by dismay at the book's 'bizarreness'"[23] (Nyblom 2008, p. 89), its global perspective, inventive narrative representations of time, and migratory main character would emboss the novel with a distinctively modern signature, as it took the unusual course of centering the protagonist's alienation as the narrative's driving force and its primary aesthetic underpinning. Taken together, this novel represents the most interesting and pertinent example of Heidenstam's aesthetic of estrangement and clarifies its tenets and transformative significance.

Specifically, in terms of structure, movement, and content, the novel was highly and intentionally anomalous for its era, with critics reacting most strongly to the work's "confusing multiplicity of ideas and scenes"[24] (Nyblom 2008, p. 89). A sprawling 400-page prose epic divided into three sections (Löftet, Hades, and Hemkomsten) and partitioned by dreamy poetic interludes, the novel's formal experimentation and existential exploration have long eluded simple classification among contemporary scholars, distinguishing the work as "one of the most original and difficult-to-label works that has been admitted to the official Swedish literary history"[25] (Lovén 1993, p. 77). The book has been difficult to attach to a specific literary style or tradition, as Susan Brantly notes, due to "the presence of numerous symbolist elements" in the work that also "have much in common with" literary decadence (Brantly 2019, p. 56). In her analysis, Brantly works to disassociate the novel from the French symbolist movement and, instead, catalogues Heidenstam's copious reproduction of decadent "tropes" throughout its storyline—"dandyism, a blurring of the boundaries between art and life, a longing for the past, a life spent in dream or memory . . . an attraction for dangerous women . . . and the pleasurable tragedy of being the last of a noble line", among other details (p. 66). Although Heidenstam often rebuffed characterizations of being a decadent writer to his colleagues and critics, Brantly aptly synopsizes *Hans Alienus* as a "decadent fashion show" (p. 66), asserting that the novel is, in fact, "a grand participant" (p. 56) in the decadent tradition. In *A Baedeker of Decadence*, George Schoolfield describes how this decadent "fashion" became a popular "mode or attitude" in "novelistic literature . . . of the last decades of . . . nineteenth century" Europe, wherein "supremely egocentric and sometimes supremely wealthy" protagonists "form" their "own artificial paradise . . . enjoying the thought" of their "intellectual and aesthetic superiority" as they await their inevitable destruction (Schoolfield 2003, p. xiii). An isolated aesthete whose pursuit of beauty motivates his journey into Hades and isolates him from others, Hans Alienus has much in common with other seminal characters of decadent literature from similar European traditions: the egotistical and reclusive Jean des Esseintes from John-Karl Huysman's novel *Á rebours* (*Against Nature*, the sensually driven titular protagonist of Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*, and even the quintessential dandy described in Charles Baudelaire's poetry collection *Les Fleurs du Mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*). This decadent charac-

terization of *Hans Alienus* is useful because it not only provides a pathway for examining the novel's aesthetic flourishes in relation to broader trends of late nineteenth-century European literature but also because it positions Heidenstam's seemingly irregular work within more widely accepted developmental continuums of Nordic modernism. In fact, examining Hans Alienus' transportive journey through the Vatican and the depths of Hades as an effect of Heidenstam's migrant imagination makes it even easier to conceptualize the novel's titular hero as a quintessentially modern subject. Hans's restiveness, encyclopedic creativity, and feelings of social alienation patently symbolize the modern phenomenon of becoming untethered from a finite sense of home, place, and nation, so much so that toward the end of the story, Hans laments, "I long for a person, before whom I do not feel like a stranger"[26] (Heidenstam 1995, p. 403). Even the moniker Hans invents for himself—"Alienus"—suggests that the feelings of estrangement he expresses are not just incidental to the novel's storyline but central to the novel's broader aesthetic program. In fact, Hans's migration across time and space and his inescapable sensation of isolation and creative ostracism are the novel's centerfold—its most redemptive and resonant source of beauty—exemplifying the essence of Heidenstam's "aesthetic of estrangement": the notion that art, place, meaning, and belonging, in modern times, have necessarily become extricable concepts.

