(Dis)orienting the Reader: Literary Impressionism and the Case of Herman Bang

By

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines the ethical stakes of Herman Bang's (1857–1912) literary impressionism using both his critical and fictional writings. Against previous scholarship, which argues that Bang's impressionism was predominantly a nervous stylistic tendency, I contend that his impressionism variously implements a technique I call disorientation, which is in the service of an evolving ethical concern over character. Bang's distinct employment of disorientation can be read as bearing in mind the reader in an aesthetic logic that recasts impressionism as an ethically concerned aesthetics of fiction. Understanding that Bang's goal is to disorient the reader can account for the gaps, fissures, ambiguities, and strangeness in his work. He attempts to disorient by manipulating the narrative (e.g., via unusual narrative closure, violent literary language) such that perception is disrupted and made difficult or strange, jolting readers into a reconsideration of what they have just read. In this way, disorientation creates the possibility for a reader to be reoriented to the impression left behind by a character.

In four chapters, I trace the ethical inflections within Bang's writings. Chapter one outlines a historical and conceptual framework for apprehending literary impressionism, detailing how Bang's emerging critical writings engage with an ethically concerned aesthetic logic. In chapter two, I compare Bang's strategic use of the *partial* literary portrait in his unpublished "Manuskript til foredrag om Ivan Turgenjev" (ca. 1885, Manuscript for a lecture on Ivan Turgenev) with Henry James's references to Turgenev both in "Ivan Turgénieff" (1884, 1888) and in his 1908 preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*. I argue that this comparison reveals Bang and James's shared interest in a method of capturing and recording their impressions of characters by employing as a model the "literary portrait." In chapter three, using "Irene Holm" (1886, 1890) and *Ved Vejen* (1886, By the wayside) as evidence, I look to Bang's experimentation with disorientation in both the short story and the novel to demonstrate that he is wrangling with the tension between the need for formal closure and the need to preserve the integrity of the impression left by a character. Chapter four offers a close reading of Bang's novella "Les quatre Diables" (1890, "The Four Devils") where formal disorientation is taken to such an extreme that the language itself becomes violent. While the first two chapters are concerned with situating Bang's impressionism as a method rooted in character, the last two chapters discuss specific instantiations of Bang's use of disorientation.

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Chapter One

Herman Bang and Literary Impressionism

> Man bliver Digter, ikke fordi man staar over sin Tid, men fordi man er et fuldt, levende Udtryk af den, fordi man har lidt med den, har kæmpet med den og har forstaaet den.
> —Herman Bang, *Realisme og Realister*

> (One becomes a writer, not because one is above one's time, but because one is a full, living expression of it, because one has suffered with it, has struggled with it and has understood it.)[1]

Prologue

In April 1968, the American Comparative Literature Association's "Symposium on Literary Impressionism" (Benamou et al. 1968, 40) deliberated about whether literary impressionism, with its multiple, conflicting definitions and characterization as merely a nervous stylistic tendency, should be dropped from the literary lexicon. As Calvin Brown put it: "The time has come to fulfill [Brunetière's prophecy] by dropping *impressionism* and *impressionist* from the musical and literary vocabulary. We have nothing to lose but confusion" (1968, 59).[2]

In Scandinavia, just three years prior, a similar concern regarding the definition and applicability of the term "impressionism" appeared in Torbjörn Nilsson's (1965) *Impressionisten Herman Bang*. In that comprehensive study of the Danish literary impressionist Herman Bang (1857–1912), Nilsson contended that associating Bang with literary impressionism was unproductive because it could symptomatize Bang's work as unstable and indefinable; instead, he advocated categorizing "Bang's impressionism" as distinct from literary impressionism at large in order to avoid what he saw as impressionism's otherwise "extremely vague meaning" (1965, 303; quoting English summary).[3]

Despite literary impressionism's negative reception as merely a vague aesthetic fad, recent publications have demonstrated impressionism's ethical and political valence. For example, Adam Parkes (2011), Jesse Matz (2001), and Daniel Hannah (2013), have done much to reframe impressionism's indefinability and instability as a virtue rather than a vice, and one that is at the core of the literary impression's ability to attend to life within the novel. Adding to

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1. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.
2. Calvin Brown's public address, entitled "How Useful is the Concept of Impressionism?" (1968, 53–59), summarized the stakes literary impressionism faced as a literary technique and analytic point of reference. During his address, Brown identified literary impressionism as "an art of fragments, sketches, and small forms" (58), one that is marked by "such structural devices as fragmentation of form, the breaking up of rhythms, juxtaposition without subordination, the avoidance of big climaxes, and a general preference for small units" (54).
3. Torbjörn Nilsson contends that it would be unproductive to read Bang as part of literary impressionism at large, for two reasons: firstly, Bang's impressionism is personalized to his authorship, and secondly, literary impressionism is a vague concept that often lends itself to misunderstanding (1965, 302–3). Nilsson's suspicion of literary impressionism's vague definitions is partly informed by two scholars, Møller Kristensen ([1955] 1965) and Lundevall (1953). To avoid the pitfalls of literary impressionism, Nilsson opts for a personalized account of Bang's impressionism, which he categorizes as "Bang's impressionism" (119, 302–3) rather than categorizing Bang as a "literary impressionist."

the resurgence of interest in literary impressionism, Camilla Storskog (2011) provides an overview of its role in Scandinavian literary criticism. She concludes with the contention that despite the uncertainty surrounding literary impressionism, what is needed is not a coherent and encompassing definition of impressionism, so much as "an acceptance of the various ways in which the concept can be interpreted" (2011, 409).[4]

Part of why literary impressionism has had such a negative reception is because it has been understood as an ahistorical aesthetic tendency rather than as an historically situated response by a collection of artists whose works shared some important affinities. This is Parkes's (2011) central objection to how impressionism is often conceived. He finds that literary impressionism has generally been misapprehended in earlier scholarship because the question of what it *was* historically has often been superseded by the endeavor to answer what it *is*; this can be seen in attempts to impose a universal definition on the term (2011, ix–x). In light of this observation, Parkes makes a convincing case for recuperating the historical and cultural dimensions of impressionism; moreover, in doing so, he argues that literary impressionism was shaped by an active engagement with "larger cultural phenomena that defined the modern age." These included such politically and socially contentious topics as "anarchism and terrorism, homosexuality and feminism, nationalism and war, economic depression and new global media" (x). Accordingly, Parkes suggests that the "literary" in literary impressionism needs to be grasped in terms of its wider historical context. For Parkes, seeing impressionism as a unique reaction to its historically specific context reveals that the central question impressionism engages is how to create a discursive *record* of a historical moment and how to do so using an appropriate *rhetoric*: "Impressionist writing might be understood both as a record of historical experience and as a rhetoric seeking to define the manner in which that history is to be imagined" (4). Parkes argues that the impression is subject to two demands: creating a record (via rhetoric) and leaving a record (the published work). He demonstrates that understanding impressionism is less about arriving at a precise definition of the term and more about recognizing this double valence within impressionism. Such an approach allows for a revisitation of what the impression in impressionism is capable of—namely, its mediatory potential as both a way of responding to and documenting the complexities of modern life—thus opening a new space for literary experimentation and exploration.

Parkes's approach echoes and builds upon Matz's (2001) exploration of the mediatory potential of "the impression" in literary impressionism, which Matz discusses in more epistemological terms.[5] According to Matz, impressionist writers saw the impression as challenging the "perceptual distinctions between thinking and sensing" and thus is evidence that impressionists valued "a mode that would mediate perceptual distinctions" (2001, i). More recently, Hannah's (2013) study has variously applied Matz's and Parkes's respective renegotiations of impressionism, using Henry James as a case study for demonstrating how the

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4. Camilla Storskog concludes with the following appraisal of impressionism's diverse definitions and interpretative ends: "Wylie Sypher's considerations of the impressionist experiment in art and literature eloquently sum up my conclusion that there is not so much a need for a redefinition of the term 'literary impressionism' as for an acceptance of the various ways in which the concept can be interpreted" (2011, 409).
5. However, as Hannah points out, Matz's discussion of impressionism "focuses on the impressionist's social, rather than individualist, negotiation of these mediatory moments through gendered processes of collaboration" (2013, 13).

impression mediates between the public and private spheres.[6] In brief, by attending to a much-needed historical contextualization of literary impressionism's ability to mediate categorical binaries (e.g., thinking and feeling, public and private), Parkes, Matz, and Hannah provide new perspectives that allow for a reevaluation of the role and significance of literary impressionism. I will return later in this chapter to a more in-depth discussion of these scholars of literary impressionism, but for now this provides a preview of the types of literatures and scholarships informing my conceptual reframing of literary impressionism.

Applying these perspectives to a Scandinavian context opens a discussion of the role of impressionism as an ethically concerned literary response to its historical context. Here I extend and apply such conceptual models, especially Parkes's "record" and "rhetoric" (2011, 4), to inform my own reading of Herman Bang's engagement and experimentation with the literary impression. Parkes's discussion of the impression as having this dual function helps account for the extremes in Bang's authorship, namely his portrayals of violence and empathy (e.g., violence both in the murder/suicide in "Les quatre Diables" and in the humiliation scene from "Irene Holm"; empathy both in Agnes's friendship with Katinka in *Ved Vejen* and the pastor's daughter's attempt to console Irene in "Irene Holm"—I discuss these episodes in chapters three and four).

Moreover, I contend that these extremes are part and parcel of Bang's ethical exploration of the literary impression's ability to attend to "life" within fiction—which, as I will address throughout this dissertation, is made possible in two senses: the giving (i.e., the stamping) of an impression and the taking in of (i.e., being stamped by) an impression.[7] These two moments of the impression can also be seen in the term's etymology and usage: the Latin verb *imprimĕre* means "to press" and "later Latin practice saw the impression take on the more recent sense of an action of impressing or stamping and the mark left by such action" (Hannah 2013, 1–2). What this means is that the writer (e.g., Bang) has an impression and attempts to record (i.e., give) it in his fiction; however, he cannot simply write an account or description of the impression in procedural fashion but must do so bearing in mind the goal of stamping the reader through formal techniques. What is unique about the impressionist approach is that it bears in mind the reader not simply as a viewer of the writing but as someone who is directly involved in the writer's aesthetic logic.

Underlying this two-fold agenda—the author's recording of the impression and attempt to do so in a way that effectively stamps the impression (of a person or situation) upon the reader—is an ethical issue: how to best record the impression so as to activate an emotional response such that the reader might see a fictional other in a different light.[8] For Bang, this

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6. Hannah shows that James's impressionism used the mediatory potential of the impression to negotiate public and private spheres, which informs James's investment in intersubjectivity. For Hannah, James's impressionism envisioned "the self's inevitable dependence on the other, the private's inevitable slippage into the public and vice versa—as a stylistic condition, a (dis)orienting feat of language that the 'impression,' with all its instabilities, symptomatically evokes" (2013, 6).

7. While describing the process of an author writing down the impression can simply be seen as just his record of an impression, I am describing this as "giving" the impression because it articulates how Bang envisioned readers that would participate in comprehending the impression. What this implies is that Bang is anticipating a reader who is receptive to or has a sensibility for these types of impressions. While this might not engage all readers in the same way, the important point is to understand that Bang involves the reader in his aesthetic logic.

8. Of course, being made to experience and see anew either demands an individual reader already receptive to such impressions in the first place, or it otherwise (perhaps naively) proceeds with a formal bias: employing formal devices as a way of forcing the reader to work through a difficult or disorienting reading and hence experience a new way of seeing in literature.

involves using a technique of impressionism called disorientation. Disorientation is a technique that attempts to create a sense of bafflement whereby the reader is forced to search for meaning. This sense can be caused either by withholding from the reader any guidance about how to interpret what has just happened (as I will show in chapter three's analysis of the endings of "Irene Holm" and *Ved Vejen*) or by using techniques from drama such as shock effects or song interpolations (as I will show in chapter four's discussion of "Les quatre Diables"). The intention is to put the reader in a position whereby he or she is confronted with the responsibility of having to apprehend what these strange events mean for the main character. In essence, the reader is cleft between the need to decipher meaning and the impossibility of that task, since he or she is not necessarily given the whole picture. Put another way, Bang's use of disorientation solicits readers to feel the effect of living characters even as they convey to the reader the limits of that level of intimacy.

Accordingly, an impressionist ethics is one wherein the reader becomes integral to envisioning how an aesthetics of fiction can engender understanding of an "other." By attending to the two moments of the impression (the giving and taking in of the impression) and the ethical undercurrent of the impressionist agenda to activate an interest or response to an "other" (which, for Bang, becomes a particular type of character), the implications of the impression in impressionism are foregrounded. In this way, the ethics of the impression is directly related to the complexity of trying to know and to represent someone different from oneself.

I see Bang's engagement with literary impressionism and his application of literary impressionistic techniques (namely, disorientation) as fulfilling an ethical objective within his aesthetic logic. Peer E. Sørensen (2009) also recognizes that there seems to be an objective to Bang's style, although he identifies it as an aesthetic rather than ethical one. In his view, the main kernel is the role of ambivalence. While I agree with Sørensen that one can find ambivalence in Bang's work, I see it not as an aesthetic end in itself (e.g. the objective of Bang's work), but rather as an aspect of disorientation. Reframing Bang's impressionism foregrounds how he pushed aesthetics to encounter what he saw as the ethical mission of literature: reorienting readers to marginalized subjectivities and alterities. Marginalized alterity for Bang is defined not so much by class as by a subject's alienation in an increasingly modern, industrialized nation, whereby his or her social role becomes increasingly foreign and estranged. This is expressed in "Et Par Ord" (1886, A couple of words), wherein Bang states how his interest in marginalized subjectivities rests in the representation of people he considers drifters (such as virtuosos), who "drager gennem alle Samfund og tilhører intet" (Bang 2008–10, 7:11) [slog through all societies and belong to nothing].[9] In order to garner interest in these otherwise marginal lives, Bang comes to experiment, as I will later show, with the employment of a formal technique of impressionism that I call disorientation. Read this way, Bang's literary impressionism bears striking similarities to other continental European and American authors (e.g., Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford, Virginia Woolf) whose own formal experimentations with and critical reappraisals of the impression anticipated the literary

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9. Bang categorizes these marginalized subjectivities into four subgroups or classes, which he sees as unified in their servitude to their occupations and the corresponding loneliness of the lifestyles accompanying these occupations: 1) artists/virtuosos, 2) acrobats/dancers/performers, 3) servants, and 4) princes/royalty (Bang 2008–10, 7:16). For more on how he outlines these various castes or classes of marginalized subjectivities in "Et Par Ord" (A couple of words), see Bang 2008–10, 7:11–23.

experiments of modernism.[10] Read in such a comparative light, Bang's impressionism finds resonance as a literary project that actively attempted to intervene in critical discourse surrounding the ethical implications of literature at the turn of the century.

To position Bang as a case study for literary impressionism, it is necessary first to provide a general overview of what literary impressionism was and how it historically and discursively emerged from debates concerning pictorial impressionism within a broader, international context. To this end, I give an overview of the historical origins of pictorial impressionism as it pertains to literary impressionism, followed by a literature review of recent scholarship in this field. The second part of this chapter then transitions into a discussion of Bang's categorization as a literary impressionist. I organize my discussion of Bang according to: an historical contextualization of Scandinavian literary impressionism and how scholars have viewed Bang's engagement with literary impressionism; the positioning of Bang as a relevant case study for literary impressionism; and a closer examination of what I see as Bang's distinct application of a technique of impressionism—disorientation. Bang's distinct use of disorientation appropriates a theatrical model (e.g., dramatic effects) to shock readers into experiencing an emotive response. Thus, in this chapter, I demonstrate how Bang's impressionism gestures toward the visual and dramatic arts, in the hopes of reviving his vision of the impression's ethical charge within the literary medium.

Impressionism: The Genealogy of a Misapprehension

Pictorial Impressionism: Its Genesis and Naming

To better understand the roots of literary impressionism, a glance at impressionism's historical and social context is called for, including a precursory overview of its origins in pictorial impressionism. While impressionism was a historically situated response to artistic innovations of its time, it also responded to the reign of scientific objectivity and secularism appropriated by members of various literary circles who contemporaneously shared sociopolitical and economic conditions.[11] As John House aptly explains,

> The Impressionist vision of the world belongs to a longer history, of the emergence of a secular world view, and correspondingly of notions of vision that depended on sense experiences alone, repudiating the authority of prior abstract knowledge, and more specifically rejecting a view of the natural world that depended on divine providence. (2004, 2)

In grounding impressionism as an historically specific response to a displacement of belief and power wrought by an increasingly secular world view, House gestures toward a conception of impressionism as an aesthetic and intellectual ancestor of modernism. If we see impressionism as actively engaging with and reacting to some of the main historical and intellectual shifts of its

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10. Matz identifies literary impressionism as a precursor to modernism: "Why so many writers sought to render impressions, and how the effort continues that of early aesthetic hope, but could not bear the weight of its sociocultural expectations; how it gave way to Modernism properly, and determined so many of Modernism's plots and themes: these things remain to be explained. It remains to show the impression for the impresario it was" (2001, 11).

