

# **Stockholm's Archipelago and Strindberg's: Historical Reality and Modern Myth-Making**

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## **Abstract**

The Stockholm Archipelago is ubiquitous in the prose, poetry, drama and non-fiction of August Strindberg. This article examines the interaction in Strindberg's oeuvre between the city of Stockholm as civilized space and the wild space surrounding it, tracing the development of a literary myth of Eden in his work. Strindberg's representations of the shifting relations between city and nature, it is argued, played (and still play) an important role in the cultural construction of mythologies of the loss of the wild space. The environments described in Strindberg's texts are subject to changes, shifts and repetitions with variations, such that the archipelago in itself can be read as a mirror of the polyphony of points of view, the variability and the ambiguities we find in his oeuvre at large.

## **Keywords**

August Strindberg, Stockholm Archipelago, city in literature, nature in literature, mythologies

August Strindberg's home town of Stockholm, together with its wilder counterpart, the archipelago or *skärgård* (literally meaning group, or circle, of islands and skerries), plays a large part in Strindberg's literary universe as well as in his life. The archipelago is ubiquitous in his oeuvre; it occurs in prose as well as in poetry and in drama, and it characterizes both fiction, autobiography and non-fiction (essays, letters and diaries). It can sometimes provide the setting to whole works, but in a series of other works it can be included as one of the settings, or even be mentioned peripherally. Images of the archipelago can be conveyed while the author is living in that natural and social environment, which frequently occurs in his letters, but he can also recreate it at a great distance and with a nostalgic eye, as in the cases of the novel *Hemsöborna* (The People of Hemsö), written in southern Germany, and the collection of short stories *Skärkarlsliv* (Life in the Skerries), written in Denmark.<sup>1</sup>

An analysis of the functions and meanings of the archipelago in Strindberg's oeuvre appears as a still meaningful and needed endeavour, although one half of a large work, *August Strindbergs skärgårds- och Stockholmsskildringar* by Walter A. Berendsohn (1962), has been dedicated to this subject. Berendsohn's book is still useful as a general survey of the topic and an almost complete catalogue of Strindberg's works in which the archipelago plays a part. Its limits are, however, the vagueness in the analysis of themes and forms, in spite of some interesting observations, and the sharp separation between texts set either in the archipelago or in Stockholm or in the area of lake Mälaren. Nothing is said about a common feature in all these texts: the ways in which the urban experience and the natural spaces are related. This leads Berendsohn, for example, to the paradoxical (and interesting) conclusion that *Götiska Rummen* (The Gothic Rooms) is a Stockholm novel and not an archipelago novel (Berendsohn 1962: 193-199), although its protagonists, as we shall see, live on an island almost throughout the year. What if it were both things?

My purpose is to consider Strindberg's representation of the relation and the interaction between the big town of Stockholm and its archipelago, i.e. between the civilized and the wild space. This relation has been a major concern in Swedish culture since Strindberg's

lifetime, when the middle class and their bourgeois lifestyle started to expand, and the wild space began consequently to be conquered by the civilized space, a process that has been going on up to present time, often causing a sense of irremediable loss.<sup>2</sup> My aim is to consider this phenomenon both as a real context in terms of geography, society and cultural history – a context Strindberg was consciously part of during the second half of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century – and as a point of departure for the writer's recurring adaptation of the myth of Eden to the Stockholm area. The attempt implies that these spatial relations, as they become text, are considered – according to Jurij Lotman's and Angelo Marchese's suggestions – as a significant structure conveying cultural models and conceptions of life, rather than a set of ornamental or background descriptions.<sup>3</sup> The fascinating aspect is that these conceptions vary considerably in Strindberg. The milieus are subject to interesting changes, shifts and repetitions with variations, in such a way that the archipelago in itself can be read as a mirror of the polyphony of points of view, the variability and the ambiguities we find in his oeuvre at large.<sup>4</sup> Another challenge for the modern reader is that Strindberg – as concrete and precise as he always is in his observations<sup>5</sup> – creates a literary myth of the *skärgård* and of Stockholm's relation to it. The ultimate purpose of my article is to show how Strindberg's representations, undoubtedly subjective and unique, also partake in a wider Swedish cultural construction of what Roland Barthes defines as contemporary myths of our bourgeois world<sup>6</sup>.

Some limitations in the scope of my analysis must be pointed out. It will not include works that deal with islands outside the Stockholm archipelago, as the early play *Den fredlöse* (The Outlaw) from 1871, set on Island in the Middle Ages, or the story 'De lycksaliges Ö' (The Fortunate's Isle), from 1884 and 1890, presumably describing a place in the Atlantic or Caribbean. Also the lake Mälaren, which can be included in the Stockholm archipelago from a geological point of view, and Gamla Stan, the historical centre of Stockholm, originally an island in this landscape, represent something different from what I want to focus. I will therefore not deal with *Gamla Stockholm* (Old Stockholm) from 1880-82, Strindberg's collection of culture-historical essays, or

with works – such as the play *Midsommar* (Midsummer) from 1900 and the long poem ‘Stadsresan’ (The Trip to Town) in the collection *Ordalek och småkonst* (Word Play and Minor Art) from 1902 and 1905 – that depict a celebration of summer at the lake Mälaren or, more exactly, in the space between Mälaren and Stockholm. My specific interest lies in the process of modernity, when Stockholm became a big city and the urban bourgeoisie turned east in their search for nature, recreation and vacation, preferring the *skärgård* and its marine wilderness to the more domesticated landscape of the lake<sup>7</sup>.

The *skärgård* is a unique landscape, found in the Baltic Sea to the east of Stockholm and, further east, between the island of Åland and the south-western coast of Finland. The terms used in Swedish express two concepts: *arkipelag* – as it originally appears in the Aegean Sea – and *skärgård*. The difference in meaning may be slight, as a *skärgård* is after all a form of archipelago. However, an *arkipelag* consists of bigger islands, at a greater distance from one another and from the coast, and the focus of the word is on the islands. More specifically, a *skärgård* indicates a system of smaller islands, skerries and rocks, situated not far from the mainland or from one another, and forming one landscape with the coastline, the bays and the surrounding sea. The somewhat shifting semantic divide between *ö*, *holme*, *kobbe* and *skär* indicates a scale from the bigger to the smaller island, which is another trait of this peculiar scenery. Stockholms *skärgård* is formed by approximately 24,000 islands and skerries. The area it occupies, along the coast of the regions Uppland and Södermanland (with the city of Stockholm between them), has an extension of about 150 kilometres from North to South, while the greatest breadth from the mainland is about 80 kilometres. It consists mainly of primary bedrock, granite and gneiss. This bedrock is probably two billion years old, but in a geologically recent period (the last million years, i.e. the latest part of the Quaternary or glacial period) it was under the pressure of ice, which eroded and shaped a characteristic landscape of rounded and smooth primary rock. This phenomenon applies to the whole territory of Sweden, but it appears more evident and, as it were, naked in the wild area of the archipelago (Hedenstierna 2000a: 9-23). One feels undoubtedly closer to the elements and their origin out there, and

this primordial and cosmic feeling is also what some of Strindberg's characters experience. Another phenomenon that conveys the idea of ancestral origin is that the primary rocks and the coast are still rising after the end of the latest glaciation (about ten thousand years ago). At present they rise by approximately 30-40 centimetres in a century (Hedenstierna 2000a: 25-27). The number of the islands is therefore difficult to determine precisely: some new rocks emerge, while some separate islands and skerries merge.

The experience of losing contact with one's natural origins, and yearning for them by representing the earthly paradise as an orchard or a garden within a pleasant countryside, often situated on an island or in an archipelago, has belonged to Western culture at least since the Bible and classical antiquity, as shown by Arturo Graf (1965) and Jean Delumeau (1992). Even the Swedish expression *sommarparadis*, evoking the holidays and commonly associated with the archipelago for the modern Stockholmers, bears this heritage. During Strindberg's lifetime, which was also a time of industrial, technical and scientific revolution in Sweden, the civilized city dwellers discovered untouched nature, or rather, they saw with new eyes an environment that was well-known from time immemorial. This cultural construction objectified modern mankind's loss of nature, and compensated for it. The archipelago, situated in another place and in a wild space, was becoming rapidly closer and available, thanks to the modern communication and transport facilities. The city was expanding in all directions, even towards North-East and East, thus incorporating the natural space made of islands, skerries, rocks and water. Steamboats, newspapers, telegraph and telephone are historical realities as well as recurring elements in Strindberg's texts. In his multi-faceted literary universe these objects of our modernity become symbolic markers, pointing at various meanings and dimensions; but they clearly also perform a spatial function, connecting places and mediating between them: in our case the inner and the outer spaces, the city and the islands, the urban lifestyle and the wilderness, the expanding, dynamic and global middle classes and the rural, more static and more secluded world of local peasants, pilots, fishers and hunters.

As Per Wästberg and Bertil Hedenstierna have shown, this conquest

of natural space reflected a need expressed, initially, by the wealthy upper-middle class of Stockholm in the last decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> However artists, too, played an important role in this process of incorporation. If the rich entrepreneurs of the industrial era found a status symbol in the spacious villas, newly built for themselves and their families in the inner part of the archipelago, people like Strindberg, Carl Larsson and Anders Zorn preferred to rent humble cottages from peasants and fishers, looking for more authentic spots on the islands farther out.<sup>9</sup> As we shall see, Strindberg partook in both dimensions, the more bohemian at first, and the more bourgeois later in his life. The Stockholmers of that time, the bourgeois as well as the bohemian, used to treat themselves to leisure with a certain generosity in summer, when holiday could last three months, or sometimes even longer. It was a privilege and a moment of bliss which Strindberg, too, could enjoy on some occasions. His life and work were, in this respect, part of a collective social history.

Strindberg's father was a shipping agent, who mainly worked with the boats that travelled on the lake Mälaren, to the west of Stockholm. The first part of the autobiography *Tjänstekvinnans son* (The Son of a Servant) from 1886 describes Strindberg's first encounter with the archipelago, which occurred in 1866, when he was seventeen. It proved to be an epiphany and a lifelong love, something that inexplicably appealed to the teenager and with which he deeply identified. Strindberg writes retrospectively about his alter ego Johan's reaction in front of this natural scenery:

Där öppnade sig plötsligt en tavla som kom honom att frysa av förtjusning. Fjärdar och holmar, fjärdar och holmar, långt, långt ut i det oändliga. Han hade fastän stockholmare aldrig sett skärgården förr, och visste ej var han var. Den tavlan gjorde ett sådant intryck som om han återfunnit ett land han sett i vackra drömmar, eller i en föregående existens, som han trodde på men ej visste något om. [...] Detta var hans landskap, hans naturs sanna miljö; idyller, fattiga knaggliga gråstensholmar med granskog, kastade ut på stora stormiga fjärdar och med det oändliga havet som bakgrund, på vederbörligt avstånd.<sup>10</sup>

(Suddenly a picture opened out which made him shiver with delight. Bays and islands, bays and islands stretching far out into infinity. Although a Stockholmer, he had never seen the archipelago before, and did not know where he was. That picture made such an impression, as if he had found again a land seen in beautiful dreams, or in an earlier existence, in which he believed but about which he did not know anything. [...] This was his landscape, the true environment of his nature; idyllic spots, poor, rough granite islands with spruce forests scattered on big, stormy bays and with the endless sea as a background, at a safe distance.)