Due to the novel's nomadic themes, cultural and genric hybridity, and eclectic import of characters, settings, and techniques, it is also appropriate to conceptualize *Hans Alienus* and its peculiar aesthetic as a pioneering work of Swedish-language migrant literature, underscoring its significance within the Nordic literary canon and the development of Nordic modernism. Although the genre of migrant literature tends to be associated with writers who are forcibly displaced or navigating an exilic existence beyond their control, Heidenstam's early fiction addresses some of the same existential topics as contemporary migrant authors, whose works are distinguished by alienated narrators navigating unstable worlds where borders are increasingly porous and arbitrary and where individual identities have become palimpsests of disparate cultural traditions, norms, and places. The multiplicity of worlds that Heidenstam's protagonists, especially Hans Alienus, occupy can be viewed as representations of this distinctly modern experience due to their sweeping movements across cultural, chronological, and geographic spaces. When Hans Alienus himself is viewed as a nascent iteration of the "*voyageur*"—a Modernist archetype, whose movements and insights represent the range of "perceptual possibilities" (Thacker 2006, p. 6) brought about by modern mobilities and migration—then the significance of Heidenstam's centering of geographic and cultural estrangement become more clearly elucidated. This aspect of Hans' migrant experience is particularly interesting when juxtaposed with the novel's decadent themes because, as Thacker also notes, the popular *flaneur* of European decadence took his "pet turtle on for a walk in the city . . . to show a distaste for the pace of modern life" (p. 6). In a sense, Hans becomes an amalgamation of the decadent *flaneur* and an early modernist *voyageur*, because he, as an aesthete, embraces the hastening of modern life while willingly leveraging its mobilities and expansivity to pursue his longing for antiquarian beauty and titillation. Through Hans Alienus's journey to Hades, Heidenstam also illustrates the shifting conceptions of time and space brought about by the late nineteenth century's various modern mobilities (ships, roads, trains, and, after the turn of the century, automobiles). As a result, he, perhaps unconsciously, helped engineer a narrative restructuring of time that would become integral to later Modernist experimentations within Swedish prose writing. For example, in the middle of the novel, Hans—parched and depleted after arriving in the desert and descending the long staircase into the shadowy realm of Hades—drinks water from the river Styx, which causes time to "with a deep rumbling" roll "back millennium after millennium, like an abandoned lorry glides down a well-travelled slope"[27] (Heidenstam 1995, p. 233). When he reawakens from his stuporous slumber, Hans inexplicably finds himself in the ancient land of Babylon, a mental leap that foreshadows the way "Modernism, express[es] time moving in arcs, flashbacks, jumps, repetitions, and, above all, subjective leaps and swerves" (Childs 2000,

p. 67). Later, after the roaming protagonist visits Assyria and Rome, ascends to Heaven, and then returns to his former time and life, the story resembles an innovative circular composition, (Brandsma 2021; Smeds 2001) a literary time lapse that is quite novel for its day. The narrative begins in the present, drifts off into the distant past, and then winds up back in its contemporaneous setting, an innovative chronology that supplants linear time and replaces it with "cyclical time", a concept "brought to many Europeans by African" and other cultures that would later "bec[o]me a frequent Modernist stylistic device" (Childs 2000, p. 59). Although it is important to clarify that Heidenstam was not a Modernist in the twentieth-century sense, the writer's extensive travels, the multiplicity of his settings, and the disjointed chronology he employs in his early prose establishes a connection to later Modernist movements and the "heteroglossia" that Søren Frank (2014) argues characterizes migration literature. Critics' initial puzzled reactions to *Hans Alienus*'s form and content are, thus, the exact type of reaction the work was destined to evoke. *Hans Alienus*—its nomadic themes, diverse scenery, and chronologic elasticity—was never intended to fit snugly into the discernible traditions or artistic categories of its time. The book's "aesthetic estrangement" from many of the prevailing cultural programs of its day, as well as its quixotic migrant protagonist, is exactly the point. In many ways, the book is a fulfillment of Heidenstam's earlier charge that literature should "move on, move steadily forward and never doubt that what is now considered perfect can be replaced by something better"[28] (Heidenstam 1889, p. 38). *Hans Alienus* was his answer to this "better" future for modern literature.