11. For an explaination about how impressionists subjected themselves to the vicissitudes of the economy, see Isaacson 1980, 10–11.

time, then impressionism can be read as a key, transitional *artistic*—and as I will discuss later—*literary* response to its time.

Impressionism originated with the first impressionist exhibition (April 15–May 15, 1874), which exhibited a host of impressionistic pieces by thirty-one participating artists, including Cézanne, Degas, Monet, Pissarro, and Renoir (Isaacson 1980, ix; Nochlin 1966, 10).[12] The term "impressionist" was initially wielded as a derogatory label by the French critic Louis Leroy (Nochlin 1966, 10; Schapiro 1997, 21).[13] Other critics followed suit, admonishing these impressionist artists as provocateurs.[14] Such provocation and dissonance became characteristic of this group of artists who, it must be added, went on to hold as many as eight impressionist exhibitions between 1874–86.[15] But it was not until the third impressionist exhibition, which took place in April 1877, that these artists had actually appropriated and adopted the name "Impressionists" as their own designated label. In doing so, they further embraced the rebellious and counter-cultural spirit with which they were initially associated.[16] As Parkes recounts, "When Cézanne, Degas, Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, and their colleagues decided in 1877 to adopt the label 'impressionists,' originally bestowed on them as a mark of critical derision, they signaled their desire to embrace its implicitly belligerent rhetorical element" (2011, 10). This sentiment is echoed by House, who notes that the impressionists were also characterized as "independent" and "intransigent":

> It was these contexts that gave meaning to the three labels that were applied to the painters of the group in the years of their early exhibitions: "independent," because they rejected the state-organized, institutional structures of the art world by organising their own exhibitions; the explicitly political term "intransigent," because their attack on the dominant values of the art world could so readily be seen as an attack on the values of the

12. According to Parkes (2011), the first impressionist exhibition displayed works by a group of artists then called "Société Anonyme Coopérative d'Artistes-Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs, et Lithographes" (A cooperative limited company of artists-painters, sculptors, engravers, and lithographers). This group of artists would retroactively adopt the label of both "Impressionists" and "Independents." As Parkes describes, it is not until the fourth impressionist exhibition that this group adopted the title of "Independents" (2011, 211). Moreover, as Isaacson outlines, the label of "Independents" was for Degas "the artistically more neutral but socially more provocative label" that allowed these artists to affirm "thereby their own art-political stance rather than their artistic homogeneity" (1980, 4).
13. Louis Leroy satirically employed the term "Impressionist" in his review entitled "L'Exposition des impressionists" ("The Exhibition of the Impressionists"), which initially appeared in *Charivari* (Pandemonium) on April 25, 1874 (Nochlin 1966, 14). For more on Leroy's critique, see Rewald 1961, 318–24; Nochlin 1966, 10–14. For a discussion of the unusual pun with the French phrase "*peinture d'impression*" [impression painting] these artists may have had in mind when they initially adopted Leroy's term, see Schapiro 1997, 21.
14. After Leroy's scathing critique, other critics followed suit, admonishing the respective artists of the first impressionist exhibition as provocateurs who, as one critic decried, had essentially "declared war on beauty" (Parkes 2011, 10). The critics' outrage surrounding the impressionist exhibitions provokes the following question: what did impressionism put at stake or problematize such that it would be seen as such a threat to the pre-established artistic statutes of "beauty" and "painting" at large. For a discussion of how impressionist artists were potentially targeting a working and middle-class audience by holding unusually late exhibition hours, thereby bringing into relief impressionism's rebellious attitudes on how and for whom art was to be exhibited, see Isaacson 1980, 2–3.
15. Further impressionist exhibitions, with additional changes of cast would continue until the eighth and last impressionist exhibition, which was held from May–June 1886. For more information on the various respective impressionist exhibitions, see Herbert 1988, Isaacson 1980, Rewald 1973, and Schapiro 1997.
16. Parkes remarks how such dissonance was in fact typical of impressionism: "Such unruliness was, in fact, typical of the movement from the very beginning" (2011, 10).

"moral order" regime; and "impressionist," because their vision depended on sensory experience alone. (2004, 2)

These labels of "independent" and "intransigent" identified two rebellious qualities in the impressionists: their status as artists outside the hallowed halls of the Salon and Academy as well as their method of exhibiting, which was without a jury selection or preapproval from the Salon. Indeed, all the labels that the impressionists were given or appropriated signaled their highly radical and subversive mission: to challenge how art was to be *seen* both in its metaphorical (e.g., impressionist techniques used to highlight the process of seeing) and its literal sense (e.g., what nontraditional channels the artists used in order to exhibit and have their work *seen*).[17]

There were other factors that contributed to the impressionists' perceived rebellious spirit and implied radical edge. In *The Crisis of Impressionism*, Joel Isaacson (1980) finds evidence for the impressionists' entrepreneurial mission by pointing to a business charter that this "joint-stock company of artists" had originally drafted for their first exhibition. Here Isaacson identifies a threefold aim, which he summarizes as follows: "1) to hold exhibitions without a jury or system of awards, 2) to promote sales, and 3) to publish their own journal concerned exclusively with the arts. It was, in effect, a cooperative business enterprise, concerned with questions of responsibilities and benefits, liabilities and assets."[18] The first aim—"to hold exhibitions without a jury or system of awards"—provoked outrage precisely because it was conceived of as "an expression of artistic and personal liberty, an attempt to bypass and, in a limited way, to undermine constituted authority as represented by the annual, official Salon exhibitions and the jury system that governed admission to them." In this way, the impressionist group's manner of exhibiting entailed an overt break from the traditional methods upheld by the Salon and Academy. The impressionists' second aim—"to promote sales"—highlighted their entrepreneurial stance. Isaacson traces this back to their initial name—"Une société anonyme cooperative" (A cooperative limited company), which he believes highlights the group's establishment of themselves as "a corporation rather than a union." Taking into account this entrepreneurial spirit, Isaacson goes on to suggest that "they likened themselves more to artisans than to workers, to independent businessmen rather than employees, thus reflecting the basically middle-class origins and assumptions of most of its members" (1980, 2). Lastly, the third aim— "to publish their own journal concerned exclusively with the arts" was less organized and systematic, leading some to declare the lack of a manifesto by the artists themselves as evidence that impressionism did not constitute a movement. And yet, despite not having a unified critical platform, or perhaps because of it, the impressionist exhibitions instigated a flurry of scathing reviews and newspaper columns, resulting in a corresponding series of essays and articles written in their defense. These critical writings are the subject of the next section.

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17. In 1883, Jules Laforgue (1860–87) wrote an essay in defense of impressionism, entitled "L'Impressionnisme" ("Impressionism"), wherein he gave an intriguing account of the radical or "daring" aesthetic mission of the impressionist artists who wanted "there [to] be no more medals or rewards, and that artists be allowed to live in that anarchy which is life, which means everyone left to his own resources, and not hampered or destroyed by academic training which feeds on the past. No more official beauty; the public, unaided, will learn to see for itself and will be attracted naturally to those painters whom they find modern and vital" ([1902–3] 1966, 20).
18. Here Isaacson is summarizing the threefold aim outlined in the impressionists' business charter from the first impressionist exhibition (1980, 3). For the charter, see Adhémar and Gache-Patin 1974, 223.

The Critical Discourse Surrounding Pictorial Impressionism

While impressionism lacked both a clear doctrine and manifesto for its member artists to follow, the flurry of critical writings about impressionism (e.g., by the artists' friends, patrons, and critics, rather than by the artists themselves)[19] reveals that impressionism was a mode of inquiry into, experimentation with, and observation of modern life. Indeed, in referencing Poggioli's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Isaacson notes that despite impressionism's antagonism with the Salon and the Academy, it did not fit an "activist/antagonist model" (1980, 9) in the strict sense; yet it "did constitute a movement and . . . it 'must be considered a genuinely avant-garde movement, perhaps the first coherent, organic, and consciously avant-garde movement in the history of modern art'" (1980, 9; quoting Poggioli 1971, 132). In other words, it provoked a critical discourse, even if it did not originally have a unified critical discourse of its own.

Because the impressionists' unusual methodological innovation of adopting a visual platform was neither always well received nor well understood (due, in part, to the lack of writing by pictorial impressionists themselves), essays written in defense of impressionism appeared alongside critical objections of it. In her comprehensive compilation of critical essays and source materials from the impressionist period, *Impressionism and Post-Impressionism: 1874–1904*, Linda Nochlin speaks to the critical vitality surrounding what would retrospectively be identified as the impressionist movement or period:

> At no preceding time in the history of art had there been such a rapid succession of styles and movements, such vehement affirmations and denials of the validity of crucial aesthetic positions, such active and vocal participation in artistic discussion on the part of critics and men of letters. Time and again, the most basic questions—about the relation between art and nature, perception and reality, about the nature of reality itself—were raised by the Impressionists and the painters who followed them and reacted against them. In all cases, the advanced painters of the epoch struggled to free themselves from the bonds of traditional formulas and ready-made solutions to the problems of art and, at the same time, strove to attain authentic vision and to create valid pictorial metaphors for reality as they conceived of it. (1966, v)

While Nochlin goes on to say that an authentic vision factored into the impressionists' "enterprise," the "pervasive difficulty" of such a mission is readily acknowledged throughout their critical writings. This is perhaps one of the reasons for the abundance of contradictions that riddle the critical treatises and essays about impressionism, which often results in a general misapprehension of impressionism as contradictory, fragmented, and non-critical. And yet, by surveying some of the key writings on impressionism, a general model of experimentation with novel techniques in representation and observation can be inferred. This model can provide insight into what impressionism was attempting to do and the *effect* it endeavored to produce among its respective audiences.

For an earlier example of a response to the impressionist exhibitions, I turn to Edmond Duranty's (1833–80) *La Nouvelle Peinture* ("The New Painting"),[20] an essay he had written in 1876 in defense of the second impressionist exhibition. In this essay, Duranty attempts to

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19. For more on the critical writings on impressionism, see Nochlin 1966.
20. *La Nouvelle Peinture* ("The New Painting") initially appeared in a pamphlet in 1876. See Duranty 1986, 37–49; Nochlin 1966, 3–7.

"elucidate the aims of the impressionist group in its entirety" (Armstrong 1991, 74); however it is important to note that while he supports the impressionists' aim in this piece,[21] he neither uses the term "Impressionist" (Nochlin 1966, 3) nor "Impressionism" (Pigeon 2005, 87). In his endorsement of the impressionists' implied artistic objective, Duranty champions what he sees as their direct engagement with modern life: "the artist who is observer of modern life, a mordant commentator on contemporary manners, movement, and gesture" (Nochlin 1966, 3). This appraisal is seen more explicitly in Duranty's description of the painters' objective:

> The aim of drawing, in these modern attempts, is precisely that of becoming so intimately acquainted with nature and of embracing it so strongly that it [drawing] will become unexceptionable in all of its relationships to form and familiar with the inexhaustible diversity of character. Farewell to the human body treated like a vase with a decorative, swinging curve; farewell to the uniform monotony of the framework, the flayed figure jutting out beneath the nude; what we need is the particular note of the modern individual, in his clothing, in the midst of his social habits, at home or in the street. ([1876] 1966, 5)

Here Duranty explains that the objective of this new group of painters (i.e., the impressionists) is to promote a view of modern life that infiltrates and affects the way the artist observes, views, and, in turn, comes to communicate his or her art. This approach entails a novel way of seeing that exploits specific perspectives or vantage points that disturb and thereby draw attention to (or orient an audience toward) the depiction of modern life.

Such an investment in seeing as an orienting device is best exemplified by the impressionists' unique framings and perspectival cuts. For example, Isaacson contends that by "likening the picture frame to a window through which we communicate with the outside, he [Duranty] affirmed by recourse to daily experience the validity of the altered perspectives, occult balances, and abrupt croppings of images at the edges of the canvas, which he found, of course, primarily in the works of Degas" (1980, 16). As Duranty himself describes, novel framings enable communication, here seen vis-à-vis the frame procured by a window:

> From within, we communicate with the outside through a window; and the window is the frame that ceaselessly accompanies us. . . . The window frame, depending upon whether we are near or far, seated or standing, cuts off the external view in the most unexpected, most changeable way, obtaining for us that eternal variety and unexpectedness which is one of the great delights of reality. ([1876] 1966, 6)

As seen in this passage, Duranty's recounting of a representational method that demonstrates "the great delights of reality"—what he also calls "the marrow of life" (5)—is animated not only by capturing the "eternal variety and unexpectedness" of impressions "from within" (or, more precisely, the emotional life of its subject) but also by the ingenious technique of framing from without (the seemingly objective frame of the subject). Such a representational method further articulates the objective of the impressionists' enterprise: vision and orientation, whereby *seeing* becomes difficult in order to draw attention to how one sees in the first place; such a pedagogy of

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21. It is important to note that Duranty was not consistent in his support of the impressionists. As Nochlin elucidates: "about the other Impressionists—Monet, Renoir, and Pissarro—he [Duranty] expressed certain reservations" (1966, 3). For more information on Duranty, see Pool 1967, 153; Pigeon 2005, 87–93.

viewing and seeing privileges a process of seeing *anew*. In this way, impressionism constantly alludes to its ethical and social mission: to represent *all* aspects of life, including the often forgotten or overlooked perspectives of marginalized subjectivities. As Duranty confirms: "By means of a back, we want a temperament, an age, a social condition to be revealed; through a pair of hands, we should be able to express a magistrate or a tradesman; by a gesture, a whole series of feelings. . . . The pencil will be steeped in the marrow of life" (5). In the gathering of minute gestures and details to impart a whole world of feelings (e.g., the recording of depths from the viewing of surfaces), Duranty foregrounds the importance of point of view for impressionism's aesthetic logic.[22]

In this way, the objective of "this new realism" (Pigeon 2005, 90) becomes one that endeavors "to eliminate the partition separating the artists' studio from everyday life, and to introduce the reality of the street that shocks the writer in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*" (Duranty 1986, 44). As House further elucidates,

> A key passage in Duranty's essay of 1876, *La nouvelle peinture*, insists on the central importance of the physical viewpoint in the "new painting;" for him, novel viewpoints are one of the defining characteristics of the modern experience of the world. Insisting that "in real life the appearance of things and people are unexpected in a thousand different ways," he lists some of the most characteristic experiences: figures seen off-centre, objects viewed from above or below, scenes observed out of windows, and forms seen only partially, cut off by a frame or some other intruding object. All of these viewing positions, of course, also contravene standard artistic conventions; when they were presented in fine art, their unexpectedness was at one and the same time a marker of the modernity of the experience itself and of the "newness" of the painting. (2004, 105)

Thus, as House explains, Duranty envisions the impressionists' aim as a method of distilling impressions into an interactive model of experience that entails seeing anew. This aesthetic-experiential model essentially relies on the intrusion of disorienting frames (e.g., "off-centre figures," "forms seen only partially," "cut off by a frame or some intruding object") to disturb or shock a viewer into experiencing the process of seeing from another point of view.[23] In Duranty's implied impressionist logic, disorientation made possible by framing techniques serves to reorient the viewer's visual experience (although, it is important to note that this does not in fact guarantee that a viewer will be reoriented). Hence, by orchestrating unusual visual frames and points of view, the impressionists' method strategically implements visual disturbance. Such dynamic, visual tensions act as catalysts (shock effects) to problematize a viewer's experiential platform of seeing. Accordingly, impressionism relies on the following permutations of an impression: 1) the artist's subjective impression of a character or event that the artist attempts to portray through 2) a seemingly objective frame that 3) nevertheless privileges the artist's vision in the hope that this will allow the viewer to experience that vision in a similar manner. Therefore, the impressionists' mission may be read as capturing, via the

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22. Here it is important to note that because Duranty drew his own understanding of impressionism from works by Degas, "some falsely charged that *La Nouvelle Peinture* had actually been written by Degas" (Rewald 1973, 376). See also a note to the same effect made in Nochlin 1966, 3; Pigeon 2005, 87.