Commenting on this passage, Björn Meidal posits that it was crucial for the protagonist that his discovery occurred when he was alone and far from his father and the rest of the family.<sup>11</sup> It became an important psychological factor in the young man's process of emancipation. Another interesting aspect is that the realistic recollection of what happened twenty years before allows visionary overtones, as Olof Lagercrantz has suggested.<sup>12</sup> The protagonist is perceiving with his senses the real southern Stockholm archipelago, caught with a bird's eye view from the mainland at Tyresö; but he is at the same time transferred to another dimension. That natural sight suggests both a hidden origin, a previous existence, and something that, equally invisible, lies far away, beyond the perspective view of the infinite sequence of islands, skerries and bays.<sup>13</sup> The first experience of the archipelago is depicted almost as a sacred revelation of a home beyond the phenomena, and the word *paradis* is used to convey this metaphysical perception.<sup>14</sup>

Strindberg confesses the same special attraction to this environment in the introduction to *Skärkarlsliv*<sup>15</sup>, an unparalleled spatial description that can combine a concisely accurate focus on the local nature with the adaptation of the myth of earthly paradise to a northern climate. To the author's eyes the environment displays an attractive 'variation of gloomy and smiling, poor and rich, pretty and wild, inland and coastland'.<sup>16</sup> Strindberg's Linnean approach<sup>17</sup> is evident in his description of the mineral, the vegetable and the animal

kingdom on the islands, and of the circumstance, underscored also by Hedenstierna (Hedenstierna 2000a: 9; 24-28), that the moraine and the clay, left behind in the valleys among the primary rocks after the glaciation, have given fertile land that has been cultivated, and where deciduous forests have been growing, producing a fascinating mixture of garden-like landscape and wilderness.

Given these natural circumstances, the author proceeds to give a socio-economical and psychological mapping of the population of the archipelago. The rural classes are basically three: the farmers on the bigger islands; the farmers on the smaller islands, who practise agriculture on a minor scale and combine it with fishing; and the real *skärkarlar* (people from the outer skerries), who live on hunting, fishing and a little subsistence agriculture. Another part of the population has found jobs in the navy, the merchant navy, the Swedish Customs and the pilotage service, whereas a more recent source of income originates from the summer guests. Tourism from the big town is developing in this traditionally rural area, but in 1888 Strindberg must still observe that the archipelago forms a rather secluded little world with no regular communications with the mainland.<sup>18</sup> Lonely people live here, including those who, for some reason, have sought loneliness, fleeing from the mainland and finding a place of refuge – a motif that will be developed in later works. A fundamental opposition is thus formulated between two models – the civilized sphere made of rules, laws and institutions, and the wild sphere of antisocial characters and outlaws who try to escape them; such a solitude often produces visionary dreamers. This preface was written with the aim of directing the readers' attention to the main settings, themes and patterns of the collection, and especially of the longest and most important story, 'Den romantiske klockaren på Rånö' (The Romantic Organist of Rånö). Still, the elements presented in the preface to *Skärkarlsliv* offer a basic frame to many other representations of the archipelago in his oeuvre, from the debut to the last years.

In the early Seventies the young Strindberg worked hard to make his name as an author. He wrote the prose version of his first masterpiece, the historical drama *Mäster Olof* (Master Olof), on Kymmendö, an island off the expanding resort of Dalarö in the southern archipelago. From

1871 to 1873 Strindberg spent three summers on the island, where leisure and work, body and spirit reached a perfect balance, a variation on the classical *mens sana in corpore sano* theme.<sup>19</sup> Strindberg had found his first sommarparadis, the natural environment where a modern writer like him could be on vacation and, at the same time, creatively productive.<sup>20</sup>

Between 1872 and 1875 Strindberg wrote also a series of prose fragments and articles set in the archipelago. From Kymmendö he set off for expeditions and sailing tours that provided him with material. The fresh enthusiasm for the discovery is detectable in these texts combining narrative prose and journalistic reportage, written from the perspective of a Stockholmer who mediates between the civilized and the wild world, and observes their meeting during summer, when the town-dwellers are on vacation. In the prose fragment 'En berättelse från Stockholms skärgård'<sup>21</sup> (A Story from the Stockholm Archipelago), probably written in 1872 (SV II: 193-196), the protagonist is a student from Stockholm who is fascinated by what he hears and sees in Dalarö an early summer morning. Already here, through the perspective of the curious protagonist, Strindberg's mimetic genius can grasp the mixture of voices and accents. Dalarö appears as a place where people from the islands and the mainland mingle; we see and hear the lively steamboat traffic, local sailors, customs officers and pilots, as well as summer guests from Stockholm spending their holidays in the resort.<sup>22</sup> In one of the dialogues overheard by the student, two bourgeois ladies are talking. One of them is complaining about the idleness of the women's summer existence, spent waiting for their busy men who come and visit the family only during the weekends, when parties and activities for the elegant society are organized. She finally declares: 'I hate this town life transferred to the countryside'.<sup>23</sup> The big town was conquering the wild space by the sea, and in the woman's words we find an early expression of the bourgeois summer rites.

The author's mediating position is a main feature in the articles written for the national daily *Dagens Nyheter* between 1872 and 1875. Strindberg as a young journalist is a discoverer from town, who is on a mission in the wilderness, both in summer and autumn.<sup>24</sup> He gives his urban readers a great deal of information about the relatively

near but culturally still remote islands. And as he draws the public's attention, he invites them to discover more, predicting the touristic development of the area with a mixture of environmental enthusiasm and bourgeois advertising strategy, as in 'Livet i Stockholms skärgård'<sup>25</sup> (Life in the Stockholm Archipelago) and 'Brev från Sandhamn'<sup>26</sup> (Letter from Sandhamn). If the task of the modern reporter was to make the wide urban space familiar and recognizable for the growing reading public, as Eckhardt Köhn has pointed out (1989), Strindberg actively contributed, through these articles, to cross the border between society and wilderness and thus incorporate the peripheral archipelago into the urban sphere of Stockholm. The exciting sailing trip from Dalarö to Sandhamn described in 'Huruledes jag fann Sehlstedt'<sup>27</sup> (How I found Sehlstedt) is also symbolically significant, because Elias Sehlstedt, the grand old man Strindberg and his friends are visiting, was the first writer to make the Stockholm archipelago a literary landscape in his pleasant songs, poems and prose from mid-nineteenth century.<sup>28</sup> Although conventional, his output was a source of inspiration for Strindberg.

Strindberg can already be seen in these early articles, where the optimistic and curious bourgeois spirit prevails, to give expression to his anarchistic and antisocial feelings, too. In 'Post-skriptum till Brev från Sandhamn' (A Postscript to Letter from Sandhamn) the writer considers that the state and the institutions appear, from the point of view of an autumn and winter in Sandhamn, as 'a fetish venerated more than God, a notion void of reality, and yet as real as anything can be'.<sup>29</sup> This meditation is connected to the episode of the clever pilot, who owing to a wrong manoeuvre in a stormy November night will undergo a trial and probably be imprisoned. This same episode becomes a short story in 'Marcus Larsson advokat' (Marcus Larsson the Lawyer)<sup>30</sup>, which is interesting from the spatial point of view, as it describes the passage from the wild space among the skerries to the trial at the Stockholm court. The narrator's voice tends to express solidarity with the pilot, showing his dangerous life and pointing out extenuating circumstances. The pilot is however condemned in court, also because of the artist Marcus Larsson's clumsy intervention as a defence lawyer. The wilderness does not seem to be allowed to exist

outside the rules of legal society.

A minor but interesting role is played by the archipelago in Strindberg's breakthrough novel *Röda Rummet* (The Red Room) from 1879. *Röda Rummet* is mainly a Stockholm novel, but a contact with the archipelago occurs when the protagonist Arvid Falk must be literally cured of his two romantic illusions: social justice and love. To do so, his friend doctor Borg takes him drastically out of town – out of the polis, as it were, and the commitment it stands for – to the island Nämndö over the summer. The contact with the sea and the natural environment makes Falk healthy again, where being healthy means for him, in the bitter final perspective of *Röda Rummet*, losing every form of idealism and becoming a passive member of a ruthless society. As such, Falk can go back to Stockholm at the end of the summer.<sup>31</sup>

At the beginning of the Eighties Strindberg, now a married man, spent four long summers with his wife and children on Kymmendö again, an often glorious time.<sup>32</sup> During this period the author's democratic and utopian radicalism is strongest, and the contrast between the constrained life in a rotten, urban society and the free outdoor life outside of it becomes sharpest. The paradisiac existence on the island confirms Strindberg's creed of revolution, and it is not by chance, as Gunnar Brandell observes, that his inflamed letters to Edvard Brandes, in the initial phase of their pen friendship, occur when the Swedish writer is on the island in summer.<sup>33</sup> On 22 July 1880 Strindberg declares himself 'Jean Jacques' intimate when it comes to a return to Nature', and expresses, from this standpoint, the revolutionary hope that the existing society may be blown up and started anew.<sup>34</sup> And on 26 June 1881 he goes on to explain that he can only believe in a rebirth through a return to nature, the abolition of towns and the dissolution of the state, replaced by village communities without any chiefs.<sup>35</sup>

In a very accurate manner, Sven-Gustaf Edqvist dissertation from 1961 illustrates Strindberg's reading of Jean-Jacques Rousseau as a support for the Swedish writer's revolutionary and anarchistic creed. Together with Edqvist's study, the other fundamental contribution that helps us to explore the dimensions of Strindberg's adaptations of Rousseau's ideas and literary universe is Elie Poulénard's *Strindberg et Rousseau* from 1959. Poulénard underscores an important

circumstance in this inter-textual relation: Strindberg, a complex and contradictory writer, adapts to his own needs the texts by Rousseau, also highly complex and contradictory. The attraction felt by Strindberg is probably also due to this affinity – the mix of temperament and reason, religion and rationality we find in both authors. In *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (Discourse on the Arts and Sciences) and *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (Discourse on the Origin of Inequality) Rousseau posits a radical opposition between the virtuous and free natural state of mankind, connected to the sphere of rural and rustic life, and the vicious and constricted condition experienced in the civilized and urban society. This opposition is important for Strindberg, as it reinforces his own doubts about the goodness of material progress, and his conception of art, science and industry as forms of luxury justifying and increasing social unbalance. There is however in Rousseau's *Du contract social* (The Social Contract) also a more progressive and constructive legacy, which is equally important for Strindberg's democratic stance during the first years of the 1880s: the free social contract of the origins, lost in the constrictions of present society, is not given once and for ever, but must be regained within the historical process.<sup>36</sup>

This democratic stance is strong in *Svenska Folket* (The Swedish People), published in 1881-82, and is expressed through the author's intention to write a Swedish history from the point of view of the anonymous people and of everyday life (Ciaravolo 2011). The archipelago plays a small but interesting part in this project, when fishing in the Middle Ages is described.<sup>37</sup> Writing about medieval herring fishing on the outer skerries called Huvudskären, in the south-eastern archipelago, is skillfully transformed into writing about the medieval traces in the Stockholm area at present, as the narrator explains that Huvudskären had been in the Middle Ages as they still were up to some decades previously (Berendsohn 1962: 28-29). The fact that Strindberg's field studies in the early Eighties, illustrated by the painter and friend Carl Larsson<sup>38</sup>, could teach him something about fishing practice in the Middle Ages, visualizes the threshold between old and new, pre-modern and modern times, over which Strindberg consciously lived and worked in his peculiarly Swedish experience of

modernity.<sup>39</sup>

The archipelago appears within a historical frame – the first part of the sixteenth century – also in the short story ‘En ovälkommen’ (An Unwelcome Man), published in the series *Svenska öden och äventyr* (Swedish Destinies and Adventures) in 1882.<sup>40</sup> In the story of Kristian, who loathes social rules and prefers a wild life fishing and hunting in the outer skerries by the open sea, we find, conveyed by spatial relations, an opposition of world models that is typical of Strindberg’s anarchistic tendencies during the early Eighties, whereby society corresponds to lies and falsehood (Edqvist 1961: 198-201).

