

LOCATING AUGUST STRINDBERG'S PROSE:
MODERNISM, TRANSNATIONALISM, AND SETTING

This page intentionally left blank

ANNA WESTERSTÅHL STENPORT

Locating August Strindberg's Prose

Modernism, Transnationalism,
and Setting

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS

Toronto Buffalo London

©University of Toronto Press Incorporated 2010
Toronto Buffalo London
www.utppublishing.com
Printed in Canada

ISBN 978-1-4426-4199-0 (cloth)



Printed on acid-free, 100% post-consumer recycled paper with vegetable-based inks.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Stenport, Anna Westerståhl

Locating August Strindberg's prose : modernism, transnationalism,
and setting / Anna Westerståhl Stenport.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4426-4199-0

1. Strindberg, August, 1849–1912 – Criticism and interpretation.
2. Transnationalism in literature. 3. Modernism (Literature) – History
and criticism. I. Title.

PT9816.S74 2010 839.72'6 C2010-902909-7

University of Toronto Press acknowledges the financial assistance to its publishing program of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council.



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

University of Toronto Press acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund for its publishing activities.

Contents

Acknowledgments vii

Introduction 3

1 National Betrayal: Public, Private, and Railway Travel in
A Madman's Defence 18

2 Rural Modernism: Ethnography, Photography, and Recollection in
Among French Peasants 55

3 Parisian Streets, Pre-Surrealism, and Pastoral Landscapes in
Inferno 88

4 Speed, Displacements, and Berlin Modernity in *The Cloister* 125

5 Recording, Habitation, and Colonial Imaginations in
The Roofing Ceremony 156

Works Cited 187

Index 205

This page intentionally left blank

Acknowledgments

This book has greatly benefited from the generous attention it has received from many readers and discussion partners over the years. Profound thanks go to my mentor and advisor Linda Haverty Rugg, as well as to other University of California-Berkeley professors who have given of their time – Mark Sandberg, Michael Lucey, Barbara Spackman, and, in memoriam, Allan Pred. I thank Strindberg scholars Ulf Olsson, Ann-Charlotte Gavel Adams, Margaretha Fahlgren, Stefanie von Schnurbein, Anna Cavallin, and the press's anonymous readers for comments and suggestions at various stages of the project. At the University of Illinois, I have encountered a wonderfully rich and collaborative intellectual environment, and a number of people have been especially significant for making this book come together. In particular, thanks go to the Friday writing group – Ericka Beckman, Ellen Moodie, and Yasemin Yildiz – as well as to Andrea Goulet, Anke Pinkert, Brett Ashely Kaplan, Maggie Flinn, Mara R. Wade, Jonathan Ebel, Shelley Wright, and Lawrence Smith. Several graduate students have helped me along – thank you Kathleen Smith, Jon Sherman, Carola Dwyer, Benjamin Davis, and Paul Hartley. The staffs at the Royal Library in Stockholm, the University of Illinois Library, the Stockholm City Museum, and the Gothenburg University Library have provided critical assistance in all stages of the project. Editor Richard Ratzclaff at the University of Toronto Press has steered this project through with wonderful grace.

Research and scholarship cannot be imagined, let alone completed, without funding. I am very grateful for the travel and teaching release support awarded by the University of Illinois Research Board, the American-Scandinavian Foundation, the Helge Ax:son Johnson

Foundation, the Flora Hewlett Travel Fund and the European Union Center at the University of Illinois, the Gålö Sixten Gemzéus Foundation, the University of California at Berkeley, and SWEA International San Francisco Chapter. For support in the final stages of publication, I thank Stiftelsen Konung Gustaf VI Adolfs fond för svensk kultur.

Permission to reprint parts of chapter 1 from the article 'National Betrayal: Language, Location, and Lesbianism in August Strindberg's Novel *Le Plaidoyer d'un fou*,' published in *Comparative Literature* 62:2 (2010), 144–60, is granted from Duke University Press; permission to reprint parts of chapter 5 from the article 'Interiority Conceits: Domestic Architecture, Grafophone Recordings, and Colonial Imaginations in August Strindberg's *The Roofing Ceremony* (1907),' published in *Modernism/Modernity* 17:4 (2010), is granted from the Johns Hopkins University Press.