23. This resembles in some ways the formalist mission of forcing readers to take notice or see anew that Viktor Shklovsky outlines in his 1917 essay, "Art as Technique": "Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known" ([1917] 1965, 12). I address this parallel in more detail in chapter four.

aesthetics of framing, a subjective—albeit, presented as objective—position from which to experience modernity so as to reorient the viewer to *see* an "other" and *imagine* his or her relative experience of it.

Framing provides a semblance of objectivity that allows for the viewer to insert him or herself into the viewing position of the picture's vantage point, which has an outward-looking orientation. The impressionists' privileging of vantage points speaks to their desire to recreate the experience of seeing, so as to have viewers imagine what it would be like to see through another pair of eyes—from another vantage point and from another consciousness than their own. It is then the tension between the feeling of intimacy and detachment that compels the viewer to want to look into the picture and reposition his or her vantage point such that the viewer comes to share the same viewing position as the person in the painting. Take, for example, a picture of a man on a balcony looking out at the street below him, whereby the viewer can only see the man's back. In this case, the viewer's perspective is drawn not so much to the street life below the balcony, as to the man's potential perspective and experience of the cityscape below him.

While Duranty's essay is often cited as an example,[24] another critical essay, similarly composed in defense of impressionism, can be found in Théodore Duret's (1838–1927) essay, concerning the third impressionist exhibition.[25] In this essay from 1878, entitled "Les Peintres Impressionistes" ("The Impressionist Painters"), Duret points out how the art world easily dismisses anything that is different, revealing the inherent prejudices and antagonism toward novel ways of viewing the world that were characteristic of the impressionists' radical vision:

> Under the summer sun, with reflections of green foliage, skin and clothing take on a violent tint. The Impressionist paints people in violet woods. Then the public lets loose violently, the critics shake their fists, call the painter a "communist" and a rascal. The poor Impressionist vainly asserts his complete honesty, declares that he only reproduces what he sees, that he remains faithful to nature; the public and the critics condemn him. They don't bother to find out whether or not what they discover on the canvas corresponds to what the painter has actually observed in nature. Only one thing matters to them: what the Impressionists put on their canvases does not correspond to what is on the canvases of previous painters. If it is different, then it is bad. ([1878] 1966, 9–10)

Furthering Duret's point and outlining a more concrete description of the impressionists' goals, is Diego Martelli's (1833–96) "A Lecture on the Impressionists" (1880). This lecture was originally given at Circolo Filologico di Livorno (Philological Club of Leghorn) in 1879 and was subsequently published as a pamphlet in Pisa in 1880 (Nochlin 1966, 21). In this lecture, Martelli outlines the revolutionary and radical implications of impressionism's innovative way of perceiving and reproducing the modern world. He foregrounds how impressionism conceptualized (or rather, *perceived*) the world in a markedly different way:

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24. Pigeon notes that while Duranty was not a major critic, his essay *La Nouvelle Peinture* is valued as a source that references Degas and implies a type of impressionism informed by Degas: "Although Duranty is now considered a minor critic, because *La Nouvelle Peinture* was the only review of the show to highlight Degas, it remains important since it provides the most extensive discussion available of his work during the period" (2005, 87). See also Armstrong 1991, 73.

25. Théodore Duret (1838–1927) held many positions and occupations, including that of a "politician and journalist, art critic and collector . . . [and] chief defender of Manet and the Impressionists" (Nochlin 1966, 7).

> *Impressionism* is not only a revolution in the field of thought, but is also a physiological revolution of the human eyes. It is a new theory that depends on a different way of perceiving the sensations of light and of expressing the impressions. Nor do the *Impressionists* fabricate their theories first and then adapt the paintings to them, but on the contrary, as always happens with discoveries, the pictures were born of the unconscious visual phenomenon of men of art who, having studied, afterward produced the reasoning of the philosophers. ([1880] 1966, 25)

Indeed, the revolution of "the human eyes" that demanded "a different way of perceiving the sensations of light and of expressing the impressions" becomes central to understanding the modus operandi of impressionism's visual enterprise.

In attempting to portray modern life authentically, impressionist artists wrangled with the following dilemma: "Is the convincing image one that shows the world as the artist knows it to be, or is it one that shows it as he and others perceive it?" (Powell-Jones 1994, 5). Such a dilemma becomes more pronounced in the critical writings surrounding impressionism in part because of a change in interpretative approaches, which, according to House, can be attributed to a sharp shift in perceptual models superimposed upon the nineteenth-century viewer and spectator:

> Nineteenth-century viewers approached the business of interpretation rather differently from the ways in which we do today. The impact of modernist aesthetics has led us first to look at the overall effect of a work of art, and only later, if at all, to scrutinise its details. By contrast, this close scrutiny, this search for cues—or clues—to interpretation, was fundamental in the nineteenth century. We, now, tend to look at a picture from the outside in; they viewed it from the inside out, as the detailed readings of pictures in nineteenth-century art criticism show so clearly. In this process, they were constantly alert to a range of signs and clues in the image—the physiognomies, gestures and expressions of the figures, together with the attributes and details that surrounded them. (2004, 102)

Here a historically informed approach to interpreting paintings is integral to understanding how impressionism was both perceived and received during its time. As House points out, the nineteenth-century interpretative approach foregrounds how audiences interpreted paintings and aesthetics from an inside-out as opposed to the twentieth century outside-in approach. That impressionists were historically situated at the cusp of this inversion allowed them to experiment with interpretative approaches that collapsed traditional points of orientation in paintings. This is part of the reason why impressionism was seen as so disruptive and radical for its time, as it was disrupting traditional perceptual models of interpretation, using methods such as unusual framing and cuts, off-centered subjects, and mirrored reflections that show more of what is happening

beyond the frame of the painting—each of which potentially results in a sense of disorientation.[26] In sum, even though the impressionists still paid attention to details and gestures so vital to traditional pictorial depiction, they also incorporated novel methods, painting in a manner that forced viewers into positions that demanded more of their time, interpretative energy, and therefore participation. Given the goal of shifting responsibility onto the viewer, it becomes more understandable why the impressionists' experimentation with details (e.g., color, gesture, tone) and disorienting devices became so integral to their revolutionary and radical disjuncture from previous, traditional ways of seeing, perceiving, and experiencing art.

House's discussion of these shifting interpretative models is later supported with specific examples, among which Claude Monet's *Rue Saint-Denis, 30 June 1878* becomes a key case in point.[27] For House, this painting best exemplifies and epitomizes the shift from an inside-out to an outside-in interpretive approach, wherein several strategic placements of socio-political emblems beg a consideration of the multiple readings that can take place. As House explains,

> The flag on the right is, virtually illegibly inscribed 'vive la répub[lique]', and, amid the play of coloured touches, it is easy to miss the banner hanging across the street that reads 'vive la France'. Should these be seen merely as uncritical transcriptions of the slogans of the Fête Nationale, or can their absorption into the overall spectacle be viewed, rather, as a comment of sorts on the evasion of politics and history that the festival itself represented? Monet's art of the 1870s leaves us with many questions such as these. (2004, 111)

Interestingly, the political emblems hidden in this painting become paramount to understanding the dual interpretative fields that this painting occupies. In other words, the painting can be read according to two different modes depending on whether one approaches it interpretatively via an inside-out or outside-in approach. On the one hand, it may be interpreted as an impressionistic piece depicting the fleeting and multicolored festivity of the holiday, *Fête Nationale*; on the other hand, it may also be read as a commentary on the newness of the festivity, foregrounding in this way the make-shift or "equivocal politics of this festival, [which] was invented to celebrate France's recovery from the Franco-Prussian War and the opening of the Exposition Universelle" (110).

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26. House further elucidates how the viewer's relationship with art was disrupted and tested in various impressionist pieces, thereby demonstrating impressionism's conspicuous way of engaging its viewers as spectators: "[T]he urban scenes of the Impressionists plunged spectators back into the world that they had left behind them as they entered the gallery from the street outside: fine art offered no sanctuary here. Beyond this, the various ways in which the pictures activated the relationship between the viewer and the canvas made the paintings themselves act in a sense like a mirror—a mirror in which the viewer was forced to imagine himself or herself as an active participant in the scene depicted. Yet in another sense, the scenarios were quite unlike a mirror, since they were carefully staged and constructed so that the viewer's position and role were predetermined" (2004, 143).

27. Incidentally, Bang crossed paths with Monet at Sandviken in 1894. Greene-Gantzberg recapitulates Bang's brief meeting with Monet, wherein Monet was said to have made the following comment concerning Bang's work: "Well, then I must tell you that *Tine* as an *impressionistic work of art* is among the best" (1997, 76–77).

In light of this interpretive and methodological shift, Hannah finds House's reappraisal of the aesthetic and sociopolitical implications of impressionism apropos.[28] Hannah summarizes House's most germane points as follows:

> John House describes how the "characteristic viewpoint" of "the Impressionists' modern life scenes . . . involved, and implicated, the viewer in unfamiliar ways, by collapsing the barrier between the viewers' space and the action within the picture," a defamiliarizing process that "implicated" nineteenth-century viewers as "historical subjects," as "social, political and moral" agents. Through unsettling strategies (by use of frontal-facing figures, indeterminate spatial mapping of the observer's presence, or by focus "on the play of visual *sensations*" . . .), impressionist paintings install a sense of both optic and political uncertainty. (2013, 19; quoting House 2004, 103)

In this passage, the "defamiliarizing process that 'implicated' nineteenth century viewers" alludes to the viewer's experience with uncertainty amid the shifting "optical" (aesthetic) and "sociopolitical" (ethical) interpretations that art and literature dealt with at the turn of the century. Thus, if impressionism reinstated viewers as "historical subjects" by implementing a defamiliarizing process whereby the divide "between the viewers' space and the action within the picture" was collapsed, then impressionism can be read as an experimentation with the subject as a viewer who is constructed through viewing. That is, viewing becomes active rather than passive, and the necessity of the active construction of meaning on the part of the viewer then has the potential to make him or her aware that what is seen is constantly being determined and oriented.

It is important to note that House's reading of impressionism resonates with Bang's own ethically concerned aesthetics: in effect, Bang uses "unsettling"—or, what I am calling, "disorienting"—narrative strategies in his application of literary impressionism. The importance of looking at pictorial impressionism in an analysis of Bang's impressionism is that he uses a visual vocabulary to illustrate the effects he wants his experimentation with literary impressionism to fulfill (as I will show in the next section of this chapter). The implications of pictorial impressionism in Bang's aesthetic logic will be further unpacked in chapter two. There I will discuss how Bang uses traditional portraiture as a point of departure for his own experimentation with the impression. He borrows a visual vocabulary to articulate his vision of aesthetic practice—that is, how he wants to implement impressionism in the literary medium. I will return to the topic of Bang and his technique of impressionism (namely, disorientation) shortly; however, I will first provide a necessary but brief overview of recent scholarship surrounding literary impressionism in order to situate the conceptual framing that informs my reading of Bang's literary impressionism.

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28. House suggests reading impressionism as a part of its sociopolitical and historical context: "the Impressionist vision of the world belongs to a longer history, of the emergence of a secular world view, and correspondingly of notions of vision that depended on sense experiences alone, repudiating the authority of prior abstract knowledge, and more specifically rejecting a view of the natural world that depended on divine providence. . . . The issue of secularization was a crucial underlying factor in the social and political controversies of the 1870s; but our understanding will be limited if either the political specifics or the wider questions of belief are neglected" (2004, 2).

Literary Impressionism

Because pictorial impressionism fine-tuned a perceptual understanding of the impression as a mediatory process involving the viewer as a subject, aspects of impressionism translated effectively into the literary medium's capacity to attend to, and instruct (that is, become a pedagogical device to orienting and thereby reorienting) the reader in viewing the text. In this way, the task of the literary impression was to involve the reader in the work. What I hope to demonstrate in this section is that rather than the impression's having been merely a stylistic component of literature, it instead served a critical function, just as in pictorial impressionism. However, unlike pictorial impressionism, literary impressionism incorporates into its aesthetic logic a more intimate experimentation with the role of the reader as a viewer in a writer's "house of fiction" (James 1995, 7)[29]—that is, the reader is subjected to experience the effects of the unfolding narrative, something for which there is no correlate in pictorial impressionism.

But before detailing the complex and sometimes even contradictory capabilities of the concept of the impression, I will first examine its etymological origins. I will then show how the impression can be read alongside recent scholarship that has renegotiated and recuperated the role of the impression within literary impressionist discourse. According to Parkes and Hannah, the etymological roots of the word "impression" can be traced back to the Latin word, *impressio*, denoting "irruption," "onset," or "attack" (Parkes 2011, 4).[30] Hannah notes that in modern languages "an impression can denote physical exchange, an indenting, depressing, or marking of a surface, and the resultant imprint or mark (and, in a now obsolete form, 'to impression' something represented the verbal form of that act of indenting)" (2013, 1). Here, Hannah considers the latent violence in the word "impression" as a productive energy and intensity underlying impressionism. While violence is not often associated with impressionism, the dual function of the word *impression*—to both mark or stamp (impress) and be marked or stamped (impressed)—suggests violent potential. As Parkes puts it,

> Thus the notion of literary impressionism may be made to answer not only to the idea of psychological receptivity, with which it is often associated, but also to the sense of rhetorical emphasis or violence evoked by its etymological roots. . . . For, if impressionism bears the stamp of its time, it also does its fair share of stamping. (2011, 4)

In line with exploiting the extremes of the literary impression—that is, its capacity for violence and its logical other, empathy—literary impressionists also recognized that an impression produced by language was capable of both recording and reenacting the intensity of modern life.

In addition to its etymology, the term impression can also be traced to its rich but variously implemented appearance within the Western European philosophical tradition. Indeed, the term impression becomes especially nuanced in late nineteenth-century intellectual history, taking root in John Locke's and David Hume's philosophically informed approaches to the self:

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29. Adam Zachary Newton provides a crucial way of apprehending how authors, like James, can be understood as viewers in their own "houses of fiction" (1995, 146). According to Newton, the author's fictional constructions or "houses of fiction" are populated by fictional beings that situate the author as a viewer of his own fiction—that is the author is similarly confronted with a character he cannot fully know. If this is indeed the case, then readers can also be vicariously situated as viewers—looking into the same "house of fiction" that the author had constructed and thus participating in the viewing (perceiving) process of a certain impression.
30. Hannah further expounds upon the etymological roots of the word "impression." For this discussion, see Hannah 2013, 1–2. See also Matz 2001, 24.

>Late-nineteenth century deployments of a language of impressions grow out of an Enlightenment-born, liberal philosophical tradition, based in the work of writers such as John Locke and David Hume, that sought both to classify epistemologies of the self and to clarify the conditions for ethical public life in the emergent nation-state. Impressions in this tradition became the seat of self-awareness and self-construction at the same time that they became important terms in a vocabulary for explaining the structure of an emergent bourgeois public sphere. (Hannah 2013, 1)

Despite this rich history in the philosophical tradition, its transition into the literary domain was met with reservation. Even today, not all critics and scholars see eye-to-eye about literary impressionism and this is noticeable not only in its earlier reception, but also in its acculturation within academic discourse. Although Calvin Brown declared at the 1968 "Symposium on Literary Impressionism" (Benamou et al. 1968) that "literary impressionism" was no longer a valid literary term, scholarship since then has taken a more charitable attitude and tended to congregate around five general approaches: 1) focusing on literary impressionism's pictorial affinities, which includes attending to the use of color, light, and unfinished appearance rendered in their works (Kirschke 1981; Kroneggar 1973; Torgovnick 1985); 2) placing emphasis on the inchoate sensational world captured by impressionism (Beckett and Duthuit 1970); 3) looking to the mediatory space engendered by the literary impression (Katz 2000; Matz 2001; Peters 2001); 4) taking into (perhaps larger) consideration the sociological determinants of impressionism and even accounting for the latent violence implicit in its name (Parkes 2011; Rowe 1984); and finally, 5) viewing literary impressionism as a politics of seeing that is part and parcel of shifting notions on the public and private role of authorships at the turn of the century (Hannah 2013).[31]

While there are different ways of dicussing the value of the impression as an aesthetic practice, I find most intriguing the third, fourth, and fifth approaches' shared attempt to account for the impression's critical potential within an ethically concerned aesthetic practice. In particular, as I mentioned earlier, the recent scholarly works of Matz (2001), Hannah (2013), and Parkes (2011) have explored how the impression within literary impressionism can be restored from older, traditional models of understanding literary impressionism as a stylistic or pictorial application within the literary medium. By looking at how the literary impressionists utilized the term impression within their own respective critical writings, these scholars are able to recuperate a way in which the impression can again be appreciated for its attempt to implement techniques that could potentially involve readers in a way that would be transformative. I find these three scholars of particular importance to my own exploration of Bang's situation as a Scandinavian literary impressionist precisely because they are able to accommodate an expanded understanding of the ethical component of literary impressionism both historically and conceptually. Because of this, and because I build upon their scholarly insights, I will take this moment to address their respective positions on literary impressionism.