The archipelago plays a relevant part in the section ‘Högsommar’ (High Summer) of *Dikter på vers och prosa* (Poems in Verse and Prose), Strindberg’s first collection of poetry from 1883.<sup>41</sup> The prose and verse poem ‘Solrök’ (Heat Haze) (SV XV: 77-86) is interesting also from the stylistic point of view, as the protagonist’s story is conveyed by an interior monologue in the third person, a form of ‘Erlebte Rede’. He and his family are initially on a steamboat, together with a crowd of Stockholmers going from town to the islands on a summer day (SV XV: 77-78). These people are excited and expecting a regeneration in nature; the protagonist observes them with detachment, but he is after all a part of that same collective movement from the civilized to the natural space. In the last section of the poem (SV XV: 83-86), a trip to a virgin island is described. The protagonist is now alone; he needs loneliness and wants to reach as far as possible from the crowd. The unmasking of his dream of regeneration occurs when he sees human traces on the island (Kylhammar 1985: 43-45). A feldspar cave was there; now it has been abandoned, leaving devastation behind. It is common to find veins of feldspar, a more recent kind of rock, in the primary bedrock. Feldspar became important in the eighteenth and nineteenth century for the industrial production of pottery, and even the archipelago was exploited for the purpose (Hedenstierna 2000a: 17-18). In ‘Solrök’, where the author’s perspective is inspired by Rousseau, the protagonist draws the conclusion that he cannot escape civilization, as human traces, even one’s own, are everywhere, and unspoiled nature is an illusion. What finally saves him from pessimism is the view of his wife in a white summer dress with their child in a pram

under the oak trees. In spite of the latent tensions behind the apparent harmony, expressed in the poem 'Lördagskväll' (Saturday Evening) (SV XV: 96), summer family life on the island appears as a form of paradise in *Dikter*. In another poem, 'Morgon' (Morning) (SV XV: 97-98), Strindberg depicts what Roland Barthes has defined the modern myth of the writer on vacation in a natural environment, which helps him to find concentration and produce more (Barthes 1957: 29-32). The poem shows how the protagonist, a loving father and husband, but above all a writer, has an intellectual social function that inevitably links him to urban activities, projects and habits, although he is in the silent wilderness.<sup>42</sup> Strindberg's *skrivarstuga* on Kymmendö, the hut where he wrote in front of the sea, is a symbol of this myth.

Strindberg would never see Kymmendö again after summer 1883, but for some years he hoped that he might go there again. The nostalgic feeling makes the archipelago appear suddenly, as a vision, while the writer is living abroad. It happens in the sequence 'Fjärde Natten' (The Fourth Night) of the long poem *Sömngångarnätter på vakna dagar* (Sleepwalking Nights in Broad Daylight) from 1884, when the constricted and falsified nature in Bois de Boulogne, embodied by a small spruce fir that the protagonist sees there, arouses memories of Swedish summer and its Nordic nature (SV XV: 206-207).<sup>43</sup> This contemporary presence of real and imagined space determines the structure of *Sömngångarnätter* (thus shortened), with its interaction between Paris and Stockholm, civilization and nature.<sup>44</sup> The final vision of 'Fjärde Natten', again inspired by Rousseau, consists of a new ice age, by which civilization – with its excesses, privileges, establishments and rules – is swept away, and after which a mythical rebirth takes place (Ciaravolo 2012b: 181-182). The images of glaciation and post-glacial natural rebirth create associations to the archipelago (SV XV: 219-220).

A similar nostalgic vision is described in the series of articles *Från det vaknande Italien. Sommarbrev i mars*<sup>45</sup> (From the Awakening Italy. Summer Letters in March), when the writer is watching the Mediterranean sea near Genova at sunrise in March 1884 (SV XVIII: 81-82). The tendency of this reportage is to observe Italy from the point of view of a fault finder, in order to question its romantic myth

(Ciaravolo 2012c); and even when things are beautiful, as in front of the Mediterranean sea, the subjective reporter finds something lacking, for example some islands and skerries scattered in the gulf, to fill its emptiness: '[...] not islands with oranges, laurel trees and marble palaces, but small rough gneiss hillocks with thorny spruce firs and red cottages'.<sup>46</sup> Strindberg's identification with a landscape can even be expressed in such peripheral annotations.

In Western culture the classical and Christian traditions join, through the Middle Ages and up to the Renaissance, in search of an earthly paradise, and the conjectures about the existence of paradisiac islands were frequent.<sup>47</sup> These traditions, describing a state of harmony among human beings and in the whole creation, acquired a political meaning in the Renaissance, when the myths of Atlantis and of the Fortunate Isles were welded into new utopian visions of society. Thomas More's, Tommaso Campanella's and Francis Bacon's utopias all take place on islands.<sup>48</sup> Even Jean-Jacques Rousseau's state of nature is, according to Delumeau, part of this cultural heritage (Delumeau 1992: 297).<sup>49</sup>

Some traces can also be found in Strindberg's utopian essays in *Likt och Olikt*<sup>50</sup> (A Bit of Everything) from 1884. In 'Om det Allmänna Missnöjet, dess Orsaker och Botemedel' (SV XVII: 9-83) (On the General Discontent, Its Causes and Cures) the proposed solution of the social issue can be summarized in a return to self-sufficient rural villages, simpler living conditions and less demand for comforts and consumption (Ciaravolo 2012c: 275-279). These ideas are based, as the author reports, on his concrete experience of the rural and pastoral Kymmendö, where the population typically combines agriculture, fishing and hunting (SV XVII: 69<sup>51</sup>). In the same essay Strindberg condemns the polluting steamboats (SV XVII: 66), i.e. the means of transportation which actually allow his moving back-and-forth between Stockholm and the islands. Here the writer seems to be more consistent with his utopia than with his life experience.

Strindberg's depiction of marital conflicts finds one of its settings in the archipelago. In *Dikter* the family is for the poet, as we have seen, an anchor against pessimism. The short story 'Ett dockhem'<sup>52</sup> (A Doll's House) in the collection *Giftas I* (Getting Married I) – a story and a collection that in many respect will determine a turning point

in Strindberg's career and life – is also an archipelago story in its first part (SV XVI: 145-148), when the union between man and woman appears as a paradisiac state before the Fall, i.e. before the knowledge of Henrik Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* and its protagonist Nora (Meidal 2012: 138). Dalarö is the setting of a series of summers that unite the protagonists, the captain and his wife, in a state of perfect bliss. All the cherished ingredients are there, and they contribute to evoke what Per Wästberg has termed, quoting the title of Luis Buñuel's film and with reference to the summer in the archipelago, 'the discreet charm of the bourgeoisie'<sup>53</sup>: guesthouse, veranda, white dresses, white nights, sailing trips, freedom, nature, joy of the senses. When the couple returns to Dalarö, after the problematic knowledge of Nora, that environment has lost its magic (SV XVI: 153-157). The captain's revenge, when he proves to be a Real Man and conquers his wife again, defeating Ottilia (his wife's feminist friend) and Nora (the source of evil), takes place at home in Stockholm (SV XVI: 157-161).

Strindberg's most popular, fictional adaptation of his experience on Kymmendö is the rural novel *Hemsöborna*<sup>54</sup> from 1887. In the writer's intentions, and as an actual result, this work is an epic and unbiased depiction, which neither argues in favour of or against anything<sup>55</sup>; it does not even make modernity one of its main themes. Nevertheless, as Lars Dahlbäck has indicated, the plot of the novel and its protagonist's progress reflect a sweeping historical development, concentrating in three years a series of changes that required a much longer process in reality, such as the modernization of agriculture, a wider communication and transportation system, the impact of summer guests and industrial exploitation on the natural environment (Dahlbäck 1974: 44-45). In 'Solrök' we have seen the devastation caused by the exploitation of feldspar. The fact that Carlsson, the protagonist of *Hemsöborna*, negotiates with a German entrepreneur about the same business, determines a turning point in the plot, as Carlsson begins to experience how pride goes before a fall. The entrepreneur is introduced by the professor, Carlsson's summer guest from Stockholm; and the steamboat where part of the deal takes place becomes a social marker, as it belongs to the rich people from town, who have come to exploit the area for industrial purposes; the

steamboat is comically described as a foreign territory for Carlsson.<sup>56</sup> On the whole, the sociologically precise encounters between rural and urban life, and the spatial dimensions connected with them, serve the form of comedy in *Hemsöborna*, without further intellectual preoccupations.<sup>57</sup> The commercial success of this novel contributed to an even more widespread interest in the Stockholm archipelago among the Swedish readers. In the perspectives of ethnology and cultural history the novel is a mine of information, and its popular and attractive form fostered a nostalgic feeling towards nature and rural life. As Lars Dahlbäck and Björn Meidal have observed, *Hemsöborna* is written from a summer guest's point of view; the action is concentrated in summer, while winters tend to pass quickly.<sup>58</sup> Even as a bourgeois novelist, then, Strindberg could act as an intermediary between the wild and the civilized space, and as an advertiser of the wilderness.