As always, much gratitude is due to the Stenport and Westerståhl families for unwavering support; to Ingegerd, especially, and to Märta and Jacob for joy and diversion. And I save the largest thank you to last: this book is for Olof and it comes with much love.

LOCATING AUGUST STRINDBERG'S PROSE:
MODERNISM, TRANSNATIONALISM, AND SETTING

This page intentionally left blank

Introduction

If you were to name the locations of European literary modernism, would London, Paris, Vienna, New York, or Berlin rank at the top of your list? Or Dublin and Prague, perhaps? But what about Stockholm? Or the rural countryside of France? How about the railway lines connecting Copenhagen to an anonymous boarding house in Bavaria, or an ethnographic exhibition of thousands of artefacts brought from Congo to Sweden by missionaries and military; or an Alpine landscape in Austria? Similarly, which national traditions and languages would you use initially to exemplify the movement? Anglophone or francophone, perhaps? But what about a Swedish writer who lives in exile all over Europe for a good portion of his adult life, and whose most experimental works are written in French about Stockholm and Paris, or in Swedish about peasants in France and artists in Berlin, or which may be set in an anonymous Stockholm apartment but tell a story of domination in Africa from a national perspective that does not include acknowledgment of its colonization practices? And what does literary modernism look like from the geographical periphery of Europe, when part of writing within a modernist paradigm means challenging conceptions of nation and national languages as constructs upon which a centre-margin paradigm relies?

Looking for answers to some of these questions spurred me to write this book about August Strindberg's prose narratives. In works written by Strindberg (1849–1912) in exile from Sweden – or in those of his texts that explicitly seek to destabilize concepts of nation and national language, or margin and centre – I have also sought for ways to understand how European modernism construes setting as a literary device that can supplement our understanding of the movement: its self-reflexive

emphasis on experimentation, on disjointed temporality, on alienation and fragmentation, on speed and transience, on recollection and artistic creativity, and on the coincidental and contingent.

In a well-known prefatory remark to *A Dream Play* (1902), Strindberg outlines his experimental conception of the spatio-temporal. In this play, like in a dream, 'tid och rum existera icke ... Personerna klyvas, fördubblas, dubbleras, dunsta av, förtätas, flyta ut, samlas' (*Ett drömspel* 7) (time and space do not exist ... Characters split, double, multiply, evaporate, condense, disperse, and converge [trans. Robinson, 176]). Many of Strindberg's prose works suggest similarly complex approaches to space and time. This is particularly true for narratives that thematize transnational travel and linguistic displacement, and which self-reflexively address the function of literary setting. The settings of Strindberg's prose modernism explored in the five chapters of this book range from Stockholm to Paris, Berlin, and London; from the Swedish, French, Prussian, and Austrian countrysides to the Swedish involvement in the Belgian Congo; from apartments to restaurants, railway carriages to boarding houses, libraries to hospitals, and streets to farmland, incorporating practices of writers, artists, actresses, scientists, farmers, explorers, photographers, and many others.

What these locations and practices show is that Strindberg's prose is explicitly and self-reflexively transnational at a time when national allegiance remained strong in the European tradition, including the Swedish. Using his own works as a guide, I suggest that Strindberg's prose offers ways to redefine and rewrite a marginal literary identity at the end of the nineteenth century. These narratives not only reformulate what it means for a literature to be construed as 'Swedish' or 'French,' but also make apparent the multilingual complexity inherent in European prose modernism as it evolves from the late nineteenth century onward.