In *Literary Impressionism and Modernist Aesthetics*, Matz utilizes the works of Henry James, among other key authorial figures, such as Thomas Hardy, Virginia Woolf, Walter Pater, Joseph Conrad, and Marcel Proust, to demonstrate how literary impressionist writers understood the impression to be anything but a mere sketch or sensory indulgence:

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31. For an overview of scholarly approaches to literary impressionism, see Hannah 2013, 11–12.

> They did not mean that fiction should keep to the sketch, the fragment, the moment, the surface, the sense—that it should be "impressionistic." Such connotations come from painting, where impressions are momentary brushstrokes, or from philosophy, where impressions are primary sensations. The literary Impressionists meant that fiction should locate itself where we "have an impression": not in sense, nor in thought, but in the feeling that comes between; not in the moment that passes, nor in the decision that lasts, but in the intuition that lingers. If "fiction is an impression" it *mediates* opposite perceptual moments. It does not choose surfaces and fragments over depths and wholes but makes surfaces show depths, make fragments suggest wholes, and devotes itself to the undoing of such distinctions. (2001, 1)

Indeed, for Matz, literary impressionism seeks a perceptual "totality," which utilizes fiction as a mediator between "opposite perceptual moments." In this way, Matz sees the impression as a new method of representing life in the novel.

Building upon Matz's work, Hannah's *Henry James, Impressionism, and the Public* provides a case study of Henry James's own corresponding musings on publicity and engagements with impressionism. Like Matz, Hannah appeals to the impression's mediatory potential; however, unlike Matz, Hannah locates the impression's "mediation at the interspace between private and public," which permits him "to speak more broadly to James's engagement with disparate cultural-historical shifts in the realm of publicity at the tail end of the nineteenth century beyond the rise of the New Woman" (2013, 13).[32] By engaging with the cultural-historical shifts that contributed to an increased awareness of the importance of publicity at the end of the nineteenth century, Hannah analyzes how James's fictional and critical (journalistic) writings speak to James's developing understanding of impressionism and publicity.

Hannah's reading of literary impressionism similarly engages with and responds to Parkes's *A Sense of Shock: The Impact of Impressionism on Modern British and Irish Writing*. Parkes's study seeks to recontextualize and historicize the cultural phenomena that shaped the critical and artistic qualities of impressionism. Parkes makes a convincing case for recuperating the politically contentious issues that literary impressionism addressed. Reading literary impressionism in its historical context, Parkes is able to answer why impressionism was not only seen as so radical during its time, but also why its reception in academic circles has produced its own set of frustrations and stigmatizing responses. Parkes also accounts for literary impressionism in terms of both its formal style and the historical context in which its literary, cultural, social and political functions were developed and deployed. In this way, Parkes makes a case for reading "the 'literary' in literary impressionism" as grounded in "a wider historical context where the discursive relation between text and context is itself part of the problem" (2011, xv).

While Matz's, Hannah's, and Parkes's scholarly engagements with literary impressionism provide different nuanced angles and approaches to literary impressionism, they

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32. While Hannah agrees with and builds upon Matz's work, and even builds his own study from his work, he nonetheless still points out a key weakness in Matz's (2001) and Katz's (2000) contributions to literary impressionism: namely, that they do not adequately account for the impression's mediatory role in negotiating queerness. Nevertheless, while still a weakness in their accounts of literary impressionism, Hannah does not see this as taking away from the contributions they do make. As Hannah maintains, "While Matz's and Katz's models downplay impressionism's aesthetic investment in queer, same-sex, or triangulated collaborations, they offer a potential window onto the reflexive representational work done by the impression as an experiential unit between subjectivities" (2013, 13).

converge in their conceptual negotiation of the impression as a multifaceted critical category that could document in fiction the increasing intensity and volatility of life at the turn of the century. Such a conceptual reconfiguration of the impression's categorical imperative (as a way of documenting and reproducing "life" in fiction) resonates with Bang's ethically concerned aesthetic practice of literary impressionism. It is this particular resonance with Bang's own vision of literary impressionism to which I now turn.

Framing Bang: Impressionism and the Scandinavian Context

Literary Impressionism from the Scandinavian Perspective

Contextualizing Bang's critical and fictional works within the aforementioned conversations on literary impressionism necessitates first and foremost a discussion of the Scandinavian reception of literary impressionism. Accordingly, in this section, I turn to a discussion of both literary impressionism's reception in Scandinavia and Bang's critical approach to impressionism, as evidenced by "Impressionisme: En lille Replik" (1890, Impressionism: a short retort).

Recently, Camilla Storskog's article "Literary Impressionism and Finland: A Critical Digest" has provided an informative overview of Scandinavia's adoption of impressionist discourse. Storskog gives an account that discusses both the historically and theoretically specific reaction to contemporary critical debates about the significance of impressionism in Scandinavia at the turn of the century.[33] She shows how Scandinavian impressionism emerges as one that adapted, transformed, or, in other places, rejected a critical reception of literary impressionism. The term impressionism, Storskog notes, had its grand entrance on the stage of Scandinavian literary criticism, following the publication of the Norwegian writer Henrik Jæger's (1854–95) article "Om J.P. Jacobsen som novelist" (On J.P. Jacobsen as a novelist) in 1883. In response to Jæger's article, the Swedish novelist Gustaf af Geijerstam wrote a review in 1884, "Skuggspel, tidsbilder af Georg Nordensvan" (Shadow-play, images of the time by Georg Nordensvan), wherein he discusses the practical need for usurping and appropriating the term impressionism to account for the Norwegian author and critic Georg Nordensvan's (1855–1932) "literary method" (Storskog 2011, 390–91). According to Geijerstam (1858–1909), Nordensvan's appropriation of impressionism "owe[d] much to impressionistic painting" (391): "Impressionism, hvilket ju som bekant eljes egentligen betecknar en särskild riktning inom måleriet, är just rätta ordet för att beteckna det skrifsätt, som Nordensvan här användt" (quoted in Storskog 2011, 391) ["Impressionism, which, as is known, really refers to a particular current in painting, is the correct word with which to define the literary mode that Nordensvan here has used" (Storskog 2011, 391)].

Here, as Storskog relates, Geijerstam's personal understanding of the literary and artistic currents of the emerging pictorial impressionism of the 1880s led him to distill two defining

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33. Storskog discusses literary impressionism's reception specifically within Scandinavia, namely Finland and Sweden, noting that "Herman Bang [is] sometimes regarded as the only Scandinavian impressionist" (2011, 401). Interestingly, Storskog notes that "the critical category of literary impressionism" can be traced back to I. Leopold's 1907 discussion of Bang's *De uden Fædreland* (*Denied a Fatherland*) (407). While her article's focus is not Bang's authorship but the reception of Scandinavian literary impressionism, she still looks to Bang as an example of how impressionism was distilled within a Scandinavian context. Such a reception study—not so much of Bang himself, but of Scandinavian literary impressionism on a broader scale—proves useful to discerning the differences between the Scandinavian and international reception of literary impressionism.

characteristics or dimensions of literary impressionism:[34] "the question of the metonymic mode (the ability to render, with a few essential details only, an entire landscape or a whole object) and the idea of the untutored 'innocent eye' that is representing an object as it is seen rather than as it is known" (2011, 394). What is interesting is that Geijerstam sees a parallel between the artistic and literary impressionist techniques, while still identifying key literary techniques that distinguish literary impressionism from its pictorial predecessor:

> glimtvis uppfattade naturscenier [sic], dessa snabba ruminteriörer [sic], dessa samtal, der jämt så mycket är uppfångadt och bibehållet, som behöfs, för att man skall kunna förstå, dessa sammanträngda lifsskildringar, der de allmänna dragen tagits med ögonblicksfotografi, och detaljerna suddats bort. (quoted in Storskog 2011, 391–92)

> natural scenery caught in glimpses, swift room interiors, conversations, from which just as much is reported and maintained as is necessary to make the reader understand these concentrated life stories of which the general traits have been pictured with instantaneous photographs, and all details wiped out. (Storskog 2011, 392)

Such characteristic descriptions of literary impressionism speak to how Bang's impressionism is often analyzed—that is, via an interpretative approach that assumes pictorial impressionism as a derivative model. While such literary techniques and dimensions do play a central role in Bang's authorship, this view of literary impressionism is more prone to ahistorical readings. Indeed, Storskog cautions that Bang's impressionism often contributes to the "conceptual uncertainty" already subtending literary impressionism: "The reference to Herman Bang adds yet another ingredient to the soup of conceptual uncertainty that had been boiling since the 1880s when the Scandinavian critics first tried to trace the essence of literary impressionism" (2011, 401). While Storskog does not focus primarily on Bang, she nevertheless does provide a reading of his authorship in light of the broader theoretical dimension of literary impressionism and its reception in Scandinavia at large:

> The Scandinavian writers connected with the movement, first and foremost Herman Bang (who very rarely used the term and ultimately came to consider it an incomprehensible foreign idiom), did not invent the definition to characterize their own works. If literary impressionism more than anything seems to be an "affaire uniquement de critiques" [purely a matter for critics], it is interesting to note that this category created by Brunetière and his fellow critics in the late nineteenth century was often viewed as suspicious—in many cases by the very same critics who made use of the term and most certainly by their twentieth-century followers. (408; quoting Pouzet-Duzer 2008, 124).

Here Storskog draws out an important point: that Bang rarely used the term impressionism, and when he did, he was suspicious of its otherwise foreign characteristics. While this is true when considering impressionism as an *artistic* movement (and, moreover, Bang's own hesitation about the dominance of any one particular representative form), it does not resonate with Bang's

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34. According to Storskog, Gustaf af Geijerstam was pivotal for introducing literary impressionism to Finnish readers: "Thanks to the mediation of Geijerstam, who introduced it into the critical discourse in 1884, however, the Finnish readers were acquainted rather early, at least from a Scandinavian point of view, with the idea of impressionism in literature" (2011, 408).

critical application and interest in the mediatory potential of the impression for his own vision of the objective aim of the *literary* impressionist. Evidence to these points can be found in Bang's 1890 essay on impressionism, wherein his literary project, as we shall see later, bears particular resonance with Henry James's discussion of the impression in fiction or Viktor Shklovsky's formalist vision on the literary enterprise of forcing readers to see differently. I will address James and Shklovsky in later chapters.

Appearing in *Tilskueren* (The spectator) in August 1890, Bang's "Impressionisme: En lille Replik" takes exception to Erik Skram's (another Danish Breakthrough author) understanding of the impressionist method and objective aim. In direct reply to Skram, Bang goes on to suggest some of the ways in which he comprehends the role of the literary impressionist and how impressionism functions as a narrative art. For Bang, the literary impressionist's narrative art offers a unique lens into the emotional life of its subjects because unlike the psychological novel's tendency toward "Dvælen og de Overvejelser [lingering and deliberations], the literary impressionist novel constructs its subject from a different vantage point. Instead of trying to fully describe the subject, the literary impressionist, according to Bang, respects its subject's enigmatic emotional life. What this means is that rather than explaining, the literary impressionist's narrative art must become as accommodating of its subject's complex emotional life as possible, allowing the subject to "live" in the text's surface rather than to become petrified in a description or explanation of the subject's fathomed depths: "Impressionisten tror, at det menneskelige Følelsesliv med al dets tusendfoldige Sammensathed er et endeløst og altfor uredt Garn. Han strækker magtløs Vaaben overfor denne gaadefulde Blandingaf bevidst og ubevidst, af villet og viljeløst" (Bang 1994, 46) [The impressionist thinks that the human emotional life with all its various complexity is an endless and altogether untidy net. He draws his weapons powerlessly vis-à-vis this mysterious blend of conscious and unconscious, of will and will-lessness].[35]

Moreover, as Bang's essay further elucidates, the literary impressionist's objective is one of portraying the *living* human—with all its complex, unknowable emotions, such that its subject may retain the very same aura of mystery that made it of initial interest to the writer himself: "Impressionisten er netop 'Medvider i denne Hemmelighed ved vort Liv i Naturen og mellem Menneskene'" [The impressionist is precisely an "accomplice in the mystery of our life in nature and among people"]:

> Hans Fremstillings Maal er da at gøre disse handlende Mennesker *levende*. Han higer møjsomt efter, ad hundrede Veje, at frembringe den yderste Illusion af bevæget Liv. Og naar han paalægger sig al denne Møje, er det netop, fordi han tror, at Læserens "Hjærne er et overmaade drevent Redskab"—saa drevent et Redskab, at den overfor denne "levende" Kunst vil magte det samme som overfor selve Livet: Læseren vil ogsaa i Kunsten "se mere end hans Øjne er i Stand til at sanse, forstaa mere, end han netop har Ævne til at opfatte." (Bang 1994, 47)

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35. There is a resonance between Bang's discussion of the impression and that of his contemporary, Henry James. In James's essay "The Art of Fiction" (1884, 1888) experience and the impression become interwoven in a complex web: "Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spiderweb of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness and catching every airborne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative—much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius—it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations" (James 1986, 172). This bears affinity with Bang's own description of experience and feelings as a web or "uredt Garn" (1994, 46) [untidy net] in "Impressionisme: En lille Replik" (Impressionism: a short retort).

(His exposition's goal is then to make these rendered people *alive*. He painstakingly aspires to produce, in a hundred ways, the outer illusion of moving life. And when he imposes all this struggle upon himself, it is precisely because he thinks that the reader's "brain is an exceedingly astute tool"—so astute a tool, that in facing this "living" art, it will manage the same as in life: in art the reader will also "see more than his eyes are used to sensing, comprehend more, than he actually has the ability to perceive.")

In identifying the objective of impressionism as a process of seeing where "more than his eyes are used to sensing"—that is, *seeing anew*—Bang's essay resonates with Duranty's contention. For them, impressionist art, whether in pictorial or narrative art, is not only about aesthetics but also about ethics: impressionism employs an ethically concerned aesthetics that situates seeing as a value-laden category, interestingly revealing a whole host of moral and social implications vis-à-vis its ability to portray, or rather, reveal how seeing is always already an oriented process. Here the ethical force underlying impressionist aesthetics lies in the placement of responsibility onto the reader—a reader who, in trying to decipher meaning, "can be brought to see": "Og det *mere*, som han tror, Menneskene ogsaa i Kunsten kan bringes til at se, det er netop—den Sum af Tanker, som rummes i Handlingerne og som afspejles i dem (47–48) [And the *more* that he thinks people can be brought to see in art, it is precisely that—the sum of thoughts, contained in deeds and reflected through them].

Accordingly, the impressionist method relies on an intimate system of surface and minute observations challenging the reader to read into the otherwise mysterious poses, gestures, and actions of its characters as signposts for an otherwise illegible emotional life: "Som al Kunst vil ogsaa den impressionistiske Fortællekunst gøre Rede for de menneskelige Følelser og for Menneskers Tankeliv. Men den skyr al direkte Udredning og viser os kun Menneskenes Følelser i en Række af Spejle—deres Gerninger" [As all art, the impressionistic narrative art also wants to take into account human feelings and human intellectual life. But it eschews all direct explanations and shows us only the human's emotions in a series of mirrors—their deeds]. What is interesting, however, is that even though the impressionist author is supposed to reveal his or her subject through a "row of mirrors," these "mirrors" and their reflections are determined by the author's careful subjective perspective in determining what is most important for the description of a character, and correspondingly, for the reader to see:

Her synes Impressionisten da, idet han fremstiller den ustandsede Handlen, at medtage *alt*. Men i Virkeligheden er hans Kunst som al anden: Kunsten at sammentrænge. Hans Arbejde er at udskille væsentligt fra uvæsentligt, og han medtager i sin Skildring i Virkeligheden kun de *væsentlige* Handlinger, det vil sige en Handlingsrække, hvor hver lille Handling er et Glughul ind i det skildrende Menneskes Tankeliv—en Række af Udfaldsporte ind i Følelseslivet hos den Skildrede. Summen af Tanker, Vævet af Følelser, som den drevne Hjærne saaledes kan naa bag om de medtagne Handlinger, er det impressionistiske Værks dulgte Indhold. Dets Værd beror paa Dybden af alt det—som ikke siges. (Bang 1994, 48)

(Here the impressionist, while he describes ongoing actions, seems to include *everything*. But in reality his art is like all other [art]; the art that condenses. His work is to weed out the essential from the inessential, and include in his representation of reality only the

essential actions, that is to say, an action-series where every little action is a peephole into the depicted human's mental life—a series of gateways into the emotional-life of the depicted. The sum of thoughts, the fabric of emotions, through which the driven mind can reach behind the folded-in actions, is the hidden content of the impressionistic work. Its worth depends on the depth of all that which cannot be said.)