When *Hans Alienus* is understood as both an early modernist and migrant novel, another generative aspect of Heidenstam's philosophical and aesthetic program for the work—its interrogation of universals—becomes evident. Despite its expansive geographic and chronological leaps, Hans's futile quest for aesthetic satisfaction points toward the growing realization that establishing a master narrative of beauty has become untenable in a modern world where borders are becoming more regularly transgressed, where nationalities are becoming amorphous identities, and where artistic agendas are contending for primacy and transmission within a transnational context. Hans journeys across multiple eras, multiple geographies, and multiple cultures, and yet he fails to find the suitable, singular ideal of beauty that can assuage his restlessness. This feature of the novel's storyline is particularly critical, because, later in his career, Heidenstam responds to this theme of aesthetic futility, not by embracing it wholeheartedly but by working against it while trying to carve out a distinctive Swedish literary identity. Works such as *Karolinerna* (translated into English by Charles Stork as *The Charles Men*), which reenacts the downfall of the Swedish King Charles XII, attempt to refashion the monarch's mysterious assassination as a sort of decadent national(ist) project about a storied Swedish past, suggesting Heidenstam's belief that national consciousness can still cohere through narrative. Notably, at the beginning of *Hans Alienus*'s first section, the protagonist seems to hold a view similar to Heidenstam's later perspective, naively asserting his intention to ascertain such an ideal, asserting that "life is a battle for the finest clothes, for the gilding on a chair, for the carpet on the floor, and for the most beautiful women . . . ugliness is what is evil"[29] (Heidenstam 1995, pp. 82–83). Before migrating to Hades, Hans approaches his longing for beauty with an Icarus-like sense of arrogance and certitude, a belief that aesthetic satisfaction is a prize that can be won after an arduous struggle with the gratuitous and unseemly aspects of life. However, after his extravagant procession collapses into chaos, and after his descent into Hades yields only deeper dissatisfaction and restlessness, Hans gives up on the endeavor and devotes his attention to the more personal matter of repairing his strained relationship with his father, who, like him, "share(s) . . . this longing for the past" and "dream(s) of being surrounded by beauty and opulence", which "neither attains . . . though they have both looked for it" (Brantly 2019, p. 65). Hans and his father, over the course of their lives, have taken up arms in the same "war of beauty" to no avail, perhaps the only relatable experience they share, for as Father Didrik, Hans's confidant, points out ["the young and the old are natural enemies", which has crushed "thousands of hearts and families' happiness"[30]

(Heidenstam 1995, p. 383). As far as this story shows, two aesthetes failed in this mission to discern an artistic ideal that can inhere—and endure—across generations and geographies, indicating that Heidenstam was aware of the endeavor's pitfalls. The failed establishment of a beauteous master narrative in *Hans Alienus* is another inherently modern feature of the novel. The dissolution of belief in and skepticism toward what Jean-Francois Lyotard would similarly term "meta-narratives" (Lyotard [1979] 1984) would become a defining characteristic of postmodernity, even though evidence of this skepticism toward master narratives would start to materialize in Swedish modernist literature, well before Lyotard articulated his theory (Brandsma 2021). As Hans's failure showcases, a world shaped by increased movement and migration, where various cultures and peoples constantly interact with each other and exchange norms and customs, could no longer sustain or rationalize singular conceptions of Enlightenment ideals, such as beauty, truth, and art. In that sense, Heidenstam's "aesthetic of estrangement", which he cultivated through visual art and literature, becomes a sensible response to such an epiphany about beauty's illusive nature. It is an aesthetic predicated on the notion that every piece of art is a singular creation, whose beauty and meaning can only be determined by its observer. The features of this aesthetic come to symbolize the only possible notion of beauty that Heidenstam fathoms and postulates in his polemic *Renässans*: a joyous beauty "that builds on a grand resignation"[31] (Schück and Warburg 1932, p. 297).