Gunnar Brandell, one of Strindberg's many biographers, makes the author's geographical vagabondage evident in a map in the second of his four-volume biography. He counts twenty-eight domiciles mostly in continental Europe during the period 1883–94 (*Strindberg – ett författarliv*, vol. 2) and counts another ten or so primarily in Paris, Austria, and Sweden during the period 1894–8 (*Strindberg – ett författarliv*, vol. 3). Brandell's visualization of Strindberg's extensive vagabondage is inspiring. It makes visible how Strindberg's writing challenges any stable correlation between nation and author; it also raises questions about aesthetic tensions inherent in his constructions of literary setting. Along

these lines, this book proposes to read Strindberg's transnational writing in ways that emphasize its connection to European prose modernism. For Strindberg, as for many other contemporary émigré modernists (Rainer Maria Rilke, Franz Kafka, or Joseph Conrad, for example), language as a construct does not appear associated with a perceptual 'home.' Strindberg's writing in French, or in Swedish about France, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, rarely addresses conceptual issues of writing in a 'foreign' language or about 'foreign' locations. In fact, although Stellan Ahlström has argued in an oft-repeated formula that Strindberg left Sweden in self-imposed exile in 1883 armed with the explicit desire to 'conquer' Paris and achieve literary fame in the French capital, Strindberg states in a letter to Danish newspaper editor Edvard Brandes that he actually has no intention of becoming a 'French writer,' instead making use of French 'for want of a universal language' (*Brev* 5:122; my trans.). Language and location are both intriguingly transparent as concepts in Strindberg's writing, which counteracts the language-as-a-national-marker model so influential for later literary reception.

Emphasizing Strindberg's prose as constitutive of transnational European modernism allows us to rethink some of the ways in which the author Strindberg has been construed as a delocalized psyche. He has been, we could say, construed as pure subjectivity extraneous from geography. This narrowly conceived legacy of Strindberg's delocalized authorial persona has influenced the general reception of his writing as primarily, if not exclusively, about subject-formation and (fraught) identity construction. Strindberg's authorial persona has always been marked by attributes signalling a rational subject's dissolution, such as those including medical insanity or extreme misogyny, as several scholars show (Olsson, *Jag blir galen*; Fahlgren). In the paradoxical extension of arguments in which nation and authorial persona coalesce, Strindberg's prose has been read as primarily about identity and subject formation. In this paradigm, based on assumptions of positivist construction, literary representation becomes a way to heal a problematic authorial persona and a fragmentary national literary history. Not only can Strindberg be construed as the father of modern Swedish literature in this paradigm, but his prose also becomes a way to engage with the 'crisis of representation' that is modernism's hallmark according to Pericles Lewis in the *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (1).

Turning the relationship between modernist subjectivity and setting around proposes shifting the weight we have put on something we perceive to be a given (the tormented, split subject; the challenges to

temporality) to perceiving it, in fact, as inseparable from something quite concrete. This identity/subjectivity interpretive tradition, which is how we have been taught to think about modernism's spaces, in part obscures what is actually original in Strindberg's prose, namely, its sophisticated and complex constructions of setting across national traditions, languages, and trajectories of travel. Focusing on the setting of his literary works conceived in exile and upon returning to Sweden, allows for the expansion of a tradition of scholarship that has coerced Strindberg's prose into both national paradigms and constructions of a cohesive authorial persona. It also allows us to understand from a different perspective Strindberg's astonishingly comprehensive output.

Though best known in an international context for the theatrical innovations of *Miss Julie* (1888), *A Dream Play* (1902), or *The Ghost Sonata* (1908), Strindberg was a prolific prose writer for over forty years in numerous genres and in two languages – Swedish and French. Strindberg's prose writing includes popular realist and naturalist novels, like *The Red Room* (1879) and the *The People of Hemsö* (1887), as well as experimental and expressionist ones like *Inferno* (1897) and *Black Banners* (1907), numerous autobiographies, short story collections, historical fiction, and essays on aesthetics, natural sciences, linguistics, and social and political issues. Expansive and prolific, Strindberg's collected works in the recent Swedish *Samlade verk* (*Collected Works*) comprise over seventy volumes, while individual pieces number in the hundreds. He also wrote over ten thousand letters. In fact, Strindberg's oeuvre engages with all major literary and aesthetic movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and encompasses all major genres of the period – drama, novel, short story, poetry, ethnographic and historical prose, journalism, essayistic writing, criticism, and autobiography, as well as painting and photography.