Finally, perhaps Bang's most astute observation is that even though in its time, impressionist narrative art is the form most attuned to portraying the human condition, it is still a form; and like all other art forms, it will one day be usurped by another form that meets the representational challenges of its time: "Den impressionistiske Fortælleform vil vel, som alle Kunstens Former, kun have sin Tid. Men selv den Dag, hvor den er afløst af en ny Form fra Fremstilling, vil Impressionismens Nytte spores. Tiden vil have skærpet Fordringen til Skildringens Anskuelighed" (49) [The impressionistic narrative form will presumably, like all art forms, only have its time. But even when the day comes when a new form of representation replaces it, impressionism's usefulness will be noticed. Time will have sharpened the claim of lucidity in description]. Bang's attunement to the historical situation of form and its eventual displacement by other art forms underscores how the underlying problematic of the impressionist narrative art was, for Bang, one of form itself. While I will not go into this here, it is something I will return to when looking at the impression's dual function (both in the sense of *taking in* and *giving* the impression) as mediating the narrative art form's capability to attend both to a representative and dramatic mode.

Bang's outlined meditations on the functioning role of the impression suggest that his true subject becomes the reader (*Læseren*).[36] By referring to the impression's critical mediatory role, Bang effectively targets and outlines his ethically concerned aesthetic logic and hence literary agenda: the use of the impression in its double implication as both a mark/stamp and marker/process of being stamped (which, it must be added, implies an openness or receptiveness to being stamped). Essentially, the impression functions as an effect that disorients in order to reorient the reader to marginalized characters and their hidden emotional lives. Moreover, this essay helps foreground Bang's nuanced approach to literary impressionism—seeing the potential in its narrative strategy of disorientation as a means of reorientation, while understanding its historically contingent existence as a narrative form. In this way, Bang's essay on impressionism gives a brief glimpse into the direction and purpose Bang assigned to the literary impressionist's method and form. What then becomes clear is the tension between a traditional understanding of impressionism as a vague aesthetic style and Bang's understanding of literary impressionism as an ethically concerned aesthetic practice. These tensions in understanding Bang as an impressionist open the question of how central literary impressionism is to an understanding of

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36. This resonates with James's own use of the term "impression." According to Pigeon, James locates the value of the impression in its ability to alter the consciousness of its protagonist and produce an effect; which, incidentally, relies on the reader's privileged vantage point to witness such an effect. As Pigeon summarizes: "Significantly, the value of the impression is not limited to the intensity of the passing moment; rather the value of the impression—its intensity or power—depends on its ability to alter the consciousness of the protagonist and thus generate a lasting effect. The reader, moreover, is granted a privileged position from which to observe this process and is thereby invited to vicariously participate in the deciphering of the received impression—'to guess the unseen from the seen'—an interpretative act that creates the uncanny effect of experience consciously felt, what James aptly calls 'the illusion of life'" (2005, 57–58; quoting James 1987, 195). I will return to a discussion of James in greater detail in chapter two.

his authorship. This issue becomes the fulcrum of the next section, which considers Scandinavian scholarship on Bang as a literary impressionist.

Herman Bang, the Scandinavian Literary Impressionist

While scholarship on Herman Bang has categorized him, on the one hand, as a Modern Breakthrough author with impressionistic tendencies (Fjord Jensen 1961; Rossel 1992; Sørensen 2009) or "nervous" predilections in his aesthetic style (Lindén 2008; Rosenberg 1912; Schoolfield 2004; Zerlang 2001), and on the other hand, as a literary impressionist (Nilsson 1965; Møller Kristensen [1955] 1965; Greene-Gantzberg 1997; Driver 1970a, 1970b), such canonical categorizations and scholarly considerations have remained curiously divorced from more contemporary developments and reappraisals of literary impressionism in Western Europe and the United States (Parkes 2011; Matz 2001; Hannah 2013). And yet the exclusion of Bangian scholarship from a more Anglo-American discourse on literary impressionism makes sense for the following reasons: 1) Bang was not perceived as being a part of the international community of impressionist artists and writers; 2) his theoretical writings gesture toward an impressionist ideology but never fully embrace the term literary impressionism; 3) his writings were entrenched with references and approaches to the theater that made their way into his narrative style and attest to a more dramatic rather than traditional model of perception than is normally attributed to literary impressionism; and, 4) Bang was responding specifically to the Scandinavian Modern Breakthrough, rather than a more international European impressionism. Still, given these reasons for why Bang has traditionally been read outside a primarily literary impressionistic model, there remains the question of why scholars tend to use the term "impressionist" to describe his work. In other words, what, if anything, does keeping literary impressionism in the lexicon of Bangian scholarship reveal about his authorship?

Indeed it seems logical to assume that if impressionism can be identified in Bang's work (Nilsson 1965; Møller-Kristensen [1955] 1965; Greene-Gantzberg 1997), then it would make sense to reconsider his impressionism in light of current developments and renegotiations surrounding what literary impressionism was (historically speaking)—that is, what it was responding to, and what it intended to do (even if these literary projects were not always successful). Building primarily on the work by Storskog (2011), Heitmann (2011), Sørensen (2009), Lindén (2009), Zerlang (2004), Lund (1993), Jensen and Jonker (1978), Secher (1973), Mortensen (1970), Nilsson (1965), Møller Kristensen ([1955] 1965), Fjord Jensen (1961),[37] and read alongside Bangian scholarship available in English (Greene-Gantzberg 1997; Driver 1970a, 1970b), my ensuing analysis examines how literary impressionism has been discussed in relation to Bang's work. In the section that follows, I address two related questions: firstly, how does Bang's impressionism embody the goals of the broader literary impressionistic agenda? And secondly, how is Bang's impressionism contextualized or accounted for within the Scandinavian scholarly tradition?

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37. Johan Fjord Jensen's (1961) study, *Turgenjev i dansk åndsliv: Studier i dansk romankunst 1870-1900*, provides a comprehensive study of Turgenev's influence on Danish literature at the turn of the century, wherein he discusses Turgenev's influence on Bang. While not solely about Bang, Fjord Jensen does posit that Bang's impressionism is informed by Turgenev. For more on this see Fjord Jensen 1961, 224–30, 252–68. For a rebuttal to Fjord Jensen's claim that Bang's impressionism arose in part from Turgenev's influence and in part from Jonas Lie's influence, see Nilsson 1965, 129–32.

Scholarly Perspectives on Bang's Impressionism

In this section I discuss a handful of critical works in Bangian scholarship that look to Bang's impressionism as central to a discussion of his authorship. While my approach differs in some ways from theirs, these scholars have provided informative ways of discussing Bang's impressionism. For example, Vivian Greene-Gantzberg (1997) provides the most accessible study in English that conducts a contemporary biographical reading of Bang's impressionism, surveyed in light of his entire authorship. Gantzberg is able to contextualize and thereby open up a discussion of Bang's respective membership and categorization as a literary impressionist within a more international context. This work offers a much-needed review of Bang's authorship that concomitantly describes his biography in both a Scandinavian (primarily Danish) and European literary context and, in doing so, provides reason to understand him through the lens of literary impressionism. While this contextualization is a crucial starting place, a comprehensive picture of Bang as a literary impressionist would require the following: 1) a more concrete analysis of Bang's adoption of literary impressionism via close readings, 2) a more detailed study of Bang's critical writings and those of other literary impressionists, and, 3) an understanding of Bang's narrative style as less "the consequence of [his] understanding the relation of life to art" (1997, xv) and more an intentional methodological investment in delving into the purpose of literature vis-à-vis his critical musings on realism and the role of the impression. While Greene-Gantzberg does point to Bang's theoretical investment in discussing realism, she does not situate how this fits within a larger literary project or definable agenda, let alone within Bang's particular brand of literary impressionism. In other words, at the end of the study, it remains unclear whether Bang developed his own type of impressionism or whether he merely adopted certain aesthetic tendencies, which consequently mark his work as impressionistic. In this way, Greene-Gantzberg does not touch on why we should consider Bang to be a literary impressionist. Still, Greene-Gantzberg's study delineates an informative biographical reading of Bang's impressionism, one that begins to recontextualize his authorship within a larger comparative literary context that is necessary for any subsequent rereading and reexamination of Bang's literary impressionism.

Torbjörn Nilsson (1965), on the other hand, provides a detailed and comprehensive reading of Bang as a literary impressionist. Nilsson argues against a reading of Bang as an impressionist whereby impressionism casts him as "a cultural aesthete and as a representative for a style of writing themed by degeneration and decadence." Such readings of Bang as an impressionist tend to reaffirm rather than challenge the conception of Bang "as being disinterested in social and political questions while little noting that faith in progress and the demand for individual freedom were among his fundamental conceptions" (1965, 297; quoting English summary). While arguing against a specific discussion of impressionism spurred by debates about the validity and relevance of literary impressionism as a literary term—namely, those espoused by Møller-Kristensen ([1955] 1965) and Lundevall (1965)—Nilsson contends that it would be unproductive to read Bang as part of such a generalized (mis)understanding of literary impressionism. Instead, Nilsson argues that if one is to associate Bang with impressionism, one needs to do so in the terms Bang intended: "Bang menade något bestämt, när han använde sig av termen, och vad han menade framgår med stor klarhet både av en analys av hans teknik från och med år 1885 och av hans egna uttalanden om den" (119) [Bang meant something definite, when he used the term (impressionism), and what he meant can be seen with great clarity both by an analysis of his technique from the year 1885 and by his own statements

about it]. To combat such misperceptions about impressionism, Nilsson looks to Bang's journalism, in particular, to seek not only what Bang potentially meant with his impresssionism, but also to demonstrate that "he was a child of his time and grew up in the spiritual climate which created the so called modern breakthrough in Scandinavian Breakthrough" (297; quoting English summary). While Nilsson's study provides an in-depth and comprehensive reading of Bang's specific brand of impressionism vis-à-vis his journalism, he isolates Bang's type of impressionism from a broader comparative scholarship on literary impressionism. Perhaps this is in part because of the rampant attacks on literary impressionism occurring among scholarly circles during the 1960s (Benamou et al. 1968), in turn making it difficult to localize and affirm a concrete definition or approach to literary impressionism.

Other works tackling the issue of Bang's impressionism through a more historical and contextual reading include those by Martin Zerlang (2004) and Peer E. Sørensen (2009). Like Nilsson, Zerlang also makes a case for how journalism impacts Bang's writing. Zerlang writes: "Avisen er også et af de vigtige mønstre for Bangs eksperimenter med romanformen" (2004, 243) [The newspaper is also one of the key designs for Bang's experiments with the novel form]. Here Zerlang suggests that Bang employs a style that emulated newspapers—thus producing an aesthetic style that could simulate the nervousness of the times Bang was describing.[38] Alternatively, while less focused on impressionism as a prism for unpacking Bang's authorship, Sørensen provides a way of reading Bang's ambivalence—an ambivalence that is often assumed to be a byproduct of his impressionism or impressionistic tendencies. As Heitmann recapitulates, Sørensen argues that Bang's work is developed out of a series of (unresolved) ambivalences "mellem det dekadente og det vitale, mellem realisme og allegori og mellem det ironiske og det sentimentale" (2011, 68) [between the decadent and the vital, between realism and allegory and between the ironic and the sentimental]. Accordingly, Sørensen reads Bang's work as "chaotically" performing the tensions of modernity's unresolved ambivalences: "Herman Bangs kunst lever i og af ambivalenser" (2009, 112) [Herman Bang's art lives from and on ambivalences]. Such ambivalences are, for Sørensen, a byproduct of modernity, wherein modernity's illusions bounce back and forth between unresolved tensions (e.g., between attraction and repulsion). Sørensen's claim about ambivalence underscores my own point: however scholars may differ in their opinion about to what end Bang employs it, Bang's aesthetic logic favors a type of effect. I see Bang's aesthetic logic as favoring an ethically concerned aesthetic (disorientation as a technique that allows for a reader's reorientation) rather than a purely stylistic model.

What becomes apparent from a review of Bangian scholarship is that his impressionism relies on a distinct narratorial maneuver vis-à-vis objective narration. Such an objective narration is contingent on authorial absence within the narrative, which some scholars see as Bang's most distinctive trademark. As Storskog affirms: "Bang's unique impressionism demanded its own terminology and implied, among other things, the use of an impassive narrator who did not intrude into the impressions of the characters and relied on the senses as the only source of information" (2011, 409). Sven H. Rossel (1992) also finds that a focus on objectivity is key to Bang's impressionism. In *A History of Danish Literature*, Rossel outlines how objectivity is integrated into Bang's narrative practice and methodological approach: "[Bang] asserted that literature ought not to be tendentious; he eventually maintained that instead of expressing opinions, the author should disappear behind the characters and scenes created and thus give a

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38. Here Zerlang (2004) develops this interpretation based on a comparison between Bang and the Danish author, Johannes V. Jensen (1873–1950).

semblance of objectivity" (1992, 280). Resonating with Rossel's description is Nilsson's statement: "objectivity is one of the most fundamental concepts behind his [Bang's] impressionism" (1965, 299; quoting English summary).

And yet, what did such objectivity entail and to what end? According to Nilsson, Bang's "theory and practice" of impressionism "concerned never 'telling something about anything but showing everything'" (Nilsson 1965, 308; quoting English summary). Thus "only gestures, reactions and lines are rendered and the narrator avoids any analysis, any more detailed commentary to that which plays itself out before the reader's eyes" (305; quoting English summary). Thus, to create such an effect, Bang saw to it that "people should be followed as they walked, talked and stood, as they sat and got up and moved their hands. Every movement that was described should be like a spotlight into the person's innermost" (308; quoting English summary).

Siding against Nilsson's and Sven Møller Kristensen's ([1955] 1965) emphasis on Bang's objectivity is Klaus P. Mortensen (1970), who argues that objectivity is an illusion in Bang's work. As Mortensen contends, "Bang er på ingen måde objektiv i betydningen passivt medium, men selektiv, komponerende og uhyre bevidst i sin skaben, og for en grundig analyse fremstår hans værk derfor ingenlunde som et væv af uforarbejdede virkelighedsindtryk. Objektiviteten er en tilstræbt illusionsvirkning" (1970, 57) [Bang is in no way objective in the sense of a passive medium, but selective, composing and acutely aware of his creativity, and a thorough analysis situates his work by no means like a web of raw impressions of reality. Objectivity is a studied illusion effect].[39] Here Mortensen presents Bang's objectivity not as a transparent medium of reporting or presenting, but rather as one that is contingent on the appearance or, rather, illusion of transparency. Read this way, objectivity is just an illusion.

Astrid Jensen and Jytte Jonker respond to Klaus P. Mortensen's mistrust of how objectivity can be possible when a reader is supposed to simultaneously arrive at a subjective interpretative of the conclusion: "Klaus P. Mortensen does not cast any doubts on the fictionality of the 'houses', but expresses concern as to how on earth the reader is to arrive at an interpretation with this kind of disguised narrator, who indeed seems to slip away between your fingers, and changes class, sex, and social status just as it suits him" (1978, 105). Alternatively, Jensen and Jonker read Bang's objectivity as producing a smokescreen effect,[40] one that makes the rhetorical functionality of the text dependent on the reader—that is, a model that implicates the reader as a co-creator of the text's ending. They write, "the text carries with it an expectation of being completed—or of developing further—in the mind of the future reader" (128).

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39. Such a perspective on objectivity as an aesthetic effect resonates with Guy de Maupassant's (1850–93) own statement in his 1887 preface to *Pierre et Jean*, entitled "Le Roman," wherein he describes the writer's attempt to reproduce "the illusion of truth" (1979, 27). Incidentally, both James and Bang write about Maupassant and also Ivan Turgenev (the subject of the next chapter). For a brief discussion of James's respective discussion of illusion and impressions, see Hannah 2013, 9–11. For James's 1888 essay on Maupassant, see James 1986, 197–231. For a discussion of Bang on Maupassant, see Nilsson 1965, 132–34.

40. Astrid Jensen and Jytte Jonker describe the smokescreen effect as follows: "The 'Vorhang' or smokescreen which the implied author puts between himself and what is being narrated, is amongst other things the non-interpreted observation of non-verbal communication. This division is however not only vertical-between the narrator and what is narrated-it also has a horizontal function, because it means that the reader is drawn into the rhetorical dimension, or in other words, that the text is no longer self-sufficient. The text as we have it is in unfinished form. It is in the future, with the reader, that solutions and conclusions lie" (1978, 127).