The expectations were high when Strindberg finally wrote the dramatic adaptation of *Hemsöborna* as a 'folk comedy'.<sup>59</sup> This play has however not been successful, and has mainly been considered as a weak drama since its first staging in 1889 (SV XXXII: 243-259). Gunnar Ollén misses 'the beautiful nature and the fresh archipelago air' that characterized the novel<sup>60</sup>, and this objection is recurring in the general perception, which is interesting in terms of horizon of expectations. Apart from impossible comparisons with the novel, which is a masterpiece, we can observe Strindberg's spatial solutions in the play, as he is determined to convey the wide outdoor environment of the archipelago within the never changing interior of Mrs. Flod's cottage. The ethnological richness is transferred indoors through all the visible working tools and the characters' strongly vernacular language. The outside world is referred to in their speeches, and can be perceived behind the cottage door and windows, through a summarizing, typical panoramic view of the archipelago from above, since the cottage is now located on top of a hill (SV XXXII: 11).<sup>61</sup>

The archipelago scenery is also exploited by Strindberg in *Le Playdoier d'un fou* (*En dåres försvarstal*<sup>62</sup> in Swedish translation; *A Madman's Defence*), the autobiographical novel written between 1887 and 1888 about the writer's tormented love story and marriage with Siri von Essen. Long passages set in the archipelago illustrate the

initial phase of their relationship in order to make it more intense, dramatic and picturesque. In summer 1875 the protagonist and narrator, secretly in love with the baroness, accompanies her and her husband from Stockholm through the archipelago to a bigger boat she is taking to go to Finland. The torment of the separation is interwoven here with the magic of the quiet, white night spent together, and the following sunrise that makes the islands aflame with colour (SV XXV: 43-47). In the following autumn, the protagonist's desperate attempt to flee from Stockholm to France, away from this hopeless love, ends at Dalarö. From the boat he recognizes the landscape that evokes 'visions of beautiful summer days, memories from early years'<sup>63</sup>, and he implores the captain to get off. Sweet memories of Kymmendö, mixed with the staging of something that resembles a suicide in the autumn weather, reflect the protagonist's confused state of mind (SV XXV: 82-98). In the third part of the novel, Kymmendö is mentioned again when the protagonist describes what he calls 'the high season of my life'<sup>64</sup>: his breakthrough with the novel *Röda Rummet* in 1879, the birth of his and Maria's (Siri's) first child in early 1880 and the first long summer on Kymmendö as a family man. This happiness culminates in '[...] some months off from service, to live life in the wild with my family on a greening island in the outer Stockholm archipelago'.<sup>65</sup> The greening island corresponds, in Strindberg's personal mythology, to the perception of the beauty of life as a husband and a father – in a certain sense the peak of happiness and pure paradise on earth to him.<sup>66</sup>

Strindberg's knowledge of the nature, geography and society of the archipelago, of the relations between it and the city, and between the inner and outer archipelago, is displayed with variation and richness in the ten stories of *Skärkarlsliv*. In this respect the already analyzed introduction keeps its promises. In spite of this anchorage to reality, however, *Skärkarlsliv* does not plead for democracy or social commitment, no more than *Hemsöborna* did. We can even say that *Skärkarlsliv* marks, as far as the representation of the archipelago is concerned, the end of the democratic vision and the beginning of the aristocratic one. Strindberg's detachment from his own radical and utopian ideas, which started in the aftermath of the *Giftas* issue, and

continued in the autobiography *Tjänstekvinnans son*, is detectable in the narrator's distant, neutral, and at times even sceptical attitude towards the popular subject matter in his stories. The social and cultural differences, caught with subtlety, are seen with no hope or desire for reform. Even in *Skärkarlsliv* different worlds meet and, to a certain extent, mingle. In 'Den romantiske klockaren på Rånö' (SV XXVI: 17-70) the protagonist's life connects the mainland (the small town of Trosa), the capital town of Stockholm, a bigger island (Rånö) and the outer skerries, where the hidden and traumatic past of the protagonist is also concealed (Johannesson 1968: 109-120). Wilderness is no more a positive marker as such; the archipelago can appear on the contrary – in 'Den romantiske klockaren på Rånö' (SV XXVI: 59-68) as well as in 'En brottsling' (A Criminal) (SV XXVI: 89-103) – as a miserable social milieu where poverty fosters crime. Another interesting meeting point between the urban and the rural sphere is described in 'Min sommarpräst' (My Summer Priest) (SV XXVI: 71-78), where the narrator and protagonist is a cultivated atheist from the city, who enjoys the company of his friend the rural (and also cultivated) priest, with whom he can quarrel and escape the crowd of other summer holiday makers.

The archipelago becomes again a peaceful oasis in *Blomstermålningar och djurstycken*<sup>67</sup> (Flower Paintings and Animal Pieces) from 1888, a fascinating and nostalgic autobiographical book, where Strindberg represents himself as a lover of nature, a hiker, a gardener, a fisher and a hunter. The bliss of a quiet, white summer night in the archipelago is evoked, with its almost sacred feeling of proximity to the elements of the universe: the sky, the moon, the sun and the sea (SV XXIX: 194-195). The archetype of Eden is even actualized in the description of Strindberg's garden on Kymmendö (SV XXIX: 219-225), where the writer is finally conscious that he will never see that island again, since both *Hemsöborna* and *Skärkarlsliv* have made him unwelcome (SV XXIX: 224). Even here, the preparations for the gardening and the purchase of seeds take place in Stockholm, the urban point of departure (SV XXIX: 219-220).

In 1890 Strindberg's second archipelago novel *I havsbandet*<sup>68</sup> is characterized by the sharpest dissociation from his earlier democratic radicalism. It is however also based on the description of Baltic herring

fishing in the Middle Ages, given some years before in the cultural history *Svenska Folket*, as we have seen. The author's standpoint has now changed from popular and democratic to Nietzschean and aristocratic. Such a change is also detectable in the spatial relations: in and out, i.e. mainland and open sea, civilized town life and wilderness on the islands, acquire opposite connotations, and account for the author's new world model. The opposition is no longer constriction versus freedom, rotten society versus authenticity, but rather reason and rules versus dumbness and lawlessness. The fishery inspector Borg tries to teach updated fishing methods, but in vain, because the fishers prove to be pariahs, who live a basic and almost animal life. *Skärkarlsliv* introduced the motif of the skerries by the open sea as a secluded place, where concealed crimes are committed, away from legal social life; this motif is developed in *I havsbandet*. The tragic thing about Borg is, however, that he neither belongs to the urban and lawful society on the mainland or to the more disordered and less constricted social life by the open sea. Rather, the small island where he is living becomes a place of banishment and a prison for him, and he literally does not know which direction to take, either in or out.<sup>69</sup> Contact with mankind becomes detestable, only nature is sacred and desirable.<sup>70</sup> The image of Borg's pathological isolation reaches its peak in chapter nine, when he enjoys sitting alone on an outer rock surrounded by a thick fog (SV XXXI: 120-136).<sup>71</sup> After that, only the voluntary journey towards darkness remains. The remarkable beauty of Strindberg's Nietzschean, decadent and tragic novel consists also in the fact that the natural elements are described with such delicacy. As the narrator says at the beginning of the novel, this landscape leads Borg back to the origins (SV XXXI: 34).<sup>72</sup> This declaration of love is expressed through Borg's new aesthetics. His culture is urban; he is a refined aesthete and a scientist at the same time.<sup>73</sup> The combination allows him to perceive the variety and beauty in the only apparently simple nature of the islands and skerries by the open sea.

In a certain sense, the coastal area near Stockholm and the bigger islands were conquered by the urban sphere as early as in the seventeenth century, when the powerful Swedish nobility became the owner of large estates and built manor houses and castles, especially

in the southern archipelago (Hedenstierna 2000b: 9-10, 31). The young Strindberg's second encounter with the archipelago dates back to 1867, when he worked as a private tutor for children belonging to a noble family, and stayed with them at their estate to the south of Dalarö (SV XX: 144-157). A similar setting, the Sandemar Castle near Dalarö, is used in 'En häxa' (A Witch), a short story that takes place in the seventeenth century. The protagonist Tekla, a social climber from the lower class in Stockholm, happens to experience some days of paradise at Sandemar, when she is invited by Ebba, a noblewoman and friend of hers (SV XIV: 133-149). The boat trip from Stockholm to Sandemar, described from Tekla's perspective, accounts for the captivating change of place, from the constricted urban room to the natural paradise outside of it.

Between 1889 and 1891, when he is back in Sweden after his long stay abroad, Strindberg spends some periods in the archipelago, among other things to write *I havsbandet*. He wants to come back to his landscape, but also hide himself. He is divorcing from Siri von Essen and the children, and in his letters from Sandhamn and Runmarö, in the spring of 1889, he evokes the summer paradise in a desperate attempt to draw them there, reunite the family, and restore what has irreparably fallen to pieces.<sup>74</sup> Strindberg's archipelago mythology is developed even further in these vivid descriptions. In the short story 'Silverträsket' (SV XXIX: 273-294) (The Silver Pond) published first in 1898 but connected to the personal events of 1889-90<sup>75</sup>, the protagonist's psyche undergoes a process of dissolution in the aftermath of the traumatic separation from his family, especially from the children. The setting is an island in the archipelago, with its both enchanting and disquieting nature. What could be a summer paradise has turned to a sense of irremediable loss, and the protagonist's growing isolation from the human community reminds one of Borg in *I havsbandet* (Lagercrantz 1986: 270-272).

While the process of divorce is going on, during winter 1890-91, both Strindberg and his wife live on Värmdö, a bigger, inner island, but they do not live together. The writer's mood is gloomy, and the archipelago appears now as the stage of a bourgeois drama; August and Siri, well-known people in the capital, hide from the public eye to perform their

last act together. Yet they are not far from town, especially as the wilderness of the inner archipelago is gradually becoming part of the larger urban area of Stockholm.<sup>76</sup>

The interpretations of the myth of Eden during the Middle Ages often wondered how long the blissful life of man and woman as a couple really lasted. The assumptions varied, but it was common to think that it lasted a short time. The shorter it lasted, the sharper the Fall, its consequences and the yearning for the original state made themselves felt.<sup>77</sup> In his seminal book about Strindberg and the poetry of myth, Harry G Carlson has given evidence of the author's mythological thinking, and of the mythopoetic layers we can find in his plays, both historical and contemporary. Among these representations, the Fall and the loss of Eden play an important role.<sup>78</sup> On his own conditions, Strindberg can adapt mythical patterns. The gloomier and more melancholic archipelago, experienced during the divorce from Siri, can be read as an actualization of the mythical lovers' loss of Eden and their Fall. This set of representations acquires an even more intense character in connection with the writer's third marriage to Harriet Bosse, with its peculiar swings between bliss and desperation, paradise and hell. Images of isolation, absurd waiting, imprisonment and shipwreck become recurrent in Strindberg's later production, and they also affect the images of the archipelago, although the natural beauty of it never stops nourishing the hope of happiness and redemption.

During his second marriage, to Frida Uhl, the Inferno Crisis and a new long period abroad during the Nineties, Strindberg temporarily lost touch with the archipelago; he came back, however, in 1899. By the age of fifty he was, to be sure, still a controversial writer in Sweden; but his canonization as a great national author, especially as a playwright, had begun. He was celebrated and, for the first time in his life, wealthy. The fashionable resort on Furusund, in the northern archipelago, where Strindberg spent some summers from 1899, brought about a rich literary production.<sup>79</sup> On 3 August 1899 *Ockulta Dagboken* (The Occult Diary) contains a simile between the environment around the writer and Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim in Palestine, situated one opposite the other and connected to curse and to blessing in the Bible.<sup>80</sup> From Furusund, with its luxuriant nature,

Strindberg emphasizes the contrast with the barren and poorer Yxlan, the island he could see on the opposite side of the bay, and with the villages on it called Köpmanholm and Skarmsund. On the fictional level, Furusund becomes Fagervik (Fairhaven), while Köpmanholm and Skarmsund become Skamsund (Foulstrand). The Fagervik-and-Skamsund motif is found in the play *Ett drömspel* (A Dream Play) from 1902, in the collection of short stories *Fagervik och Skamsund* (Fairhaven and Foulstrand), also from 1902, and in the collection of poems *Ordlek och småkonst* (Word Play and Minor Art), published in two versions in 1902 and 1905. The writer's experience on Furusund is an inspiration also for the play *Dödsdansen I-II* (The Dance of Death I-II) from 1901, the novel *Götiska Rummen* (Gothic Rooms) from 1904, and the short novel *Taklagsöl* (The Roofing Feast) from 1907.