Locating August Strindberg's Prose proposes that without an investigation of setting, neither the forms nor cultural contexts of European modernism can be understood, and, by extension, that two lesser-known items of the modernist tradition – the prose of August Strindberg and the concept of literary setting – are central to how we perceive the movement's formation and continuing legacy. My approach to Strindberg's prose is in line with other significant developments in modernist studies, namely, from the psychological to the spatial; from a *modus operandi* that traces representational 'crises,' often assumed to be based in character or author psychology, to their implementation in formal choices and

to ones that propose spatial relations as distinctly formative for and representative of modernism.

As a transnational writer, Strindberg incorporates many locations into his writing and obscures and eschews others. The field of Strindberg scholarship is similarly diverse – scholars in Sweden and Scandinavia, Germany and France, and North America and the United Kingdom have often focused on very different aspects of his writing, and have tended to make those conform to their respective national traditions of literary interpretation. *Locating August Strindberg's Prose* expands on the limited number of monographs on Strindberg's prose available in English, including Eric Johannesson, *The Novels of August Strindberg*; Michael Robinson, *Strindberg and Autobiography*; Harry G. Carlson, *Out of Inferno*; and Gunnar Brandell, *Strindberg in Inferno*. In this book, I draw on my own transnational positions as a U.S.-trained scholar of comparative literature and native of Sweden, with a significant interest in French and German literature. I build on and incorporate English-language scholarship, as well as a wide range of sources in Scandinavian languages, French, and German, which may be little known internationally. The methodology I use involves close readings of spatial descriptions and a narrative's structural dependence on certain settings, while these literary readings are related to larger questions about production and reception. This book is thereby part of an explicit effort to demarginalize Strindberg's prose and challenge boundaries between different national scholarly traditions, while offering new ways for a field like comparative literature to investigate the assumptions of nation and monolingualism on which its methodological and theoretical approaches have been based.

Setting

Part of the central argument in this book is that Strindberg's prose illustrates and contextualizes fundamental conceptualizations of European literary modernism. By analysing something very concrete in Strindberg's prose, and in the prose's production and reception circumstances, I seek to illustrate how two disparate and unwieldy traditions – those of Strindberg and of modernist scholarship – can be related. The project started as a pragmatic query. I noticed there are very few critical interpretations of Strindberg's prose settings, despite the primary importance of location in his works. It made me think that if we are searching for 'this

"something"" (dette 'noget') which makes Strindberg's prose modernist, in Per Stounbjerg's formulation (315, my trans.), and we have not been able to identify it, perhaps we have been looking in the wrong places. Per Stounbjerg's scholarship is suggestive in this regard, as he has consistently interpreted Strindberg's writing as a modernist. The recent essay title 'Ett subjekt intrasslat i världen: Strindbergs självbiografiska prosa' (A Subject Entangled in the World: Strindberg's Autobiographical Prose, my trans.) suggests Stounbjerg's interest in exploring spatialized conceptions of subjectivity, though his investigations remain removed from concrete engagement with geographical locations. I hope that the present book will help spur further interest in literary setting as a conceptual tool for analysing both locations represented and places imagined in the prose of August Strindberg and in European modernism. I believe this can help us expand Strindberg studies outward from its historically dominant interpretive paradigm based in subjectivity and identity studies. A concept like setting offers us a concrete way to explore other facets of Strindberg's writing and shows how these connect with prevalent strategies of European literary modernism. Such an interpretive strategy ultimately seeks to de-marginalize Strindberg in European literary and cultural history.