The Task of Bang's Impressionism

In reviewing how Bangian scholars have grappled with understanding and explaining Bang's impressionism, it becomes apparent that objective narration (or the illusion thereof) is a crucial feature. However, whether the narration is *really* objective is of secondary importance. What matters is why Bang is so concerned about maintaining a sense of objectivity, whether real or illusory. I contend this is because he believes that creating a sense of objective narration for the reader is essential for the effectiveness of the impression that the author intends to leave on the reader. Regardless of how objective the actual presentation is, in both instances, it is the author's impression of life—namely, an impression of a character (taken from "real" life, as is the case when Bang is drawing, as he confesses, from a trough of "memories")—that matters.[41] What concerns him is *giving* (impressing into a text) or transferring the impression of a character whether drawn from the real world (memories) or an illusion. To render such an impression "living" within the literary medium, an intermediary step is necessary: non-subjective (that is, objective) narration. Non-subjective narration relies on the overt removal of the author's personal or pronounced investment in the impression of the main character. Following this logic, objective (that is, the non-subjective) narration is the intermediary step necessary to *recording* or *impressing* the impression. However, the literary impressionist, as Bang discovers, cannot stop here. Instead, there is an additional step: not only the *giving* of the impression (i.e., that is, recording the details of the character for the reader to interpret), but the receipt of the impression by a third party, namely, the reader.

I propose that this next step in Bang's literary impressionist method—wanting to make the reader experience the effect of the fictional agent or character as a person—relies on formal effects or techniques borrowed from the theater. What this step entails is essentially "impressing" the reader (that is, marking the reader with the impression) through these formal techniques. As I will later show, Bang deploys a technique of impressionism—disorientation—seen either via violent language or disconcerting endings that essentially provoke the reader to rethink how the narrative's objectivity has oriented him or her all along. While not every reader will read accordingly, what matters here is that Bang involves the reader in his aesthetic logic. For Bang, literature's ethical force resides in its potential to shock or disorient readers to see anew—which for him means seeing otherwise marginalized or unimpressive characters. Bang knew that merely giving them voice and making them the central characters of his fiction might not be enough to draw readers into empathizing with such "pathetic" characters. In order to prime the reader to take on the responsibility of empathizing with the character, Bang essentially stages an objective narration of the character and later simultaneously exhibits and problematizes the narrator's authority by the narrative's end—thereby arriving at a juncture where the reader is given the responsibility to decipher meaning or to make sense of what has just occurred at the novel's or novella's end. In this way, Bang shifts the responsibility of apprehension onto the reader. His perhaps naïve belief in the reader's ability to decipher meaning and "see" anew anticipates a reader that is receptive to the formal effects and techniques of impressionism. While I will not assess the success of Bang's enterprise here, as the goal of this dissertation is a reinterpretation of his use of impressionism, I do think that it is important to note how the reader figures in Bang's aesthetic logic. In sum, Bang's experimentation with what I call disorientation (a technique of impressionism) stages aesthetics ethically precisely by placing the reader at a

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41. In his preface to *Tine*, Bang discusses how his memories (*Erindringer*) ultimately inform his fiction and respective choice and vision of characters ([1889] 1986, 9–15).

juncture where the ethical demands of a (fictional) other are most likely to be felt or experienced.

Thus, to return to the issue of objectivity often discussed in Bangian scholarship—whether Bang's objectivity is based on the *illusion* of objectivity or in the successful reproduction of an objective reality—what remains pertinent to my analysis is that, either way, the reader is envisioned and intricately involved in Bang's aesthetic logic. Bang's impressionistic experimentation with objectivity, as I have argued, is then predicated on his commitment to getting his reader to see anew. This process of *seeing* requires not only that the author *give* the impression of objectivity but also use that impression to make the reader experience or *take in* the impression and hence, consider its meaning. This process foregrounds Bang's reliance on a specific type of reader—one who understands that seeing has been constructed all along. While I do not intend to suggest that all readers will respond accordingly (and, in essence, be reoriented), I believe that his vision of a dynamic aesthetics that involves the reader, only to then disturb his or her perspective, speaks to his investment in working through how perception entails or implicates an ethics. In such a perceptual model of viewing, the observed object (the subject or main character) is not only seemingly objectively observed and recorded by the author but also, once placed within a narrative, perpetually re-observed by readers whose value-laden system of viewing already orients them to see (perceive) one way or another. Put another way, if objectivity as authorial absence is fundamental to his work, it is to trouble or disorient the reader in order to reorient perception toward an ethics of seeing. While on the one hand, Bang gestures toward a pictorial impressionism in terms of drawing attention to how a viewer (reader) sees—the appropriation of this model into the literary medium necessitates a performative immediacy that he borrows from the theater. Literary impressionism, for Bang, surpassed the pictorial medium in that it could likewise incorporate and use the dramatic power or force of theater to motivate and shock readers into seeing anew—that is, to seeing and in turn responding to the ethical demands of an "other." Bang's well-known interest in the theater will further help us understand what I see as his technique of impressionism—disorientation.

Bang's Scenic Novel: Staging the Impression

For the literary impressionist, *giving* the impression relies on the narrative's ability to stage a subjective point of view as seemingly objective. In framing a subjective point of view via a seemingly *objective* narrator, the literary impressionist attempts to affectively manipulate a reader into *taking in* or *absorbing* a sense of what that character's life feels like (e.g., the impression). If this is successfully staged in the narration, an intimate space is engendered, providing the reader with the sense that he or she is given privileged access to a character's subjective point of view and thus insight into another life. Such aesthetic measures gesture toward, and even variously implement, a technique that owes much to the appropriation of dramatic techniques from the theater: the invocation of shock effects and dramatic overtures to elicit the audience's sympathy. By implementing such dramatic techniques (that is, techniques borrowed from the theater) within its narrative frame, literary impressionism stages a type of intimacy between the narrative and the reader, only to disturb this relationship as the narrative closes. These essentially disorienting moves—orienting the reader to the given point of view, only to disrupt the orienting point of view by creating a conclusion that problematizes or raises concern with the governing character's point of view—provoke the reader to question his or her initial understanding and reorient the reader to the overall meaning of the narrative.

To detail how such a dramatic technique both infiltrates the narrative frame of the novel and variously implements an experiential model that actively involves (although, not always successfully) the reader in its aesthetic logic, I first turn to a discussion of the novel's evolving appropriation of dramatic techniques into its own narrative frame. Indeed, the dramatic component underlying the literary impression's methodological function—namely, using the literary impression as a method of staging the processes of *seeing* and *experiencing*—crystallizes what David Kurnick (2012) identifies as the novel's latent but longing references to a public audience. More specifically, Kurnick reads the "formal traces [that] the theater leaves in the novel" (2012, 8) as evidence of the novel's latent "symbolic mediation on the destiny of community" (5); one that "index[es] the collective horizon that is the necessary ground of any meaningful political engagement" (18). In this way, ethical and political traces can be found in the novel's implied and adopted theatrical model. Kurnick explains that many writers have been read as failed playwrights or actors as a way of negotiating or, rather, accounting for the theatrical impulses in their fiction. While their failures in the theater might invite a biographical reading of their writing, a more pertinent concern for Kurnick is how theatrical failure informs these writers' methodological approaches to the literary medium, whereby an audience is not only assumed but also made central to the novel's formal construction.

The growing awareness of and desire to appeal to a public audience (readership) in late nineteenth-century novels becomes, as both Kurnick and Hannah note, particularly applicable when analyzing the experiments and theatrical appropriations seen in literary impressionist works. Indeed, their approaches help account for the ethical impulse underlying literary impressionists' incorporation of and experimentation with shifting interpretative models or methods in light of formal reforms to the novel's capacity to capture attention and restage experience for an audience of engaged readers. The adoption of such a dramatic model into the novel's evolving narrative form at the turn of the century can be read not only as a response to the need for an audience's active observation and participation with an artistic production, but also an engaged method for manipulating and exploiting the mediatory potential of the impression to negotiate literature's shifting role at the end of the nineteenth century. With literary impressionists' nuanced applications of various interpretative and dramatic models, the reader is seemingly given a privileged vantage point via the narrator; however, this vantage point functions more as a means of reorienting the reader's attention—something that becomes most noticeable at a narrative's ending. I shall return to this concept in chapter three.

The interpretive shift in visual and dramatic approaches can be seen in both the narrative and visual mediums (Hannah 2013; House 2004; Kurnick 2012). Supporting this, Collier and Lethbridge examine the increasing crossover and permeability among artistic media, disciplines, and approaches to photography and the novel as evidence of changing interpretative frameworks and approaches:

> Increasingly in the nineteenth century, Renaissance visual conventions of translation of successive moments into spatial sequences, or even a complete narrative of historical scenes, disappear in favour of the depiction of emblematic, pregnant moments, divorced from narrative evidence, which becomes the province of the novel or of photography. (1994, 5)

Such disruptions in the traditional visual conventions and approaches of various artistic mediums—namely, painting (House 2004), theater (Kurnick 2012), photography, and the novel

(Collier and Lethbridge 1994)—foreground a conspicuous investment in and appropriation of dramatic elements and tropes that resonate with the mediatory potential of the impression as a vehicle for orienting audiences, viewers, and readers.

These dramatic models, which are subsumed into and inform the novel's developing form and capacity to orient audiences, become even more pronounced in Bang's adoption of the dramatic inflection of the impression's mediatory potential. This can be seen, for example, in what he would call "den fremstillede Roman" [the scenic novel]—a term he used for the impressionistic novel (Bang 1908, 678).[42] According to Storskog, Bang's "fremstillede Roman" was built upon a novelistic technique that presented "characters, actions, and environments dramatically" such that "what was known about the universe of the novel would emerge primarily from how it appeared and from the way characters acted and spoke" (2011, 401). As Bang confirms in his aforementioned essay on impressionism: "Som al Kunst vil ogsaa den impressionistiske Fortællekunst gøre Rede for de menneskelige Følelser og for Menneskers Tankeliv. Men den skyr al direkte Udredning og viser os kun Menneskenes Følelser i en Række af Spejle—deres Gerninger" (Bang 1994, 48) [As all art, the impressionistic narrative art also wants to take into account human feelings and human intellectual life. But it eschews all direct explanations and shows us only the human's emotions in a series of mirrors—their deeds]. Reflecting feelings in a "series of mirrors" unearths an underlying impulse or pressure toward exteriorization—wherein actions lay bare the characters' emotions. According to Driver, such exteriorization becomes characteristic of Bang's dramatic employment of literary impressionism: "It was Bang's expertise in stage direction which formed the basis of his own special brand of narrative impressionism" (1970b, 82).

Although it must be noted that he often used the terms "scenic" and "impressionistic" interchangeably (Driver 1970b, 80), such terminology (and conflation of the usage of said terminology) gives import to what Bang saw as the purpose of the impressionistic effect within a narrative. Like Kurnick, Driver sees this as Bang's appropriation of theater into the narrative form. While Driver rationalizes this trait in Bang's fiction as a result of his own inability to perform or become a successful actor,[43] Driver moves beyond a purely biographical reading (as Kurnick also does), taking into account the implications of such a dramatic style on Bang's overarching design for the novel: "Precisely by transferring the interpretive techniques of the stage to the novel he [Bang] became one of Scandinavia's most innovative and controversial figures" (80).

And yet, while it is tempting to consider Bang's "scenic" approach to the novel as highlighting his stylistic affinities with impressionism or an impressionistic aesthetic, it is important to note, as Storskog does, that for Bang "den fremstillede Roman" [the scenic novel] was both a nuanced response to the otherwise unstable or superficial categorization often attributed to impressionism: "It is well known that in 1908 Bang would go so far as to suggest that the definition 'the impressionistic novel' be replaced by the Danish expression 'den fremstillede Roman' [the scenic novel], which according to him had the advantage of being less

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42. Driver contextualizes Bang's application of the term "scenic," noting both Bang's appropriation of the term from Otto Ludwig's essay "Formen der Erzählung" and the term's particular resonance with Percy Lubbock's later distillation of the term in *The Craft of Fiction* (1921). According to Driver, Bang applied the term in much the same way as Lubbock did (1970b, 78).

43. This resonates with Nilsson's biographical reading of Bang's appropriation of dramatic form as a logical extension of Bang's own personal predilection for the theater. As Nilsson recounts: "For Bang, who experienced all of life as a drama, this was a natural stipulation to begin working with a dramatic form within the frame of the novel" (1965, 302; quoting English summary).

hazy and, alas, 'impressionist.'" As Storskog further elaborates: "Denying the reader's access to the minds of the characters and limiting description to the observable are elements of the impressionistic mode that have given critics yet another reason to criticize impressionism. The American scholar James Nagel observes that precisely these limitations have made impressionist fiction seem shallow and superficial" (Storskog 2011, 401).

Storskog lays out how Bang's "scenic novel" was impressionistic in its application of a dramatic model within the novelistic form. Furthermore, she foregrounds how he directly responded to or attempted to counter the misperception of literary impressionism as a superficial or "hazy" aesthetic with reference to the development of a terminology and methodology for the literary impressionist novel. In this way, Bang's appellation of "scenic novel" may be conceived as evidence that he was both aesthetically and ethically conscious of the impression's mediatory or even dramatic potential *to impress* (i.e., mark) the reader. I would posit that it is this potential that Bang saw as generating impressionism's ability to reorient the reader and thereby open up the possibility for change (whether at an individual or a more social level). It is in the last step, wherein reorientation (which usually occurs via an initial disorientation) takes place, that Bang's ethical imperative in literary impression is not only stressed but also achieved.

Read in light of Bang's ethically oriented impressionism, the dramatic inflections of Bang's impressionist narratives accommodate the reader into its aesthetic logic, conflating perceiving (seeing) and experiencing within its visual platform. This conspicuous slippage between seeing and experiencing foregrounds how perception can be staged, and, in turn, function, as a politics of seeing. Kimberly Engdahl Coates identifies the orienting function of what she calls "a politics of perception" as follows: "To define perception as inherently political is to foreground how what we see or fail to see is constantly being shaped by larger cultural frames and narratives that, once made visible, can be broken and reassembled so as to diffract rather than merely to reflect hegemonic norms and values" (2010, 67). Given this, I would posit that "a politics of perception," when applied to Bang, is conflated with an ethical design: namely, orienting or reorienting how the impression could mediate perception.

To unpack how Bang's impressionism can be construed as an ethically concerned aesthetic, I turn in the next chapter to Bang's discussion of Ivan Turgenev in "Manuskript til foredrag om Ivan Turgenjev" (Manuscript for a lecture on Ivan Turgenev), wherein Bang's critical discourse about a method of capturing an author's impression is folded into a method of capturing character, thereby divulging Bang's ethically concerned aesthetic logic. He introduces this method using a static visual metaphor—the "portrait"—to describe his concept of the impression. This static concept (made static in the metaphor of the portrait) is then used in combination with more dynamic dramatic techniques as a way of attempting the successful transmission of the portrait. It is in this way that the impression is mediatory—its goal being the successful painting of the literary portrait but in a way that has a receptive reader in mind. The mediatory potential of the impression, for Bang, is seen in his references to both the static depiction of character captured in portraiture and the dynamic affective involvement of a reader seen in his references to the theater. While he cannot name how much of the impression derives from the portrait versus the theater, it seems that he was interested in the potential of the impression to do both. In this way, it is interesting to explore Bang's vision of how the literary medium can gesture toward and appropriate two senses of the impression: the pictorial impression (which Bang explores, as I will show in chapter two, with the impressionist portrait) and the dramatic impression (wherein Bang adapts a "scenic" model and, as I will explore in chapters three and four, its corresponding ability to solicit an emotional response to dramatic

endings). While looking and gesturing toward the visual and dramatic arts, Bang firmly situates and even envisions the immense capabilities of the literary medium to attend to and appropriate both the pictorial and dramatic models of the impression. In this way, Bang sees literary impressionism as extending and revitalizing the potential of the impression to capture life (his pictorial model) and draw in an audience (his dramatic model) into the complexity of apprehending a (fictional) "other."