The Fagervik-and-Skamsund complex is full of elements taken from the observed reality, which are of great interest from the historical and sociological point of view. Thanks to biographical research – but, before that, thanks to the autobiographical space Strindberg himself has created through his letters and diaries and through his whole way of staging his literary work as experienced life<sup>81</sup> – we gain a better understanding of the process by which reality is remoulded into the peculiar post-Inferno literary universe, often taking on a visionary and dream-like quality. Fagervik and Skamsund become, in such a way, the terms of a symbolic opposition, through which the author can give his motif of summer paradise in the archipelago a gloomier and more problematic turn: human misery and unhappiness are also found on the sunny side, and behind the smart façade of upper class vacation rites.

What is specific about *Dödsdansen*<sup>82</sup>, with reference to the setting, is that this family drama takes place on an island, apparently on what we have called the sunny side, but actually in a bourgeois interior that conveys the idea of cage and claustrophobia (Wirmark 1989: 58-61, 65). The outdoor environment is hinted at in the stage directions and by the characters' words, and perceived at a distance through the windows and the veranda. It is as if the paradisiac promises that the place would allow in theory, are contradicted and denied, sometimes with a form of black humour. Captain Edgar refers to the myths of

classical antiquity and the Bible in the second part of the play, when he mentions the Fortunate Isles and Paradise, comparing them to his 'little hell', i.e. his life on the island and his indissoluble love-hate relationship with his wife Alice (SV XLIV: 158-159).<sup>83</sup> This form of misanthropic cynicism characterizes Edgar, who can define his island 'a community of idiots'.<sup>84</sup> In *Dödsdansen* the island is an anti-utopia: a place of banishment and a retirement post for people who are suffering failures and shipwrecks, especially marital ones. Even the surrounding sea and the shores are described as unpleasant by the characters (SV XLIV: 151, 209). Kurt – Alice's cousin, the couple's old friend, and the third pole in the triangle – is the new quarantine master on the island, a job that is connected with banishment and suffering, and a symbolic role that will be developed in *Ett drömspel* and *Fagervik och Skamsund*.

The spatial relations are an interesting aspect in *Dödsdansen*. Edgar's intrigues imply his restless moving between the island and the city; and when Kurt dreams of a love affair with Alice, he invites her to go to town that same day – in just one hour, he says, and maybe go to the theatre, she adds.<sup>85</sup> It is true, as Wirkmark observes, that neither the name of the island or that of the city are mentioned, but it is not true that we do not know how long it takes to reach the town by steamboat.<sup>86</sup> Wirkmark gives priority to an allegorical, mythical and metaphysical reading of *Dödsdansen*, whereby the geographical, historical and social elements of it are played down, if not denied (Wirkmark 1989: 80-85, 92-95). Yet, I argue, the contexts depicted in the text indicate Stockholm and its archipelago. Using the steamboat, the telephone and the telegraph becomes a leitmotif in this play, where observed reality and nightmarish atmospheres mingle. It also illustrates the circumstance that living permanently in the archipelago was possible for the well-off bourgeoisie of Stockholm at the turn of the century, and that the technical improvements in the communication system allowed an even high standard of comfort.

In the second part of the play there is a possible opening in the claustrophobic space, expressed in the love story between the young couple Judith and Allan. It is summertime now, and markers of the vacation atmosphere enjoyed by the upper class, such as tennis rackets, white dresses and parasols, can occasionally enter the cage-

like interior (SV XLIV: 143, 154).

A section of the dream in *Ett drömspel* takes place at Skamsund and Fagervik, named as such for the first time.<sup>87</sup> After the claustrophobic marriage scene in a town flat, featuring the Daughter and the Lawyer, the Officer has taken the Daughter to the seaside. Skamsund, the unlucky place, is the first station of their journey (SV XLVI: 54-65), with Fagervik, the lucky place, appearing on the background of the bay; then the positions are inverted when they visit Fagervik (SV XLVI: 65-67, 71-79). In *Ett drömspel* stage directions are detailed, as they must describe with precision the transformations in the image flow of the dream. The seaside scenery appears however stylized and universal rather than realistic and local: it is the archipelago, yet it could be any seaside locality.<sup>88</sup>

Furusund used to be a quarantine station before becoming a seaside and health resort where people could, among other things, take mud baths.<sup>89</sup> Such historical circumstances are integrated in a fundamental leitmotif running through the play: the symbolic interaction of the elements Earth, Water, Air and Fire. Air and water is what the scenery at the bay between Fagervik and Skamsund mainly consists of; furthermore, water and fire give steam in the quarantine station, and mud is a mixture of earth and water. The Poet, i.e. the Daughter's third male partner, is introduced here: as he tends to be too ethereal, he needs a mud bath every now and then, to restore balance. Although the quarantine station was on Furusund (i.e. Fagervik), it is placed in Skamsund in the play, because of the symbolic opposition Strindberg needs in his literary universe. The sphere of the quarantine station includes sickness, suffering, absurd waiting and seclusion. The Quarantine Master – who already appeared in *Dödsdansen* through Kurt – is in close touch with this sphere, and his job is in itself a form of banishment.

The terms of the opposition between Fagervik and Skamsund in *Ett drömspel* indicate that although human suffering can be caused by social injustice, it is found across the social divide. The polyphony of suffering in the play accounts for a universal condition, including the sunny and elegant resort. Even here many dream-like details are based on Strindberg's real experience of Furusund: the Italian (i.e. Italianate)

villas, the masquerade, the clubhouse with its dance and music, the ugly upper class girl who does not participate in the dance, and finally the rich blind man who is the owner of it all. Strindberg's in many respects happy reunion with the archipelago is thus included, under particular conditions, in his pessimistic masterpiece about mankind's suffering.

To the existential perspective in *Ett drömspel* a decidedly social perspective is added by those stories in *Fagervik och Skamsund* that are set in the archipelago.<sup>90</sup> As it happens in *Skärkarlsliv*, a preface offers a skillfully constructed stage direction, a spatial and social description that lays the ground for the stories (SV L: 115-117). It defines the opposition between the poorer and popular Skamsund and the richer and bourgeois Fagervik, whereby the narrator tends, this time, to adopt Skamsund's point of view. The local population on Skamsund consists mainly of pilots and pietists, whereas the summer guests from Stockholm dominate in Fagervik. The paradisiac vision of Fagervik, where 'everything seems to be arranged for the three-month-long feast called summer'<sup>91</sup>, is seductive for the less privileged islanders, like the boy Torkel in 'En Barnsaga' (SV L: 118-152) (A Fairy Tale), and the three servant girls in 'De Yttersta och de Främsta' (SV L: 275-278) (The Last and the First Ones), but this seduction is deceptive, according to the pietists' (and the narrator's) way of looking at the fortunate island (SV L: 126-127, 278).

In 'En Barnsaga' the adopted perspective is Skamsund's. Through it a social stance and a clear solidarity with the lower classes make themselves heard. The story of the protagonist Torkel is one of poverty and deprivation, and to his eyes Fagervik is almost an unreal dream, the manifestation of an inaccessible Eden (SV L: 126). He dreams of reaching Fagervik one day, although a pietist on Skamsund reminds him of Ebal and Gerizim. In this story everything is based on the opposition, spatial, social, cultural and ideological, between the two localities. When Torkel has managed to get to the other side of the bay, in order to work as a servant, he is at first fascinated by the charm of the Stockholm bourgeoisie on vacation in the *skärgård*: white dresses, beautiful young people, clubhouse, music, fireworks, leisure and life as uninterrupted feast. His perspective changes, however, when he

happens to be treated unjustly. He realizes, then, that he is and will remain a servant. A feeling of social revolt makes him see the dirt and misery behind the attractive façade – in the typical Strindbergian unmasking manner we know from many works, the servant Jean in *Fröken Julie* (Miss Julie) being maybe the best known example. In the end Torkel becomes a sailor, leaving both Fagervik and Skamsund behind.

Pietism is historically important for the culture and identity of the population of the archipelago. Strindberg has already used this trait in *Skärkarlsliv* and *I havsbandet*. The pietists, assiduous Bible readers (they are called *läsare*, readers, in Swedish), can use the archetypes of the holy text to distinguish deceptive seduction from authentic redemption (Ebal versus Gerizim). Strindberg, quite differently from what he did in *I havsbandet* (where pietism was part of the pariahs' culture that Borg despised), now shows an appreciative attitude towards Skamsund's religious perspective. A chord of sorrow, pessimism and, at times, misanthropy is thus struck amid the mythical summer paradise, undermining the illusion of happiness cherished in Fagervik's sphere. Through this chord Strindberg can in part also return, with a circular movement, to his own cultural roots: pietism, Søren Kierkegaard and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and, consequently, to his old social pathos.

The dialogue and confrontation about pietism between the quarantine master and his friend, the post master, in the preface to 'Karantänmästarns Berättelser' (SV L: 153-163) indicates the tendency in the book. According to the quarantine master the humble pietists teach us to pay more attention to the deep existential questions, and to become more spiritual. This anti-materialism, as part of a personal Christian belief, is an important element in Strindberg's post-Inferno production. The story of the quarantine master, and of the protagonist in 'Den kvarlätne' (SV L: 279-282) (The Man Left Behind), show also that Skamsund, 'Gerizim', can be chosen by people who come from the mainland and want to withdraw from the world, either to hide their misery, or because they loathe the constrictions of urban life, its social ambition and useless luxury; they are therefore, in spite of everything, happy with the purportedly cursed place they live in.

The collection of poems *Ordalek och småkonst* was first included

as a section in *Fagervik och Skamsund*, and then, in a revised and enlarged edition, published independently in 1905.<sup>92</sup> According to Gunnar Ollén it is the culmination for Strindberg as a poet.<sup>93</sup> It is undoubtedly so, also for its perception of space. The urban room is often represented as atmospheric, including the air and the clouds. A vertical gaze can establish connections between the streets and the buildings at the lower level and the sky above, i.e. between mankind's imprisoned and suffering condition and its yearning for liberation and flight. The air and the drifting clouds can also connect near and far horizontally. The urban poet's thoughts and imagination can drift with them, and one of their cherished destinations is towards the East, just beyond the woods and to the sea, the islands and the skerries.<sup>94</sup> Geographically they are close to the urban space, yet they appear far away, or better, in another place, buried in the past like a lost paradise, with their promise of love, regeneration and happiness, a vanished time that can only resist as memory and bittersweet nostalgia, as in the poem 'Vid dagens slut' (SV LI: 91-92) (At the End of the Day), and in the sequence 'Moln-Bilder' (Cloud Formations), where we find a homage to the 'greening island', seen in a dream. Whether Kymmendö or a mix of the islands Strindberg lived on, this greening place defines the space of the archipelago with its connotations of lost paradise: a utopian state of bliss and harmony where children embrace one another in peace and love (SV LI: 100-102).