With the publication of *Hans Alienus*, Heidenstam's aesthetic of estrangement came to full fruition. Not only did the novel serve as a semi-autobiographical representation of Heidenstam's own aesthetic frustration with the Modern Breakthrough, but the work also tacitly conveys a wider cognizance that, to move Swedish literature into the future, a sense of imagination, frivolity, and movement must be restored and represented within the nation's literary discourse. While Hans Alienus's supernatural flight from the Vatican to the most resplendent chapters of human history astounded and puzzled critics upon initial publication, the novel offered a new archetypal figure for modern literature that could resonate with the times and would iterate for decades: a character defined by his or her alienation, who bends the laws of time and space, seeking to salvage the idealistic striving frustrated by modernization. Moreover, Hans exemplifies the possibility that the fast pace of life and the rapidly interconnected geography of the modern world renders the search for beauty a wholly subjective perceptual experience, one that Hans gives voice to in the novel's final lines, resignedly declaring "for me, I am fortunate enough to have lived a long life, with its torments and enticing delights"[32] (Heidenstam 1995, p. 437). He does not find the transcendental beauty he is looking for, but the journey, with its futility and follies, becomes a sense of solace in itself, a noble act of idealistic integrity. The novel also centers a main character who is a cultural outsider and migrant and interacts with eras and geographies far removed from his stoic and claustrophobic origins in the Vatican. By extension, he becomes a Sisyphean symbol of modernity and its unanswered cry for certainty in a rapidly changing world. Hans Alienus is a figure, who, from the outset to the end, feels exiled from his home, his time, and his point of origin, a loss of belonging that is permanent and irrevocable. He notes that his "gnawing homesickness drives [him] to seek out something that no longer exists . . . everything is gone. [He] hear(s) other voices and see(s) other trees and stand(s) as a stranger, where [he] used to stand at home"[33] (Heidenstam 1995, p. 376). Homesick and dejected, Hans therefore becomes a conduit for Heidenstam's own sense of estrangement from the world from which he originated, since, as a youth, Heidenstam's illness and his father's concerns severed him from Sweden. As such, Heidenstam wrote a novel portending the individual effects of the twentieth-century's accelerating patterns of migration, where wars, mobilities, and shifting cartographies and geopolitics would necessitate new forms of literature that narrate the lives of individuals caught in between them all. *Hans Alienus* also challenges the naturalist fixation on portraying reality exactly and, instead, curates an adventure that is pure fantasy, paving the way for literary successors to revive the subjective realities of previous literary movements in the novel's history like Romanticism and allowing Sweden's philosophical

and artistic norms to undergo renewal and renegotiation. In a modern world where meaning becomes indiscernible, where ideals become illusory, and where ideals devolve into a competition between agendas and epistemes, the quest for beauty becomes an endless personal pursuit. Hans' father alludes to this fact in the novel's conclusion: "You did not return home from that journey, Hans Alienus. It is your destiny to journey until the end"[34] (p. 437). During the late nineteenth century, the world compressed; increased migration transformed individual perceptions of space, time, and belonging; and alienation and isolation became art and literature's only solace. Heidenstam's techniques and insights into these realities were ahead of their time. Although he borrowed from decadence and, later, turned toward nationalism, the early stages of his career perhaps remained some of his most prescient and groundbreaking years of productivity. His "aesthetic of estrangement" and its numerous innovations still resonate with the times.

4. Conclusions

During his formative years as an art student, Verner von Heidenstam traveled extensively through the heart of Europe and the Middle East, becoming, however unwittingly, an active participant in one of the defining features of modernity: the normalization of extended migration. Rather than learning how to paint in the familiar environments of his homeland and writing protest novels about the ills of Swedish society, he forged a different path for his visual and literary art than his contemporaries, letting the many worlds he traversed during his adolescence inform the paintings, poems, and prose he produced. Through his travels and "his picturesque genealogy"[35] as the son of an aristocratic elite, he created a brand of literary art that blurred lines "between homeland and oriental, national and cosmopolitan"[36] (Kamras 1942, p. 23), lending to the creation of a migrant tradition in Swedish literature. It was his formative work that would speak most profoundly to a growing sense of alienation from place and nation, which would consume intellectual discourse and engender radical new directions in literature and art within the proceeding decades. In this sense, Heidenstam's revolution against naturalism was a rousing success, even though his works did not receive much attention outside Sweden. In contemporary times, the durability of Heidenstam's legacy and oeuvre has been debated, primarily in Sweden, after the author took a notable nationalist turn after publishing *Hans Alienus*. Rather than nurturing his aesthetic of estrangement and transitioning toward Expressionism like his colleague and friend August Strindberg, Heidenstam turned his attention toward Sweden's national history for inspiration, which became "a direct response to the flaws he saw in his own day", since he gradually grew to believe that "Sweden's struggle for modernity ha[d] caused it to neglect its past" (Brantly 1993, p. 72). As nefarious nationalist projects in art, literature, and life would rise and fall in the first half of twentieth-century Europe, Heidenstam's choice to devote his writings to establishing a historical narrative of Sweden would confine his readership to patriotic or local audiences. The choice did not age well. However, Heidenstam's yearning for aesthetic renewal early in his career, and the images in word and paint that it would yield, reflect discourses of modernism and modernity that preoccupy scholars and theorists even today. The pinnacle of these efforts, *Hans Alienus*, reifies the boundlessness, freedom, and despair that both industrialization and migration would facilitate across borders and history. When he sets off toward Hades, Hans Alienus no longer has a "fatherland . . . authority . . . enemies, nor friends. Rather, he was "lonelier and freer than ever"[37] (Heidenstam 1995, p. 191). The aesthetics of Heidenstam's estrangement from place would help him lift "the path of the Swedish" letters "toward higher and brighter stars"[38] (Schück and Warburg 1932, p. 319). Therein lies the crux of his most enduring contributions to a modern Swedish literature.