The concept of 'setting' is one of the terms I draw on to address this question. Place and space have been much discussed in critical theory and cultural studies, but in this book I am referring to an older term for several reasons. The term incorporates both space and time, as evident in an expression like 'the setting of Strindberg's breakthrough novel *The Red Room* is late nineteenth-century Stockholm.' Setting is also medium-specific to literature, and specifically, to narrative prose. Literary studies have borrowed terms and approaches from other disciplines and media to address the function and importance of setting, including in particular those of geography and architecture, which indicates that questions of literary location span multiple interdisciplinary interests.¹ It also suggests literary theory's problems of defining, maintaining, and critiquing its own terminology. Part of the reason literary studies needs a return to a concept like setting, I argue, is to counteract metaphorical slippage, in which catch-all spatial terminology obscures the medium-specific functions of literature or, as David Harvey writes, which 'invite[s] theorists

1 Some of the most important concepts have been derived from Henri Lefebvre's production of space, Michel DeCerteau's practices of the everyday, Anthony Vidler's warped space and the architectural uncanny, Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's rhizomes, Edward Soja's thirdspace, and Franco Moretti's maps.

of all stripes to simply delight in the conveniently disruptive metaphors of spatialities, cartographic metaphors, and the like' ('Cosmopolitanism' 287, drawing on Neil Smith and Cindi Katz). In this book, I use setting to address specifics of literary production, reception, and representation. The approach includes attention to how Strindberg writes about locations, where he writes, about which places, in what languages, and for which audiences.

To advocate for setting as a distinct and critical category of modernism's spatial parameters necessitates drawing out some of the reasons why the concept has been overlooked. The term itself illustrates some of its negative baggage. 'Setting,' like that of a setting of a jewel, appears to imply both secondary status and stasis, by which its function becomes one of letting the jewels of narration (plot, character, theme, linguistic formulation, narrative strategy, or whatever feature you choose to focus on) shine unobstructed. When associated with the term 'set,' images of painted theatre backdrops or cinema's sound stage particle boards suggest fakery and suspendability. From these perspectives, setting appears incongruous with dominant ideologies of modernism, including its interest in philosophy and subjectivity construction. In modernism's ideology of constructions of the self – the fragmented and alienated human psyche; the priority placed on the individual's subjective experiences – situated and localized aspects of narration may appear inconsequential and dispensable.

Setting as a literary term posits, however, that a story needs a location to take place; that location, of course, may index a recognized place name, or not. Narrative takes (a) place and produces literary space. Setting is in fact so integral to narration that any story, whether modernist or not, cannot be either conceived or analysed without it, just as the literary spaces produced span the material and imaginary. Drawing on setting as a medium-specific literary term allows us to construct a credible bridge between modernist texts and cultural constructions, such as those that have become foundational for European modernism: tensions between conceptions of centre and margin, national belonging and cosmopolitanism, public and private, emigration and travel, high culture and low, city and country, formal fragmentation and subjective displacement, and gendered and sexual hierarchies.

Setting seems to be one of modernism's present absences, overlooked at least partly because it does not appear to fit easily into still-hegemonic theoretical emphases on temporality in cultural and literary studies (Gaonkar 4–5). The term 'modernism' itself connotes time, as Peter

Brooker and Andrew Thacker argue: 'to be "modern" seems to imply an intrinsic relation to time and history, and thus to past, present and future cultural practices' (1; cf. Armstrong 10–11). The modern subject's literary constitution in space – one of modernism's most interesting aspects – is neglected in such constructions of modernist ideology. Such tight linkages between literature and history, rather than literature and geography, are evident in most national literary traditions, including the Swedish. This particular tradition tends to organize divergent and heterogeneous literary expression according to decades (those of the 1880s, 1890s, and so on), while assuming stable national and linguistic boundaries of 'Swedish' literature. In this paradigm, Strindberg's varied production, conceived during forty years in multiple nations, two languages, and in multiple genres – often in direct opposition to Swedish and French national ideologies – never really fits. In its emphasis on temporal organization, Sweden's national literary history, which includes significant emphasis on Strindberg as the designated 'father of modern Swedish literature,' correlates with the emphasis on temporality in both narrative and modernist studies.' The implicit emphasis on temporality as primary and principal in literary studies has, it seems, obscured concrete ways of addressing constructions of setting that show complexities of expression that are part of emergent transnational literary modernism at the end of the nineteenth century. Such literary modernisms, exemplified in this book by some of Strindberg's most interesting and experimental prose works, also put the spotlight on actual locations that have largely been understood as marginal to the tradition in terms of both setting and topic – including those that Strindberg put at the centre of his writings.