The long poem 'Trefaldighetsnatten' (SV LI: 121-158) (The Night Before Trinity Sunday), may take us by surprise, for its idyllic and naïve praise of summer joy in the archipelago (Ollén 1941: 43-44). Through its epic and dramatic form, the celebration of summer becomes collective, polyphonic and ritual<sup>95</sup>, and it develops as a harmonic dialogue and confrontation between the summer guests arriving from town and the local population on the island, which is again Fagervik. Rites are ways of performing shared and fundamental representations in a community; and all the cherished details of what made summer in Strindberg's archipelago paradisiac are evoked: arriving with the steamboat, gardening, fishing, cottages, crayfish, tennis, clubhouse, opera at the summer theatre, skittle alley, white nights and even its mosquitos, and finally the beauty of nature all around. In this way,

the occurrence of a Christian feast coincides with the celebration of Swedish summer and of the sacredness of nature.

A similar naïve tone characterizes *Sagor* (1903) (Fairy Tales). But even when Strindberg adopts the form of the fairy tale, he does not renounce to some realistic connotations of the archipelago environment in summer, as a seaside resort for the Stockholmers. In 'I midsommartider' (SV LII: 85-95) (In Midsummertime) – reminiscent of the simple form of the folktale, but also of Novalis' visionary, dream-like, metaphysical and Christian conception of *Märchen* – the magic beauty of nature resembles paradise in such a way that the final vision of 'a greening island' belongs to heaven rather than to earth. The celebration of Swedish summer and the perspective of Christian redemption are thus joined. 'Blåvinge finner Guldpudran' (SV LII: 195-202) (Bluewing Finds the Golden Saxifrage) is a fairy tale for children that intriguingly mixes the folktale with Andersen's fairy tale, Linnaeus, and the real story of Furusund as a fashionable seaside resort. As the little girl manages to find the plant indicating the presence of drinkable water, the island can happily, in the final perspective of the fairy tale, be transformed in a seaside resort. It is, in a certain sense, a founding myth of Strindberg's Furusund (Persson 2004: 236-237).

We return to a gloomier atmosphere in the novel *Götiska Rummen*<sup>96</sup>, published in 1904. It deals among other things with a divorce, and combines the author's memories of Värmdö in winter, during his first divorce (Brandell 1985: 259), with those of Furusund, with its clubhouse and the fashionable life around it. For this reason the archipelago appears both white and icy and in its green summer version. *Götiska Rummen* is particularly interesting in our perspective, because it can neither be considered a pure archipelago novel nor a pure Stockholm novel. The protagonists belong to a family of urban professionals and intellectuals, who can choose at any time of the year to dwell either in town or on the (fictional) inner island of Storö (Big Island). Thanks to the steamboats, the newspapers and the telephone, the characters are constantly, as it were, connected; the place where they are staying does not change their social functions as Stockholm professionals and intellectuals. The novel shows that it was possible, by the turn of the century, to live at only half an hour's distance from

Stockholm, while being at the same time in a borderland where the wilderness began. It witnesses therefore a historical change during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, when the environments of Stockholm and its archipelago tended to come closer and, to a certain extent, merge. This sociological dimension gets tinged with the existential one in the novel, for example when the narrator – adopting his characters’ point of view from the steamboat going to the islands – bitterly underscores how the archipelago, near the big town and at the same time sufficiently distant from it, represents a retirement post for people who have suffered marital shipwrecks or personal failures of other kinds:

Brygga följde på brygga, och vid varje tillägg hade man tillfälle att slunga en anmärkning, en upplysning om innebyggarne. Där voro liksom reträttplatser, ibland gömställen för människor som dragit sig undan världsvimlet. Den ena sagan var inte lik den andra, och i denna ödemark, en halv timme från Stockholm hade de satt sig ner, mest kanske för att känna närheten av havet, det enda stora som Sveriges gnetiga natur bjöd på. Alldagliga sorgespel hade utspelats, och man gjorde sista akten härute. Förstörda förmögenheter, brutna familjeöden, felsteg, straffade eller ostraffade, äregirighetens sår, sorg och saknad, allt elände hade här slagit sig ner i gröna dalkjusor mellan gråstensknallar. De invigde som passerade denna vattenväg kände sig defilera förbi all livets bitterhet, och jämsides med beklämningen väcktes ett välbehag över att vara utanför. (SV LIII: 33)

(Jetty followed after jetty, and at each new landing one had the opportunity to drop a remark, a piece of information about the inhabitants. Something like retirement posts were there, at times hiding-places for people who had withdrawn from the world crowd. One story did not resemble the other, and in this wilderness, half an hour from Stockholm, they had settled, perhaps mostly to feel the proximity to the sea, the only big thing offered by Sweden’s scanty nature. Everyday tragedies had taken place, and the last act was performed out here. Destroyed

fortunes, broken family destinies, false steps, punished or unpunished, wounds of ambition, sorrow and regret, all the misery had settled down in green small valleys among granite rocks. The initiated who passed through this waterway felt all the bitterness of life march past, and alongside with the oppression, a relish arose for being outside of it.)

Even agriculture in the archipelago is, in this novel, considered from a more problematic angle, far from the pastoral tone it is possible to find in the essays of *Likt och Olikt* or in *Hemsöborna*. Sometimes agriculture does not pay off, as in the case of Anders, one of the protagonists' sons (SV LIII: 70-81, 111-115); and sometimes it pays off all too well, as in the case of the priest and diary manager on the island, which gives Strindberg the opportunity of a biting and funny anticlerical satire (SV LIII: 57-62).

Sorrow and regret characterize the perspective of the protagonist and narrator in *Taklagsö*<sup>97</sup>, a story that is again related to a painful process of familiar separation. During a long, modernistic internal monologue on his deathbed<sup>98</sup>, the protagonist recalls among other things two important and simultaneous events that took place in the archipelago the summer of the year before: the short reunion with his wife and their little son, and the reconciliation with his relatives. In his flashback, the strongly ritual elements in the Stockholm upper class' celebration of summer coincide with the revelation of a mythical, short-lived paradisiac harmony, as '[i]n that moment I experienced two minutes, preserved in my mind as truly corresponding to the images of the Fortunate Isles and peace on earth'.<sup>99</sup>

The moment of bliss, intertwined with a fundamental feeling of loss, and with the persistent reality of an everyday inferno lurking all around, is summarized in 'Hägringar' (Mirages), a text in *En Blå Bok I* (A Blue Book I), published in 1907. Here the 'greening island' appears again:

Vi hålla avvarandra på ett högre plan, men kunna icke vara i samma rum, och vi drömma om ett återseende, dematerialiserade, på en grönskande ö, där endast vi två få finnas och på sin höjd

vårt barn. Jag minns en halvtimme, då vi tre verkligen gingo hand i hand på en grönskande ö i havsstranden, och då fick jag intrycket att det var himlen. Så ringde middagsklockan, och vi voro åter på jorden och straxt därpå i helvetet.<sup>100</sup>

(We love each other on a higher level, but we cannot be in the same room; and we dream of a reunion, dematerialized, on a greening island, where only the two of us, or our child at most, are allowed to stay. I remember half an hour when the three of us really walked hand in hand along the sea shore of a greening island, and there I got the impression that it was heaven. Then the dinner bell rang, and we were again on earth, and immediately afterwards in hell.)

Delumeau distinguishes between the history of our looking for an earthly paradise from the history of the hope for a perfect and everlasting joy in heaven (Delumeau 1992: 7-8). It seems as if the two perspectives can merge for Strindberg in his later years, as Meidal has observed (Meidal 2012: 83-86). In the above quoted passage from *En Blå Bok I*, the greening island is a place we can still locate in this life of ours, yet it inspires the vision of a possible dematerialized life to come. It is interesting to observe how Strindberg even tried to visualize the soul's state after death, before its final destination, as a stage located on an island and in an archipelago, in what Martin Kylhammar calls 'the heavenly pastoral' (1985: 115-120). The visions of an ethereal, higher world, inspired by the painter Arnold Böcklin and by Emanuel Swedenborg, are found in the dramatic fragment 'Toten-Insel (Hades)<sup>101</sup> – Isle of the Dead (Hades) – written in 1907, in the fragment 'Armageddon. Början till En Roman'<sup>102</sup> (Armageddon. Beginning of a Novel), written in 1907 and published in 1908, and in the short prose text 'Högre Existensformer; Die Toteninsel'<sup>103</sup> (Higher Forms of Existence; The Isle of the Dead) from 1908. These visions are however part of another story, a story that, because of its immutability, was difficult to tell even for Strindberg.<sup>104</sup>

From his nonreligious, humanistic, meditative and ironic standpoint, the writer Werner Aspenström, who was for many years a summer

guest in the same house that Strindberg had rented on Kymmendö, has formulated some important thoughts about our contradictory, modern longing for natural paradise. He tends to interpret the quoted passage from *En Blå Bok I* as a reminder of our paradise as earthly, green and precarious, when he writes: 'The word paradise derives from an Old Persian one, which means ring-wall. Isles have not seldom had to replace the fenced gardens of the Golden Age. As to banishment, we practice it by ourselves, since the gods have died'.<sup>105</sup>

Strindberg's authorship can show consistency in spite of its contradictions. His metaphysical stance, interwoven with the epiphany of an earthly paradise, and within the persistent consciousness of a tormenting life, unites the examined passages in *Tjänstekvinnans son* and *En Blå Bok I*. In both passages the Stockholm archipelago is a material that is transformed in literature and myth. Since life and literature are so intertwined in Strindberg, it is inevitable that we, through him, come near a personal and almost private mythology, which only seems to have to do with him and his closest relatives. As I have tried to show, however, Strindberg's personal voice offers an adaptation of traditional mythical patterns in Western culture; at the same time he partakes in a collective narrative about a paradise made of islands, shaped while Stockholm is becoming a modern big city.

The archipelago reached from Stockholm by the steamboats forms, as Lagercrantz has observed, a home scenery as well as an image of the golden age of the bourgeoisie, to which Strindberg always returns (Lagercrantz 1986: 13-14). Also Lotman admits that the space chosen by writers may coincide with their familiar landscape (Lotman 1972: 273-274), but he looks at the spatial relations from another angle, as a structural function of the literary text, even beyond their biographical contents, or their correspondence to a real geography. I argue that both perspectives are needed to shed light on the topic I have chosen to discuss, because we do not diminish the poetic and literary dimensions of Strindberg's transformation if we, at the same time, look at it in terms of cultural history, as an expression of a collective myth-making by the population of Stockholm from the last decades of the nineteenth century up to present time. Strindberg's creation belongs to the pioneering phase of this construction, started

by the upper middle class, and by now part of both high and popular Swedish culture. As Selander and Wästberg argue, Strindberg discovers the nature of the archipelago not only for himself but for the Swedish people.<sup>106</sup> More than anyone else, he was before his time as a modern man, with his capability of consciously embodying the contradictions of modernity. His longing for the lost paradise is ours, but a unique power of creation belongs to him.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The English titles of Strindberg's works follow Michael Robinson (2009: xxxii-xxxvi). When titles of works, or parts of works, do not appear in Robinson's list, translations are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Sten Selander, 'Förord and Stockholms skärgård', in Selander 1954: 7-32; Erik Ljungberger, 'Badorter och sommargäster i Stockholms skärgård' in Selander 1954: 343-368; Grönblad 1970: 7-8, 162-163; Wästberg 1973: 51-53, 58, 113-114; Hedenstierna 2000a: 5-6, 42-55; and Hedenstierna 2000b: 54-55.