Chapter Two

A Partial Portrait of an Author:
Herman Bang and Henry James on Turgenev

"Manuskript til foredrag om Ivan Turgenjev" (Manuscript for a lecture on Ivan Turgenev)[44] was a draft Bang composed for a lecture tour in Sweden, Finland, Russia, and Norway in the spring of 1885. During this tour he gave talks on a series of topics including Ivan Turgenev and the modern novel (Fjord Jensen 1961, 224; Greene-Gantzberg 1997, 49–50; Nilsson 1965, 131).[45] Interestingly, in this unpublished manuscript Bang takes great care to outline what he will *not* do in his unfolding analysis of Turgenev (1818–83):[46]

> Derfor vil jeg, mine Damer og Herrer, heller ikke forsøge (at gaa paa vanlig Vis frem overfor Ivan Turgenjevs Billede), min Evne vilde forbyde det, Deres Tid heller ikke tillade det. Jeg vil ikke forsøge at løfte Turgenjevs Ansigt lig et Hautrelief frem af hans mægtige værk. Ikke prøve paa at lade det levede Livs Lys falde gennemtrængende over Digtningen og atter lade Digtningens Tilstaaelser tænde Lys over Menneskets Liv—disse to Veje, ad hvilke den psykologiske Kritiker gaar for at naa sit Maal: af Digteren at meisle et stort og forstaaet Menneske-Billede. (Bang [1885?] 7a)

> (Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, I will not attempt (to approach Ivan Turgenev's picture the accustomed way), my abilities forbid it and your time [the readers' time] will not allow it. I will not try to lift Turgenev's face like a Hautrelief [high-relief] from his great work. Nor will I try to let the lived life's light fall penetratingly over the fiction [*Digtningen*] and again allow the confessions of fiction to radiate over human life—these [are the] two ways, by which the psychological critic must venture in order to reach his goal: from the author to chisel a great and fully realized portrait of a human being [*Menneske-Billede*].)[47]

In the above passage, Bang delineates two traditional literary approaches to Turgenev's authorship that he will not pursue: that is, he will neither depict Turgenev as an idealized man isolated from his practice of fiction, nor give a biographical analysis of Turgenev based on a

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44. Today the original version of Bang's "Manuskript til foredrag om Ivan Turgenjev" can be found at the Åbo Akademi Library in Finland. The Åbo Akademi Library believes that Gustaf Cygnæus received this manuscript sometime between 1885–1894 (Martin Ellfolk pers. comm.). The original copy of the manuscript can be found in Gustaf Cygnæus's collection at Åbo Akademi Library; a facsimile of the manuscript can be found in the archives of The Royal Library in Denmark.

45. Fjord Jensen dates the lecture (for which this manuscript was a draft) to the spring of 1885: "Kulminationen i Bangs Turgenjev-kritiske aktivitet nås i foråret 1885, da han bryder op fra det hjemlige for at tournere i Sverige og Finland med sine 'forelæsninger' over Turgenjev og Ibsen" (1961, 224) [The culmination of Bang's Turgenev-critical activity is reached during the spring of 1885, when he leaves his home behind in order to go on tour to Sweden and Finland with his "lectures" about Turgenev and Ibsen].

46. It is important to note that Ivan Turgenev died in 1883, and thus Bang's "Manuskript til foredrag om Ivan Turgenjev" is in part an homage to Turgenev. For an overview on Bang's writings on Turgenev after Turgenev's death in 1883, see Fjord Jensen 1961, 223–24.

47. Note that all quotations from "Manuskript til foredrag om Ivan Turgenjev" are from my original transcription. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of both the manuscript and other scholarly sources are my own.

reading of his fiction. Instead, as "Manuskript" comes to suggest, Bang advocates representing the author vis-à-vis a (literary) portrait or picture (*Billede*).[48]

Scandinavian scholarship on Bang's literary portraits recognizes his unusual approach. In *Portrættets Moment: Forfatterportrættet hos Sainte-Beuve, P. L. Møller, Georg Brandes & Herman Bang*, Jon Helt Haarder (2003) discusses Bang's distinct employment of the literary author portrait as departing from traditional, Scandinavian biographical approaches. Haarder concludes that this had much to do with Bang's unique understanding that the author "var ikke bag værket, han var *i* værket" (2003, 121) [was not behind the work, he was *in* the work].[49]

Using "Manuskript" as part of his evidence,[50] Johan Fjord Jensen (1961) argues that Bang's impressionism was influenced primarily by Turgenev and secondarily by Jonas Lie (1833–1908). Nilsson rebuts Fjord Jensen's interpretation, contending that the notes to the manuscript collection that Fjord Jensen accessed provide insufficient evidence that Bang's impressionism was in fact modeled after Turgenev (Nilsson 1965, 130). For this reason, Nilsson does not understand how Fjord Jensen could draw such a generalized conclusion about the source of Bang's impressionism.

While Fjord Jensen is right that Bang's writings on Turgenev demonstrate an interest in Turgenev and Turgenev's characters, I concur with Nilsson that Fjord Jensen provides insufficient evidence that Bang's interest in impressionism derives *primarily* from Turgenev. However, now that I have transcribed and translated several sections of the manuscript perhaps not available to Fjord Jensen, I believe a new understanding of the relationship between Bang's impressionism and Turgenev emerges: Bang uses the occasion of Turgenev's death to paint an impressionistic (partial) portrait of an author he admired. I find that Bang's "Manuskript" deploys the literary portrait of Turgenev to serve a two-fold objective—the impression of an author and the author's impression of character. Rather than Turgenev and his works' influencing Bang's impressionism directly, "Manuskript" reveals his developing interest in impressionism as an ethically concerned aesthetics.

Building upon Haarder's insight into Bang's critical use of literary portraiture and Fjord Jensen's initial discussion of "Manuskript," I revisit Bang's "Manuskript" as evidence of Bang's evolving investment in establishing a theoretical groundwork for appraising literature in a non-traditional, impressionist manner. As such, I demonstrate that Bang purposely distances himself from a historical biographical approach to literary portraiture and instead moves toward an interpretation of an author's ability to transpose or impress life into fiction.[51] Moreover, this move anticipates Bang's evolving investment in literary impressionism. As this chapter will demonstrate, Bang, paradoxically, achieves a "forstaaet Menneske-Billede" [fully realized portrait of a human being] by giving only a *partial* (that is, impressionistic) view of the author's full portrait—in other words, a partial portrait. For Bang, only a partial portrait can properly attend to and relay the semblance or illusion of life, and it is this illusion that can retroactively animate the impression of an author's lived life in the mind of the reader. Bang's impressionistic

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48. Throughout this chapter, I will use the shortened title "Manuskript" to refer to Bang's "Manuskript til foredrag om Ivan Turgenjev."

49. For a discussion outlining how Bang's employment of the literary portrait departed from traditional Scandinavian biographical approaches to the literary portrait, see Haarder 2003, 121–31.

50. Fjord Jensen's evidence for "Manuskript" is built on Bang's "notater" [notes] about Turgenjev, which includes four pages that may have been part of "Manuskript til foredrag om Ivan Turgenjev" (1961, 225).

51. Here I am referring to the act of "impressing" (marking or stamping). This bears in mind the dual sense of the word *impression*—to both mark (impress/stamp) and be marked (impressed/stamped). For more on the etymological roots of the word "impression" see Parkes 2011, 4; Hannah 2013, 1–2.

approach to depicting character in fiction is demonstrated by this methodological interest in the partial portrait of an author.

In the second part of this chapter, I briefly juxtapose Bang's "Manuskript" with Henry James's (1843–1916) own references to Turgenev in his essay on Turgenev, "Ivan Turgénieff" (1884, 1888), and in his "Preface" to *The Portrait of a Lady* (1908).[52] The latter similarly situates a "partial" portrait of Turgenev and, indirectly, a portrait of character, in its rhetorical framing.[53] The grounds for comparing James's and Bang's respective critical essays on Ivan Turgenev is premised on the following: James and Bang were literary impressionists, who both incidentally used Turgenev to voice anticipatory concerns about the double valence of an impression as a record (e.g., how the author impresses a character's impression into a literary work); and they both use author portraits in their critical writings (e.g., James's *Partial Portraits* and Bang's *Realisme og Realister: Portrætstudier og Aforismer* [Realism and realists: portrait studies and aphorisms]). By reading Bang and James alongside one another, Bang's method and priorities become clearer. I demonstrate how Bang, like James, comes to use the literary portrait as a model that enables him to negotiate a developing impressionistic concern with character: the author's impression of a character, his desire to translate this impression onto the written page, and the need to only glimpse or see a partial portrait, so that the impression retains its dynamic vitality.

By demonstrating the ways in which Bang's approach to his discussion of Turgenev overlaps with and mirrors James's respective discussion of Turgenev, I suggest that Bang shared a similar ethical objective with his critical use of the impression. Both authors employ a pronounced critical structure that relies on rhetorical framing, digressions, and anecdotes as an impressionist method of portraying only a partial portrait of Turgenev and, in this partial portrait, circuitously arriving at a discussion of character. In other words, I demonstrate that it is the promise of a character's full portrait, while actually revealing only partial glimpses or incomplete portraits (e.g., impressionistic frames) that, for Bang, can effectively motivate the next step in his literary project: reorienting his reader to the formal impression of character. Read this way, "Manuskript" becomes a prime example of Bang's wrangling with an evolving ethical concern over how to best record an impression and how to best impress character onto a reader in an impressionist manner.

Turgenev's Reception

Before attending to Bang's and James's specific employment of Turgenev, I will first address the question of what it was about Turgenev's authorship that compelled both James and Bang to use a Russian author as a platform to expound their own literary projects. Answering this question necessitates a brief contextualization of Turgenev's reception and posthumous significance among James's and Bang's contemporaneous literary circles and political climates in the United States, England and Scandinavia.

While artistic merit definitely factored into Turgenev's popularity abroad, the initial determinant of his widespread reception in America and England was, in fact, instigated by

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52. Henry James also references Ivan Turgenev in "The Art of Fiction" (1884, 1888). Note that while James originally published *The Portrait of a Lady* in 1880–81, my discussion here draws from James's preface to the 1908 New York Edition.

53. The 1888 version of Henry James's essay "Ivan Turgénieff" was published in *Partial Portraits*; thus, the allusion to "partial" may be seen here. For James's essay on Turgenev, see James 1986, 132–49.

public discourse about Russia's political involvement in the Crimean War (1853–56). As Glyn Turton explains in *Turgenev and the Context of English Literature: 1850–1900*, the initial fascination with Turgenev was born out of the political intrigue generated by the American and British documentation of Russian life in literary journals, periodicals, and newspapers (1992, 5). As such, the fascination with Turgenev was ultimately motivated by a mixture of political promulgation and anti-Russian sentiment: "The appearance of the first translations of Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Sketches* in English at the height of the Crimean War signaled a moment of political conflict and symbolized one of cultural convergence. Anti-Russian feeling, endemic in England for a generation, gave rise to a propaganda campaign of jingoistic fervor" (Turton 1992, 5).

      As a Russian living in exile, Turgenev's stories, sketches, and novels on Russian life—more specifically, Russian domestic life—fueled the British and American publics' burgeoning appetite for Russian fiction. Because Turgenev's appearance in the international scene catered to a correspondingly popular demand for more portrayals of Russia from a western or westernized point of view, he could both legitimately and sympathetically portray Russian life for the American and British populace.

      Not only were Turgenev's novels applauded for their non-European distinction, but also for their morally inflected realism. As Turton further expounds:

> [Turgenev] was commended as a model for what one might call the ideal of pictorial realism with a moral face, which Perry and Howells saw as the desirable basis for the practice of American writers and the taste of American readers. Turgenev's work was perceived as a golden mean that avoided both the vapidities of many English novels of plot and incident and the excessively cerebral approach of French fiction. It is during the early 1870s that the New England periodicals can be observed trying to establish a code of principles and practice for the novel, resting on the assumption that the genre has both moral and aesthetic functions. In so doing the American editors clearly hoped to safeguard the dignity and high seriousness of a literary form peculiarly susceptible to debasement by popular taste and careless practice. (1992, 31)

Turgenev emerged as an author respected on both political and artistic grounds: on the one hand, his work satisfied the British and American populace's desire for windows into Russian life. On the other hand, in emerging discussions of the novel, his work was taken up as an example of a literature of aesthetic and moral aptitudes (as seen with the T.S. Perry's and W.D. Howell's advocacy of Turgenev).

      Because of this interest among the international community of readers in depictions of Russian life, Turgenev was a well-known figure in the literary community. Both Bang and James identified with his status as an exiled writer, and this is reflected in how they each emphasize in their writings about Turgenev the themes of exile, alterity and character. They also seem to admire how Turgenev's literary works demonstrated that a novel could be shaped around character, rather than plot. As Turton delineates, Turgenev's design of shaping a novel around character was significant to James:

> Of these aspects of Turgenev's work the one most often highlighted by James is that of character and its "morally interesting" potentialities as the germ of Turgenev's art. It is this that, among James's positive and accurate insights into Turgenev, deserves the

closest attention, not simply because it is the cornerstone of his own art of fiction, but also because of Turgenev's invaluable usefulness to James at the height of his campaign in the middle 1880s to break down and break with the Anglo-Saxon habituation to novels of plot and intrigue, and gain acceptance for a more mature fiction judged by moral and psychological density and depth, rather than on more superficial criteria. (1992, 45)

As Turton shows, Turgenev was a strategic and invaluable resource for James's career and his participation in the literary field's emerging dispute over how a novel should be conceived. What is interesting to note is that Turgenev's reception within Anglo-American literary circles was centered around a moral discussion of the formal demands of how to best generate or shape a novel—that is, what is the morally right way of writing a novel. Accordingly, *character* (rather than plot), with its double meaning as both the moral quality of a person and, in literature, the fictional person itself, became the perfect formal kernel to such discussions. In this way, Turgenev's work became an exemplar for a type of literature that was politically engaged and responsive to its times and also advocated on a moral basis the turn from plot-centered novels to character-centered ones. As I will later discuss in greater detail, it is this political-turned-moral critical reception of Turgenev's work that James's and Bang's responses to Turgenev highlight.

Unlike in America or Britain, the critical reception of Turgenev's work in Denmark was primarily focused on artistic rather than socio-political discussions stemming from his work. As Fjord Jensen confirms: "Medens hver ny bog af Turgenjev i Rusland afstedkom lidenskabelige diskussioner, var den danske modtagelse lidenskabsløs og primært rettet mod værkernes kunstneriske problematic" (1961, 80) [While each new book by Turgenev gave rise to passionate discussions in Russia, the Danish reception was dispassionate and primarily aimed at the works' artistic problematic]. And while an anonymous Danish translation of Turgenev's *En Jægers Dagbog* (*A Sportsman's Sketches*) appeared in *Russiske Skizzer* (Russian sketches) already as early as 1856[54]—followed a decade later by two translations by H.P. Holst in 1869[55]—it was Turgenev's death that instigated the majority of the reviews, essays, and discussions of his fiction and authorship: "Turgenjevs død i 1883 bringer den kritiske sløvhed til ophør, og en voldsom stigning i interessen for den afdødes liv og digtning giver sig til kende" [Turgenev's death in 1883 brings the critical lethargy to an end, and a surge in interest in the deceased's life and works makes itself known]. Indeed, as Fjord Jensen goes on to write, "dødsfaldet gav i første række anledning til affattelsen af en række nekrologer, der—som vanligt er—fik form af samlede vurderinger af forfatterskabet" (1961, 219) [death initially gave rise to the drafting of a series of obituaries that—as usual—took the form of overall assessments of the authorship]. Other than a brief reference to Turgenev as "Biblens Gud" (quoted in Fjord Jensen 1961, 223) [the Bible's God] in a review from *Nationaltidende* (National times) published on October 24, 1882, most of Bang's critical appreciation, reviews, and obituaries concerning Turgenev appear after

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54. As Johan Fjord Jensen confirms, Turgenev was introduced to Denmark following an anonymous 1856 translation of *A Sportsman's Sketches* (1961, 45). According to Fjord Jensen, Vilhelm Møller is responsible for many Danish translations of Turgenev's work appearing after the anonymous 1856 translation. For this reason, Fjord Jensen identifies Møller as both the editor of *Nyt Dansk Maanedsskrift* (The new Danish monthly) and as Turgenev's Danish translator: "Når Vilhelm Møller endnu figurerer i litteraturhistorier, er det ikke i kraft af sine talrige gøremål som udgiver, talentspejder, kritiker, censor eller professor, men først og fremmest som redaktør for *Nyt Dansk Maanedsskrift* og som Turgenjevs oversætter" (52) [When Vilhelm Møller still figures into literary history, it is not by virtue of his numerous dealings as a publisher, talent scout, critic, censor or professor, but first and foremost as an editor for *Nyt Dansk Maanedsskrift* and as Turgenev's translator].
55. In 1869, H. P. Holst translated Turgenev's *Anuchka* and *Mumunia* (Fjord Jensen 1961, 46).