The disregard for setting connects with fundamentals of narrative theory, as it emphasizes temporality over spatiality. For Paul Ricoeur, a representative example, 'one presupposition commands all the others, namely, that what is ultimately at stake in ... every narrative work, is the temporal character of human experience ... narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal existence' (3; see also Carroll 34; Bal 133–41). Though Mikhail Bakhtin's essay 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel' represents one of the first sustained attempts – and richly complex it is! – to investigate in conjunction spatial and temporal parameters of narrative, the concept of the chronotope prioritizes time over space. As Bakhtin writes, 'the primary category in the chronotope is time' (85) and a majority of his analyses in fact devote their 'entire attention to time' (86). Strindberg's

prose settings, in fact, gesture to the limitations of a predominant critical tradition that narrowly prioritizes temporality over spatiality. *Locating August Strindberg's Prose* suggests some concrete ways to investigate settings that bridge form and cultural context, where the contributions of modernist literary technique and theme conjoin. The prose settings I will be investigating not only challenge any stable notion of 'nation,' especially during a time of increasing nationalism and constructions of national literary histories, and of language, as belonging to nation, and of fetishized metropolitan identities (particularly those of Paris, Berlin, and Stockholm), but also challenge us to rethink notions of temporality, especially as those pertain to modernist conceptualizations of selfhood and consciousness.

Transnational

A second critical concept I draw on in this book is the term 'transnational.' According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term first came into use in 1921, thus reflecting its emergence from the time period under investigation here. In contrast to the term 'international,' which denotes relations between stable nations, 'transnational' signifies a more complex relationship. The term entails the idea of 'extending or having interests extending beyond national bounds or frontiers' and so presupposes the engagement of multiple nations and expresses according to its prepositional and adjectival usage connotations of 'across, beyond, over, transcending, surpassing' (*OED*). These are precisely the complexities that Strindberg's prose engages. James McFarlane began formulating a transnational understanding of European modernism in his essay 'Berlin and the Rise of Modernism 1886–1896,' included in the influential primer *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890–1930*. But like later developments of these arguments, McFarlane does not address *how* texts produced in, about, for, and in reaction to multiple locations and the transnational relationships between them come to formalize modernism. Strindberg's prose provides a case study in this regard for how modernism formalizes transnational settings.

Strindberg's transnational prose narratives suggest a productive way to define European literary modernism as a movement that not only challenges simplistic oppositions between concepts like margin and centre, or import and export models of literary influence, but also as one which is founded upon movement across national borders and within and between national and primary languages. Strindberg's prose

dismantles the truism that literary modernism is an international phenomenon and replaces it with a dynamic critical framework that seeks to span transnational, cultural, and literary movement(s).² Brooker and Thacker ask a very helpful question in their introduction to *Geographies of Modernism*: 'where was modernism?' (rather than the more customary *when* or *what* was modernism?). They rely, however, on an established transatlantic cartographic line that links metropolitan Paris and London with New York, to emphasize the continued importance of quintessential urban locations that have usually been associated with modernism – 'streets, offices, cafes and artists' quarters' (3; see also Huyssen, 'Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World' 6). Rosner takes the rethinking of city space in modernism in another direction, arguing that domestic spaces, interior design, and residential architecture provided a 'conceptual vocabulary' for the modernist novel that also challenges gendered preconceptions of public and private in literary modernism (2, see also Walkowitz 11). Strindberg's prose writing offers ways to rethink the construction of European literary modernism as associated with major metropolitan centres, public locations, particular gendered constructions of space, and import-export models.