<sup>3</sup> See Lotman 1977: 217-232; Lotman 1990: 199-241; and Marchese 2009: 101-127.

<sup>4</sup> The instability of meaning, character and human identity is discussed in Eric O. Johannesson's seminal book about Strindberg's novels; see Johannesson 1968: 1-24.

<sup>5</sup> Strindberg's realism is repeatedly underscored in Berendsohn 1962, for example p. 70-72.

<sup>6</sup> See in particular Barthes 1957: 7-8, 213-268.

<sup>7</sup> See Rasmusson 2010, who mentions a general change of orientation among Stockholmers during Strindberg's lifetime, from an interest in lake Mälaren, with its islands and bays, to a new interest in the wild seascape of the skärgård.

<sup>8</sup> See in particular Wästberg 1973: 9-49; and Hedenstierna 2000a: 29-55. An interesting documentation is also given in Eklund / Sjöberg 1983.

<sup>9</sup> See Wästberg 1973: 54, 59, 109; and Hedenstierna 2000b: 10-12.

<sup>10</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XX, *Tjänstekvinnans son I-II*, red. H. Lindström, Stockholm 1989: 147-148. I will henceforth indicate each volume of the *Samlade Verk* edition in the footnote, whenever it is mentioned for the first time. The references are subsequently given as the abbreviation SV plus the number of the volume and the pages. In the Works Cited only the complete edition is reported. All translations are mine.

<sup>11</sup> Meidal 2012: 16-17. The role of steamboats in Strindberg's family tradition is underscored in Lagercrantz 1986: 12-14, and Meidal 2012: 20-21. I want to thank professor Björn Meidal for his interest in my project about Strindberg and the archipelago, and for his suggestions.

<sup>12</sup> Lagercrantz 1986: 26-27.

<sup>13</sup> The Swedish word for bay is *fjärd*, a term that is part of the archipelago

environment, etymologically related to the more internationally known Norwegian *fjord*.

<sup>14</sup> SV XX: 148: 'Nu var han där i paradiset' (Now he was there in paradise).

<sup>15</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XXVI, *Skärkarlsliv*, red. N. Å. Sjöstedt, Stockholm 1984: 7-15.

<sup>16</sup> SV XXVI: 10: '[...] omväxling av dystert och leende, av fattigt och rikt, av täckt och vilt, av inland och havskust'.

<sup>17</sup> See Berendsohn 1962: 25-27 and 29-31.

<sup>18</sup> Let us not forget, though, that Strindberg had left the archipelago and Sweden in 1883, and that he, after returning to his home country in 1889, was astonished by the material progress that had taken place in the meantime.

<sup>19</sup> See Strindberg's autobiography, with further manifestations of the archipelago motif: SV XX: 328-329; and Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, vol. XXI, *Tjänstekvinnans son III-IV*, red. H. Lindström, Stockholm 1996: 23, 29, 64-77.

<sup>20</sup> Roland Barthes dedicates one chapter of *Mythologies* to the writer on vacation. The writer's splendid uniqueness consists in the fact that he does not stop producing although he is on vacation. If the bourgeois ideology allows the writer to have a false job, he must then have a false vacation too. See Barthes 1957: 29-31.

<sup>21</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, II, *I vårbrytningen*, red. C. R. Smedmark, Stockholm 1981: 7-32. See Meidal 2003, and Meidal 2012: 66-67.

<sup>22</sup> As to the role and history of Dalarö see Wästberg 1973: 54-58; and Hedenstierna 2000b: 129-132.

<sup>23</sup> SV II: 14: '[...] jag hatar detta stadsliv utflyttat på landet'.

<sup>24</sup> Strindberg spent the autumn of 1873 in Sandhamn, on Sandö, in an attempt to become a telegrapher and escape from literary failures and monetary troubles in Stockholm. See SV XXI: 80-85. As to the role and history of Sandhamn see Hedenstierna 2000b: 64-65.

<sup>25</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, IV, *Ungdomsjournalistik*, red. H. Sandberg, Stockholm 1991: 75-79; first published in *Dagens Nyheter*, 4.9.1872.

<sup>26</sup> SV IV: 80-81; first published in *Dagens Nyheter*, 4.12.1873.

<sup>27</sup> SV II: 42-49; first published in *Dagens Nyheter*, 2.7.1874.

<sup>28</sup> Compare Sehlstedt 1961; Sten Selander, 'Skärgården i litteraturen', in Selander 1954: 446-447; and Grönblad 1970: 60-61, 68-69.

<sup>29</sup> SV IV: 82: '[...] en fetisch som vördas mer än Gud, ett begrepp som saknar verklighet, men dock är så verkligt som något kan vara'; first published in *Dagens Nyheter*, 6.12.1873. As to these early anarchistic tendencies, also in connection with the archipelago environment, see Edqvist 1961: 91-94.

<sup>30</sup> SV II: 54-72; first published in the weekly magazine 'Svalan', 8, 15 and 22.5.1875.

<sup>31</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, VI, *Röda Rummet*, red. C. R. Smedmark, Stockholm 1981: 258-267. See Brandell 1987: 178-179. As to Falk's position in the novel see Johannesson 1968: 25-45.

<sup>32</sup> About Strindberg and Kymmendö see Jirlow 1945; Persson 2004: 160-182; Lindberg / Utter Wahlström 2007: 30-44; and Meidal 2012: 83-86.

<sup>33</sup> Brandell 1987: 93-97, in particular p. 95.

<sup>34</sup> Strindberg, *Brev*, II, 1877-mars 1882, Utgivna av T. Eklund, Stockholm 1950: 166: '[...] jag är Jean Jacques' intime när det gäller återgången till Naturen [...]'. Henceforth shortened as B II. In the Works Cited only the complete edition is reported. Strindberg's anarchistic letters to Edvard Brandes are examined in Edqvist 1961: 152-162.

<sup>35</sup> B II: 267: '[...] jag tror endast [...] på en pånyttfödelse genom återgången till naturen – städernas upphäfvande – statens upplösande i byalag utan öfverhufvud [...]'].

<sup>36</sup> I have discussed these aspects in Ciaravolo 2011, Ciaravolo 2012b and Ciaravolo 2012c.

<sup>37</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, IX, *Svenska Folket I*, red. C. Kretz / P. Stam, Stockholm 2001: 142-150.

<sup>38</sup> In his autobiography *Jag. En bok om och på gott och ont*, originally published in 1931, Carl Larsson has given a vivid description of the time he spent with Strindberg on Kymmendö, and of their work for *Svenska Folket*. See Larsson 1992: 82-86. Strindberg's first literary discovery of Huvudskären and their seasonal herring fishing occurs even before *Svenska Folket*, during a glorious sailing trip described in 'Huruledes jag fann Sehlstedt', SV II: 43-45.

<sup>39</sup> Through the expression 'experience of modernity' I refer to Marshal Berman's seminal and for me deeply influential study; see Berman 1988.

<sup>40</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XIII, *Svenska öden och äventyr I*, red. B Landgren, Stockholm 1981: 48-65.

<sup>41</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XV, *Dikter på vers och prosa. Sömngångarnätter på vakna dagar och strödda tidiga dikter*, red. J. Spens, Stockholm 1995: 73-98.

<sup>42</sup> This circumstance appears clearly also in the autobiography, when Strindberg describes the composition of *Mäster Olof* on Kymmendö. See SV XXI: 29.

<sup>43</sup> See Edqvist 1961: 234.

<sup>44</sup> See Ciaravolo 2012a, and Ciaravolo 2012b.

<sup>45</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XVIII, *Kvarstadsresan, Fabler och Societeten i Stockholm samt andra prosatexter 1880-1889*, red. C. Svensson, Stockholm 2009: 71-107.

<sup>46</sup> SV XVIII: 81: '[...] icke öar med apelsiner, lagerbärsträd och marmorpalats, utan små knottriga gnejksknallar med taggiga granar och röda stugor [...]'. A similar opposition between the Mediterranean area and the archipelago will be developed in an episode of the novel *I havsbandet* (By the Open Sea) from 1890; see Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XXXI, *I havsbandet*, red. H. Lindström, Stockholm 1982: 88-89, 96-100, and 114-119.

<sup>47</sup> See Delumeau 1992: 11-35, 59-97, and 129-152.

<sup>48</sup> See Delumeau 1992: 111 and 157-158.

<sup>49</sup> A satirical adaptation of the international utopian model is found in Strindberg's story 'De lycksaliges Ö' (The Fortunate's Isle), published in 1884 and completed in 1890 for the series *Svenska öden och äventyr*. Utopia is not, however, set in the Stockholm archipelago, but on an imaginary island in the Atlantic or Caribbean. See Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XIV, *Svenska öden och*

*äventyr II*, red. B. Landgren, Stockholm 1990: 41-89.

<sup>50</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XVII, *Likt och Olikt I-II samt uppsatser och tidningsartiklar 1884-1890*, red. H. Lindström, Stockholm 2003.

<sup>51</sup> With reference to the same utopian program see also the essays 'Livsglädjen' (The Joy of Living), SV XVII: 84, and 'Kulturarbetets överskattning' (The Overestimation of Cultural Work), SV XVII: 101.

<sup>52</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XVI, *Giftas I-II*, red. U. Boëthius, Stockholm 1982: 145-161.

<sup>53</sup> Wästberg 1973: 129: '[...] borgerlighetens diskreta charm [...]'].

<sup>54</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XXIV, *Hemsöborna*, red. C. Kretz / H. Söderström, Stockholm 2012.

<sup>55</sup> See Johannesson 1968: 82-90, and L. Dahlbäck 1974: 45-49.

<sup>56</sup> SV XXIV: 111-119. Lars Dahlbäck analyzes the geographical and social relations – between Hemsö and Dalarö, and Hemsö and Stockholm – with great accuracy, also in terms of confrontation between opposite world models; see L. Dahlbäck 1974: 157-163, 205, 224-235.

<sup>57</sup> In his reading of the pastoral theme in Strindberg's oeuvre Martin Kylhammar argues, however, that *Hemsöborna* pleads for agriculture on a small scale against the rules of capitalistic profit. See Kylhammar 1985: 61-62.

<sup>58</sup> Dahlbäck 1974: 45; Meidal 2012: 198. Dahlbäck refers also to the Swedish scholars who have pointed out this aspect before, starting from Fredrik Böök in 1923. See Dahlbäck 1974, note 65: 337-338.