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Notes

1 . . .'världens medelpunkt' i en liten kyrka vid Olshammars herrgård i södra Närke. . .
2 . . .med barnslig patriotism. . .
3 . . .vantrivdes med studierna. . .han avskydde realismen i konsten, att exakt avbilda efter verkligheten. . .
4 (Hur gräsligt detta landsflyktlif. . .Hur dödande!)
5 . . .inifrån hans fantasivärld. . .
6 (. . .Vill 'hem', men vet ej var hemmet ligger. . .)
7 . . .från att ha varit landsflyktig, isolerad och osäker om framtiden . . . medelpunkten i de litterära kretsarna. . .
8 . . .beundrad, läst och citerad. . .
9 . . .siare och profet. . .
10 . . .hans väg förde genom Köpenhamn och Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden och Wien, Venedig, Florens och Rom och slutligen över Neapel och Alexandria till Kairo. . .
11 . . .på våren 1877. . .Piraeus, Aten och Korint. . .på hösten samma år till Egypten, varifrån han utsträcker färden till Palestina och Syrien och besöker bland andra städer Jerusalem och Damaskus. . .
12 . . .fantasier och leka med sanningen. . .
13 . . .blev under en tid både en inspiration och projektionsyta för hans estetika idéer. . .
14 . . .realismens konventioner möter den orientaliserade romantikens. . .
15 . . .sökte uttryck för sin konstnärliga längtan i fantasibilder. . .I stället för att tålmodigt avbilda naturen älskade han guldsmedsarbeten, lysande tyger, och naket kött. . .
16 blev. . .en främling bland de unga konstnärskamraterna i Paris. . .
17 . . .kritiserade en fot som han målat. . .om man målar en ljusstake, en fot eller en Kristus, det är detsamma, bara man målar det bra. . .
18 . . .ropade. . .efter honom. . .'Idiot!'. . .
19 . . .under dessa två år 1880 till 1882 [han] utvecklats både som människa och skald i allt radiklare riktning. . .
20 . . .den svenska naturalismen begynte visa de första upplösningssymptomen. . .stötte han den i graven. . .
21 . . .ensam. . .som en främling. . .
22 . . .ursprungligheten och ungdomen. . .efterklangen och ålderdomskrämporna. . .
23 . . .mottagandet av det omfångrika och svåretiketterade verket. . .präglades av förvåning över bokens 'bisarrerier'. . .
24 . . .förvirrande mångfalden av idéer och scener. . .
25 . . .ett av de originellaste och mest svåretiketterade verk som fått tillträde till den officiell svenska litteraturhistorien. . .
26 . . .Jag önskar en människa, inför vilken jag inte känner mig som en främling. . .
27 . . .med mullrande dunder. . .tillbaka årtusen efter årtusen, liksom en lösslupen lastvagn glider utför en redan tillryggalagd backe. . .
28 . . .gå vidare, gå beständigt framåt och aldrig betvifla, att det som nu anses fullgodt kan ersättas af något ännu bättre. . .
29 . . .livet är en kamp om det sköna. . ..det är kamp om det fina klädet i din rock, om förgyllningen på stolen, om mattan där på golvet och om de vackraste kvinnorna. . .det fula är det onda. . .
30 . . .det gamla och det unga äro naturliga fiender. . .tusens hjärtan och familjers lycka. . .
31 . . .som bygger på stort resignation. . .
32 . . .det är mig lycksalighet nog att ha genomlivet ett långt liv med sina kval och bestickande fröjder. . .
33 . . .gnagande hemlängtan driver mig att uppsöka något som ej längre finns till. . .allt är borta. . .jag hör andra röster och ser andra träd och står främmande, där jag förr stod hemma. . .
34 . . .du kommer inte hem från den färden, Hans Alienus. . .Det är ditt öde att gå och gå intill det sista. . .
35 . . .hans pittoreska släktkrönika. . .
36 . . .mellan fosterländskt och orientaliskt, nationellt och kosmopolitisk. . .
37 . . .fosterland, ingen överhet. . .ingen fiender, och icke heller några vänner. . .han var. . .mer ensam och mer fri än någonsin. . .
38 . . .den svenska. . .bana mot högre och klarare stjärnor. . .

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