Periodization of European literary modernism has been contested: Lewis proposes the period 1850–1950; Bradbury and McFarlane narrow the range to 1890–1930; and individual national traditions, like the Swedish, tend to establish a later range, 1914–60, or so. In this book, I follow Toril Moi's lead in *Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism* to argue that Scandinavian modernism evolves earlier than often assumed. Any comprehensive understanding of Scandinavian modernism begins with the term 'the modern breakthrough,' coined by Danish Georg Brandes to describe what he, as a multilingual Europe-based literary critic, understood as important and original about Scandinavian literature in the 1880s – the ways it polemically engaged and reformulated Scandinavia's transition to modernity. Brandes's call for innovations in Scandinavian literature in his lecture series at Copenhagen University in 1871 stipulated that litera-

2 Cf. monographs by Thacker, *Moving Through Modernity*; Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style*; Rosner, *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life*; Briens, *Paris Laboratoire de la littérature Scandinave moderne 1880–1905*; the edited volumes by Brooker and Thacker, *Geographies of Modernism*; Wollaege, *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*; and Bahun-Radunović and Pourgouris, *The Avant-Garde and the Margins*; and articles by Eysteinnsson ('Borders of Modernism in the Nordic World'); Friedman ('Cultural Parataxis and Transnational Landscapes of Reading'); Huyssen ('Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World'); and Gikandi ('Preface: Modernism in the World').

ture could become *modern* and relevant by engaging social issues in new and original forms (383–4). Brandes explicitly challenged a pervasive national romanticism and a centuries-old import model of literary influence in Scandinavia. Strindberg did the same, especially in works composed outside of Sweden. Inspired by Brandes, I would argue, Bradbury and McFarlane began reconceptualizing European modernism from a comparative perspective, arguing that particularly Scandinavian modernism, in ‘its most significant manifestations’ was ‘a good generation *earlier* than the Anglo-American’ (37; see also Mitchell), and that the Scandinavian Modern Breakthrough Movement had thoroughly influenced conceptions of European modernism in Berlin, London, and Paris by 1890. Strindberg’s role is paramount here, but has tended to be overlooked in international scholarship. Moi charts a similar trajectory, namely, that the Scandinavian Modern Breakthrough Movement, and particularly the early plays of Ibsen, provides the earliest and most comprehensive aesthetic critique of continental idealism and bourgeois realism, but that Ibsen’s formidable importance for modernist aesthetics has been overlooked in favour of the writings of Charles Baudelaire or Gustave Flaubert, for example.³

Strindberg’s transnational prose illustrates what European literary modernism is. It is partly what Susan Stanford Friedman calls modernism’s critical ‘linguistic polyvocality’ and ‘cultural parataxis,’ which allow ‘the juxtaposition of disparate [locational and linguistic] elements in non-hierarchical ways’ (36). Strindberg’s writing about the French or Austrian countrysides, or about Stockholm in French or Paris in Swedish is part of a body of late nineteenth-century transnational literature that gives empirical background to Friedman’s claim that studies of European modernism need to deemphasize the “‘culture capitals” of Europe’ instead to investigate ‘how local formations of modernism are continually affected by cultural traffic of all kinds’ and ‘the cultural hybridity that results from widespread intercultural communication’ (36). This disparity, or heterogeneity, provides an important complement to Pascale Casanova’s paradigm of *littératisation* (127–38). In the influential *World Republic of Literature*, Casanova claims that Strindberg’s

3 Like Ibsen’s plays, Strindberg’s transnational prose modernism does not fit easily into categories of Scandinavian modernism. In its classical formulations, Swedish and Scandinavian modernism tends to emphasize a formalist approach that privileges poetic experimentation, syntactic dissolution, and fragmentary imagery, as preeminent in the canonical legacy of the 1940s generation of Swedish poets (see Brantly; Luthersson). More comparative approaches have recently begun to be explored; see Jansson, Lothe, and Riikonen.