<sup>59</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XXXII, *Folk-komedin Hemsöborna. Himmelrikets nycklar*, red. G. Ollén, Stockholm 1987: 7-124.

<sup>60</sup> Ollén 1949: 94: '[...] romanens ram av skön natur och frisk skärgårdsluft [...]'].

<sup>61</sup> See also the negative assessment in Ollén 1982: 185: 'Dessutom är det svårt att med en fonddekoration på en teater söka ersätta den förälskade naturskildring som spelar en så stor roll i romanen.' (Besides, it is difficult to try to replace, with a backdrop in a theatre, the enchanted depiction of nature that plays such a big part in the novel). Ollén 1982 is the revised edition of Ollén 1949.

<sup>62</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XXV, *En dåres försvarstal*, red. G. Rossholm, Stockholm 1999.

<sup>63</sup> SV XXV: 86: '[...] syner av vackra sommandagar, minnen från tidiga ungdomsår'.

<sup>64</sup> SV XXV: 196: '[...] högsåsongen i mitt liv [...]'].

<sup>65</sup> SV XXV: 196-197: '[...] några månaders tjänstledighet för att leva vildmarksliv med min familj på en grönskande ö i Stockholms yttre skärgård'.

<sup>66</sup> As Meidal observes (2012: 105), 'den grönskande ön' as a paradise on earth appears already at the end of the fairy play *Lycko-Pers resa*, written in 1881-82; see Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XI, *Tidiga 80-talsdramer*, red. T. Nilsson, Stockholm 2001: 265.

<sup>67</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XXIX, *Vivisektioner. Blomstermålningar och djurstycken. Skildringar av naturen. Silverträsket*, red. H. Lindström, Stockholm 1985, 165-225.

<sup>68</sup> See note 46.

<sup>69</sup> Tobias Dahlkvist (2012) argues that the Nietzschean trait in Borg is above all to be found in his frailty and modern nervousness, i.e., in the concept of the *décadent* rather than in that of the *Übermensch*.

<sup>70</sup> In this respect I do not fully agree with Kylhammar, who argues that Borg's project consists in the instrumental manipulation of nature, considered as an enemy (1985: 75-84). As Haverty Rugg (2012) has suggested, there is a clear environmental perspective in Borg's consciousness.

<sup>71</sup> See Johannesson 1968: 146-171, in particular p. 154-155 and 164.

<sup>72</sup> According to Johannesson's psychological reading, this return to the origin, and Borg's final voluntary death at sea, represent a reunion with the Mother and with the primordial realm of the unconscious; see Johannesson 1968: 167-170.

<sup>73</sup> Kärnell 1962: 211-233, proposes an illuminating comparison between *Hemsöborna* and *I havsbandet* as to the way images are used. In the earlier novel an 'organic' choice of metaphors prevails, since images are mostly taken from the semantic field of rural life and everyday occupations on the island. In the later novel, on the contrary, the similes indicate the protagonist's sophisticated and intellectual approach, his wider perspectives, and his isolation among the islanders.

<sup>74</sup> Strindberg, *Brev*, VII, februari 1888-december 1889, Utgivna av T. Eklund, Stockholm 1961: 313, 316-321. See Brandell 1985: 231-236.

<sup>75</sup> Berendsohn 1962: 186-190; and Persson 2004: 201-216.

<sup>76</sup> Strindberg also lived on Dalarö in August 1891 and the whole summer of 1892. Although the play *Leka med elden* (Playing with Fire) from 1892 takes place at a seaside resort, and is inspired by the author's experiences on Dalarö in 1891, the archipelago environment does not appear. See Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XXXIII, *Nio enaktare 1888-1892*, red. G. Ollén, 1984: 211-273; see also Persson 2004: 189-194, and Meidal 2012: 259.

<sup>77</sup> See Graf 1965: 53-58; and Delumeau 1992: 23, 34-35, 229-230, 237-241.

<sup>78</sup> Carlson 1979, in particular p. 15-46. Even Kymmendö, the greening island, is mentioned as Strindberg's image of Eden (p. 17), but the archipelago remains outside the mythopoetic field investigated by Carlson.

<sup>79</sup> See Wästberg 1973: 49-53; and Meidal 2012: 379-380.

<sup>80</sup> *Deuteronomy* 27:11-13. Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, LIX:1, *Ockulta Dagboken*, red. K. Petherick / G. Stockenström, Stockholm 2011: 197.

<sup>81</sup> The concept of autobiographical space is introduced by Philippe Lejeune in *Le pacte autobiographique* (1975: 23 and 41-43, and with reference to André Gide: 189-217). The uses of the autobiographical space in Strindberg are explored in Robinson 1986, K. Dahlbäck 1991, and K. Dahlbäck 1994.

<sup>82</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XLIV, *Dödsdansen*, red. H. Lindström, Stockholm 1988.

<sup>83</sup> The motif of 'Lilla helvetet' (Little Hell) is already introduced by Alice in the first part of *Dödsdansen*; see SV XLIV: 109. In Wirmark 1989: 83-85, the outdoor space, the marine landscape, is interpreted as the metaphysical promise of liberation from the imprisoned human condition.

<sup>84</sup> SV XLIV: 22: '[...] det är ett samfund av idioter [...]'].

<sup>85</sup> SV XLIV: 117: '[KURT:] Om en timme äro vi i stan! Då skall du se vem jag är...

[ALICE:] Så går vi på teatern i afton! för att visa oss! [...]

<sup>86</sup> Wirmark 1989: 83: 'Strindberg är medvetet inexact när han förlägger sitt drama till en ö utan namn, en ö som ej kan pekats ut på kartan. Den saknar namn men kallas 'lilla helvetet' av ors-befolkningen. Staden dit båten går har inte heller något namn och man får inte veta hur många timmar det tar att resa dit'. (Strindberg is consciously inexact when he locates his play on an island without a name, an island which cannot be pointed out on a map. It is nameless but it is called 'the little hell' by the locals. The town the boat goes to has not got a name either, and we do not get to know how many hours it takes to go there).

<sup>87</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XLVI, *Ett drömspel*, red. G. Ollén, Stockholm 1988: 54-67, 71-80. In between: 67-71, the Officer's dream of his maths test at school takes place.

<sup>88</sup> This is even more true of Strindberg's first revolutionary dream play, *Till Damaskus I* (To Damascus I) from 1898, Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, XXXIX, *Till Damaskus*, red. G. Ollén, Stockholm 1991: 7-157. The Doctor's house is the second station of the drama and, again, the second last station of it. The Doctor lives and works in the countryside, and his house is reached by a steamboat (SV XXXIX: 41: 153); this station is immediately after and before the starting and closing point of the drama, the Street Corner, i.e. the town. The fourth and fourth last stations are 'By the Sea', but they could be anywhere. Specific geographic determinations are avoided in this modern version of a Christian station drama about Everyman (See Ollén's comment in SV XXXIX: 420).

<sup>89</sup> The history of Furusund is described in Grönblad 1970; see in particular the time from the quarantine station to the seaside resort: 46-93. Some parts are also dedicated to Strindberg and Furusund; see p. 94-109, 119-121. As to Strindberg and Furusund see also Ollén 1942, and Persson 2004: 217-240.

<sup>90</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, L, *Klostret. Fagervik och Skamsund*, red. B. Ståhle Sjönell, Stockholm 1994: 113-238. The two stories called 'Karantänmästarns Berättelser' (SV L, pp. 153-254) (The Quarantine Master's Stories) deal with unhappy marriages and are not set in the archipelago. The second of them is a version of the story about Strindberg's second marriage, with Frida Uhl, better known as *Klostret* (The Cloister); compare SV L: 7-111 and 192-274.

<sup>91</sup> SV L: 116: 'Här ser allt ut vara ordnat till den tre månars långa fest, som heter sommaren'.

<sup>92</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, LI, *Ordalek och småkonst och annan 1900-talslyrik*, red. G. Ollén, Stockholm 1989: 7-84 and 85-198 respectively.

<sup>93</sup> Ollén 1941: 13-18; as to the archipelago motif see p. 42-45.

<sup>94</sup> Something of this spatial relation and atmosphere is detectable in the autobiographical novel *Ensam* (Alone) from 1903. The narrator and protagonist can at times long for nature, the coast and the sea, but has in any case decided to stay in town. See Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, LII, *Ensam. Sagor*, red. O. Östin, Stockholm 1994: 22, 39-40, 50-52. See also Berendsohn 1962: 66-68.

<sup>95</sup> The strong ritual character of summer celebration in the Stockholm area at the turn of the century is underscored in Wästberg 1973: 10.

<sup>96</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, LIII, *Götiska Rummen*, red. Conny Svensson, Stockholm 2001.

<sup>97</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, LV, *Taklagsöl. Syndabocken*, red. B. Ståhle Sjönell, Stockholm 1984.

<sup>98</sup> As to the modernistic quality of *Taklagsöl* see Johannesson 1968: 246-266, and Ståhle Sjönell 1986, in particular pp.121-161.

<sup>99</sup> SV LV: 37: 'Det var då jag upplevde två minuter, vilka stannat i mitt minne såsom verkligen motsvarande föreställningarna om De Saliges Öar och friden på jorden'.

<sup>100</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, LXV, *En Blå Bok I*, red. G. Ollén, Stockholm 1997: 188. See also, in the same book, the text 'Den Grönskande Ön (The Greening Island), where the recollection of the first encounter with the natural scenery on Kymmendö is compared to a vision of paradise: SV LXV: 28.

<sup>101</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, LXIII, *Den världshistoriska trilogin. Dramafragment*, red. G. Ollén, Stockholm 1996: 327-345.

<sup>102</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, LXXI, *Essäer, tidningsartiklar och andra prosatexter 1900-1912*, red. C. Svensson, Stockholm 2004: 102-115.

<sup>103</sup> Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, LXVII, *En Blå Bok III-IV*, red. G. Ollén, Stockholm 2000: 1451-1453.

<sup>104</sup> Barbro Ståhle Sjönell argues convincingly, though, that the review of one's life, which characterizes the moment after death in the above mentioned texts, also determines the structure of the dying man's monologue in *Taklagsöl*, including the vision of a human reconciliation that reminds us of the Fortunate Isles: another case in which the material and the immaterial sphere can touch each other and almost merge (1986: 76, 90, 95-104).

<sup>105</sup> Aspenström 1977: 78: 'Ordet paradis är härlett från ett fornpersiskt, som betyder ringmur. Öar har inte sällan fått ersätta guldålderns inhägnade trädgårdar. Fördrivningen sköter vi själva, sedan gudarna dött'. Strindberg must have been familiar with such representations, since in the chamber play *Pelikanen* (The Pelican), from 1907, The Mother refers to Persian conceptions of paradise as a garden; see Strindberg, *Samlade Verk*, LVIII, *Kammarspel*, red. G. Ollén, Stockholm 1991: 290-291. As to Aspenström's meditation on our conception of paradise, see the whole chapter: 71-78. In another chapter: 28-48, Aspenström writes about living near Strindberg's myth on Kymmendö, at his very doorstep.

<sup>106</sup> Sten Selander, 'Skärgården i litteraturen', i Selander 1954: 445; and Wästberg 1973: 47.

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