strategies for gaining recognition in Paris serve as a 'paradigm of *littératisation*' (137), i.e., the ways in which 'a text from a *literarily deprived* country comes to be regarded as literary by the legitimate authorities' (136, my emphasis) – in this case, come to be seen as attaining the cultural, monetary, and aesthetic prestige brought by Parisian recognition. Casanova posits Paris as the 'the capital of the literary world'; the 'place where books – submitted to critical judgment and transmuted – can be denationalized and their authors made universal' (127). I propose instead that Strindberg's prose modernism, particularly in Swedish-language works about Paris, deconstruct both assumptions of Paris's iconic status in European letters and the idea that literature originating in so-called literarily deprived locations is derivative of European models. Critical attention to the setting of Strindberg's individual prose works, and the ways in which these literary locations make us rethink narrative trajectory and content, help us gain a better understanding of transnational European modernism.

Locating August Strindberg's Prose thereby engages with questions of the so-called globalization of literary studies, and more specifically with the changing field of comparative literature. In the current globalization discourse, as represented by works like *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization* (Saussy) or a concept like 'planetary' (Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*), there is a clear assumption that literature has something very pertinent to do with space; that there is something geographically significant about literary production, reception, consumption, and canonization. Traditional literary history and novelistic and narrative theory has tended not to engage with these questions very openly, however. In this book I draw on terms like 'setting' and the 'transnational' because one is medium-specific and the other relates explicitly to the geographical imagination of the time period I am investigating. Both terms are critical to an understanding of literary modernism, while Strindberg's prose production thereby offers a complementary understanding of the field of comparative literature.

When studied from an international perspective, it seems that Strindberg's prose reputation has suffered from an unfortunate double-blow, which effectively has edged it out of the modernist and comparative literary context. First, few of Strindberg's novels are currently in print in any other language than Swedish, while the prose has been overlooked in favour of his drama, and, more recently, his painting and photography (see Granath; and Rugg, *Picturing Ourselves*). Second, scholars have historically had great difficulty dealing with the fact that

Strindberg's prose seems to defy any easy or stable categorization, whether national, linguistic, thematic, or stylistic. There is a problematically large body of Strindberg works to contend with and any attempt at synthesizing, generalizing, or categorizing quickly runs up against pertinent counter-examples. Scholarship has historically tried to deal with this heterogeneity in two ways, by organizing the work according to either biographical or national models. Biographical models of interpretation seem by now to have been largely relinquished, as indicated by the significant contributions of prominent Swedish Strindberg scholar Ulf Olsson (*Levande död* and *Jag blir galen*; see also Fahlgren; Hockenjos; Lönngren; Schnurbein; Stounbjerg).

National frameworks remain strong, however. The authoritative *Collected Works* is also called The National Edition, *Nationalupplagan*, and this name has become the popular moniker for the project. Another case in point involves standard Scandinavian reception of two of Strindberg's better-known French-language novels. Swedish scholars tend to label these as 'Swedish' works of literature, while scholars of French read them for their correlation with 'French' literature. In fact, both these works are explicitly transnational. *Inferno* (1897), written in French in Sweden, is set mostly in Paris and in Austria, though it was first published in a Swedish translation and only subsequently in its original version. *A Madman's Defence* was written in French in Denmark in 1887–8, and is set mostly in Stockholm, though its originating point of narration is a Bavarian pension. That work was first published in a German translation in Berlin in 1893 and subsequently in a French version in Paris in 1895. Strindberg never authorized it for publication in Sweden. Taking Strindberg's prose as a critical case study with relevance for many other marginalized texts, *Locating August Strindberg's Prose* questions constructions of national literary history and offers a model for investigating the transnational also within other literary movements, authorships, and languages; incorporating Strindberg's prose works into a context of European literary modernism, where it belongs, is part of what this book hopes to achieve.

August Strindberg's Literary Locations

Some texts discussed in this book are better known and available in English translation – in these cases, I spend less time on contextualization and move quickly into analyses of literary setting. In other cases, reframing the field of European modernist literary studies by including