Turgenev's death on September 3, 1883. Following suit, Bang's literary portrait of Turgenev attends to the Danish critical trend of Turgenev's posthumous reception, which I will now turn to in "Manuskript."

Herman Bang's "Manuskript til foredrag om Ivan Turgenjev"

Today, the original handwritten version of Bang's "Manuskript" can be found at Åbo Akademi Library in Finland—a donation from Gustaf Cygnæus's private library collection.[56] Despite Fjord Jensen's having claimed that "Manuskript" is most likely a major critical statement, "Manuskript" has, to my knowledge, neither been completely transcribed nor translated to date.[57] Analyzing this unpublished manuscript is not a straightforward process—not only because of its nearly illegible handwriting but also because of its scrambled rhetorical framework. The result is a haphazard critical collage of intersecting threads of thought, some of which are never picked up again and some of which are later contradicted or merely crossed out. Nevertheless, I have transcribed and translated "Manuskript" in full. The text, despite its problems, reveals that the formal structure of the manuscript itself mirrors Bang's literary objective: to paint (via words) a *partial* literary portrait of Ivan Turgenev, partial not only in the sense that Bang omits most details of Turgenev's biography but also in "Manuskript's" seemingly haphazard arrangement.

Starting with Bang's preamble about what he will not do, "Manuskript" continues with a circuitous topical structure, frequent digressions, and many references to the visual arts. This is an unusual method, to say the least, for conveying the life of an author into posterity. And yet, I hope to demonstrate that "Manuskript" is a prime example of Bang's wrangling with an evolving ethical concern over the very issue of how to best record or impress character into the literary medium. The form of the manuscript, as mentioned, remains partial (that is, partially constructed and seemingly shapeless)—perhaps an unintended but consequential effect of Bang's prioritization of characters (and their portraits), which I will return to later. But in order to comprehend the complexity of the manuscript's prioritization of partial portraits or impressions, I will first go over its formal complications—its intricate digressions, circuitous structure, and anecdotal references—that entrap Bang's literary portrait of Turgenev within an almost Russian doll-like exposition.

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56. In Åbo Akademi Library's database, "Manuskript" is noted to have been sent to Gustaf Cygnæus for publication in *Åbo Tidning* (Åbo times). Given this fact, there is good reason to believe that perhaps a reason why Gustaf Cygnæus did not publish Bang's "Manuskript" was his growing disdain for literary impressionism in general. As Storskog confirms, Cygnaeus exhibited a general aversion to what he saw as "a style of exaggeration and neglect" (2011, 398)

57. Fjord Jensen makes the following statement and inference about "Manuskript" based on evidence gathered from Bang's "notater" [notes]: "Desværre er det ikke lykkedes at opspore manuskriptet. Mens man over for foredragets indhold således star hjælpeløs, lades man ikke i tvivl om dets virkninger" (224) [Unfortunately, tracing down the manuscript hasn't been successful. While one stands helpless before the lecture's contents, there can be no doubt about its impact]. It is important to note that the date on the manuscript cover page at The Royal Library in Denmark is "1989/99," suggesting that this is when the most updated version of "Manuskript" was archived. This may explain why he wrote that efforts to trace down the full manuscript (although he did have some notes—see n. 50) had not succeeded.

"Manuskript's" Digressive Introduction

The strategic but bewildering rhetorical design of Bang's manuscript commences with its unexpected opening line: "Døden røvede nylig en af Frankrigs betydeligeste yngre Malere: Bastien Lepage" ([1885?] 7a) [Death recently stole one of France's most prominent younger painters: Bastien Lepage].[58] Given the manuscript's title, one would anticipate the mention of Turgenev from the very first sentence, if not the first paragraph. Instead, Bang introduces his manuscript with an homage to the recently deceased impressionist painter, Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848–84). The inclusion of Bastien-Lepage is noteworthy for several reasons: Firstly, Bastien-Lepage was known for his distinctive painting of portraits—thus allowing Bang to foreground his thematic as well as formal interest in the portrait before embarking on his own attempt to paint in words a portrait of Turgenev. Secondly, Bastien-Lepage was seen as anticipating impressionistic techniques within his otherwise naturalistic style (*Naturstudiets Troskab*). Thirdly, opening with Bastien-Lepage's recent death permits Bang not only to memorialize Bastien-Lepage but also to create a mood of mourning to stage his own literary portrait cum homage of Turgenev.

In order to unpack Bang's preamble—that is, his frame—to his literary portrait of Turgenev, I turn to why his choice of Bastien-Lepage as the opening act is apropos. Bastien-Lepage is an interesting choice because he was renowned for his portraits of subjects. Moreover, Bastien-Lepage is often linked to impressionism, whether he is identified as having "impressionistic affinities" (Storm 2004, 415) or as being a Salon-Impressionist (Callen 2000, 2).[59] Thus, for Bang, Bastien-Lepage is first and foremost an ideal candidate for fronting his own experimentation with a method of impressing his impression of a subject (in this instance, Turgenev) into a portrait. What is intriguing in Bang's appeal to Bastien-Lepage and, as I will later show in his strategic inclusion of a Bastien-Lepage anecdote, is the theme of failing to produce a complete or full portrait. This unfinished or partially complete depiction of a subject was a technique of impressionism Bastien-Lepage coopted into his aesthetic methodology. As Storm (2004) sees it, this partially finished effect is a trademark of Bastien-Lepage. To demonstrate this, Storm describes Bastien-Lepage's portrait of Henry Irving from 1880:

> While Irving's face is fully realized, however, the rest of his figure is not. The legs are only sketched in, with broad and patchy brush strokes. The actor wears light brown pants,

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58. Note that Bang does not use a hyphen for Bastien-Lepage. For this reason, I preserve his original orthography ("Bastien Lepage") in the transcription and translation of "Manuskript"; however, when not directly quoting Bang, I use the modern orthography of "Bastien-Lepage".

59. Take Callen's explanation of Bastien-Lepage as a Salon Impressionist: "Such was the value that accrued to the particular qualities of the oil sketch—spontaneity, directness, truth to the artist's first impression and, above all, sincerity—that its appearance was often artificially confected even where an artist's actual procedures were highly labour-intensive and slow. This was certainly the case with 'Salon Impressionists' like Bastien-Lepage—whose work the realist writer Emile Zola dubbed 'impressionism corrected, brought down to the level of the masses'—who combined 'advanced' subject matter with an academic attention to line and tonally modeled form, yet who added visible brush-strokes to animate his surfaces and give them the mark of 'authenticity'"(2000, 2). Here Callen outlines the characteristics—"spontaneity, directness, truth to the artist's first impression and above all, sincerity" along with "the mark of 'authenticity'"—that apply to Bastien-Lepage's impressionism and which, incidentally, Bang seems to value in Turgenev's work. Bang's strategic introduction of an impressionist artist aligns his following literary portrait of Turgenev with the techniques of the impressionist school. For Bang, this means an aesthetic methodology, one which accords with the parallel between Bastien-Lepage's and Turgenev's method of impressing their impressions of a subject.

which contrast with the deeper brown of his coat and vest and with the still-darker background of the canvas. The hands, remarkably, have yet to be articulated in any detail at all. Where hands would be, the unfinished portrait leaves only fingerless shapes, one in the brown of the pants and the other in white. (2004, 405–6)

While Bastien-Lepage's portrait of Henry Irving was never actually finished (Storm 2004, 420), it nevertheless remained a technique that he continued to utilize in other portraits he painted: the contrast between very detailed painting and otherwise "unfinished," "sketched," or even "patchy" renderings within the same picture. By giving the impression of incompleteness, the tension between completed (static) and incomplete (dynamic) juxtapositions was rendered, allowing for the semblance of life in a vital tug-of-war between stillness and movement. This resonates with H. Peter Stowell's definition of impressionism as "the synthesis of a number of paradoxes that control the basic tension between stasis and movement" (1980, 43). With respect to the "unfinished portrait" of Henry Irving, this would mean the tension produced by the "fully realized" face of Irving and the "fingerless shapes." What the impressionist portrait then provokes, in this example, is for the viewer to fill in the portrait's missing details (e.g., the missing fingers that appear as "fingerless shapes," the seemingly invisible hand that blends into the brown of Irving's pants).

 While Bang does not describe a particular portrait by Bastien-Lepage in his manuscript, he does describe at length an anecdote about Bastien-Lepage's inability to complete a portrait of Victor Hugo, which I will address in the next section. For now, I would like to return to how Bastien-Lepage's technique of the seemingly partial portrait becomes, paradoxically, a means of reproducing an impression. Here, the portrait is a means of reproducing an impression of a living person; however, when the person is dead or missing—as is the case for Bang's subject (Turgenev)—then reproducing the subject's (Turgenev's) impression becomes complicated; hence, the need to recall an anecdote about Bastien-Lepage. Moreover, as the next section will demonstrate, Bang's utilization of the Bastien-Lepage anecdote becomes a means of transitioning into his actual topic (Turgenev) while also intimating via his reference to Bastien-Lepage that the unfinished portrait becomes an ideal medium to reproduce an impression of a finished or completed life. In order to understand the aesthetic logic of this technique in portraiture, I turn, albeit briefly, to a discussion of how Bastien-Lepage's mode of impressionism allows his portraits to experiment with character.

 Bastien-Lepage's impressionist techniques are commonly associated with "the rendering of transitory images, an emphasis on apparent spontaneity, a brush technique that accentuates abbreviated dabs of color, an approximation of natural appearance under varying conditions of light" (Bendiner 1985, 104). Nevertheless, what initially set him apart from his peers was his ability to convey compelling portraits of his subjects. As Storm further elucidates: "The portraits by Bastien-Lepage are known not only for their telling details of observed character but for significant associations belonging to their individual subjects" (2004, 407). Bastien-Lepage was applauded for his ability to bring more compelling and seemingly authentic "associations" of depicted characters into his portraits, which suggested that he had retained the impression of "life" in his subject. Interestingly, staging a subject's life via observational detail offset by unfinished qualities (e.g., only the head is painted in detail, the rest of the body is merely sketched in) provokes engagement on the viewer's part to fill in the missing details in the subject portrayed or scene around the subject: as long as the portrait reveals the impression of a character behind an otherwise realistic depiction, it produces the semblance of truth. Staging a character

intimately in this way begs the viewer to search for truth; and, it is this search for truth that grants a character its enigma, generating interest in the internal psyche and thoughts of the subject upon whom the viewer gazes. Bang uses much the same technique, but with words, rather than brushstrokes. For Bang, it is exactly this technique of involving the reader in "viewing" the character that produces an effective and dynamic impression.

By framing Turgenev via Bastien-Lepage in the manuscript's preamble, Bang suspends his presentation of Turgenev. In a sense, this stages the time and distance he needs to effectively collect himself and recall his own impression of Turgenev, before rendering the actual portrait. Thus, while circuitous, Bang's preamble makes perceptible his preoccupation with framing his literary portrait of Turgenev—one that requires just the right frame to effectively capture his impression of this author.[60]

Bang's Strategic Inclusion of the Bastien-Lepage Anecdote

In order to frame his impression of Turgenev, Bang scaffolds yet another frame (or, a frame within a frame): his anecdotal reference to Bastien-Lepage's own failed attempt to paint a portrait of Victor Hugo. Let me cite the passage in full:

> Hans [Bastien Lepages] højeste Ønske her i Livet var at male Victor Hugo. Han betroede dette Ønske til Albert Wolff, og den navnkundige Kronikør talte til Victor Hugo derom. Da de saa—Wolff og Lepage—skulde hen til Victor Hugo første Gang—han skulde blot præsenteres der, Maleren—og de kom til Huset, sagde Bastien Lepage:
> —Aa, nei— lad os gøre et Slag rundt endnu— jeg tør ikke . . .
> Og da de siden gik derfra sagde han: Nei—jeg faar aldrig Mod til at male det Hoved. Den, [der] skal male det, maler et helt Aarhundrede.
> Bastien Lepage fik ikke Digterkongen malet.
> Der findes for alle Portrætmalere—ogsaa for den psykologiske Kritiker, der er hvad andet end en Fortolker af Portrætter?—saadan fristende og tilintetgørende Opgaver. Man siger til sig selv, naar man staar overfor den store Personlighed: Dette Ansigt rummer saa meget; Emnets Rigdom vil bæres deri; dette Ansigt siger tusind Ting og tusind modsatte Ting; dets Rigdom vil knuse dig. Og man bøjer Hovedet, og man gaar bort.
> Med Ivan Turgenjev er det saaledes. Kritikeren kommer til ham, dragen af sin Beundring, først maaske af Temperamentets dybe Slægtskab, baaret af Haabet om, at selve hans Ærbødighed maa uddybe og inderliggøre hans Forstaaelse: Og efterhaanden som han under sit Arbejde trænger ind i Mesterens Sjæl og Liv, mister hans Mod og Vejr, og han siger ligesom Bastien Lepage:
> —Nei, dette Ansigt kan jeg ikke male. Ti det er at male om ikke et helt Århundrede, saa en hel Aandsretning og en hel Tid. (Bang [1885?] 7a)

> (His [Bastien Lepage's] grandest wish in this life was to paint Victor Hugo. He confided this wish to Albert Wolff, and the renowned chronicler talked to Victor Hugo about it. When they—Wolff and Lepage—were to meet Victor Hugo for the first time—the

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60. Bang's specific employment of frames here may relate to an inside-out approach outlined by House (2004, 102). See chapter one in this dissertation for a discussion of how nineteenth century viewers of art were oriented toward interpreting a picture "inside-out."

painter was merely to be introduced there—and they came to the house, Bastien Lepage said:

—Oh, no—let us walk around one more time—I dare not . . .

And when they later left, he said: No—I'll never have the courage to paint that head. He [who] is to paint that, will paint a whole century.

Bastien Lepage never did manage to paint the poet-king.

For all portrait painters—also for the psychological critic, who is what else than a translator of portraits?—one finds such tempting and devastating assignments. One ponders, when one stands vis-à-vis a great personality: This face contains so much; the subject's richness is contained therein; this face says a thousand things and a thousand contrary things; its wealth will crush you. And one bows [one's] head, and one walks away.

With Ivan Turgenev it is like that. The critic comes to him, drawn by his admiration, first maybe by [his own] temperament's deep kinship, carried by the hope that his reverence may deepen and intensify his understanding: and, during his work, as he [the critic] gradually penetrates the master's soul and life, he loses his courage and his breath, and he says just like Bastien Lepage:

—No, this face I cannot paint. For it means to paint if not a whole century then an entire school of thought and a whole era.)

In reading Bang's anecdote, what stands out is its overt rhetorical function as a framing device to transition from his introductory model (Bastien-Lepage) to his next subject matter (Turgenev). Thus, while the first reason Bang includes Bastien-Lepage is to establish his (Bang's) own legitimacy before beginning a discussion of the main subject matter (Turgenev), the second reason is to set up a rhetorical framing to initiate a discussion of character portrayal. The strategic genius, however, becomes perceptible in how the anecdote serves as a legitimizing device in documenting what Bang sees as Bastien-Lepage's and, by extension, Turgenev's objectives: authentic portrayals of the subject or character in their respective mediums. Bang thus draws a parallel between his own attempt to portray (i.e., write a portrait of) Turgenev and Bastien-Lepage's attempt to portray (i.e., paint a portrait of) Hugo. As such, what the Bastien-Lepage anecdote elucidates is Bang's preoccupation with the following concerns: first, the daunting task of recording his impression of Turgenev; and second, whether the formal medium of the literary portrait was up to the task. These are the two hurdles that Bang is anxious to clear in order to validate his position as a critic worthy of translating the complexity of Turgenev's literature.

Within the anecdote, Bang provides and develops several critical terms. One, by positioning a "portrait painter" alongside "the psychological critic," Bang makes a case for a critic as a necessary intermediary for the audience to understand the artist—fulfilling, as Bang puts it, the critic's function as a "Fortolker af Portrætter" [translator of portraits]. Here the concept of the critic as a "translator" resonates with what Peter Collier and Robert Lethbridge identify (in accord with studies earlier conducted by Robert Lethbridge and James Kearns) as a "mediating role": "writers adopt a mediating role both defining their own aesthetic positions and, more problematically, articulating the intentions of visual artists. In response to public incomprehension, the critic assumes the role of the translator, providing a language with which to discuss new visions and values" (Collier and Lethbridge 1994, 3). In this sense, Bang's recourse to the visual arts (e.g., Bastien-Lepage) serves to transfer an aesthetic position from the

visual to the literary arts. While not a direct correlation, similar aesthetic problems are faced when producing a portrait, whether it is a portrait of a subject in a painting or a portrait of a character in literature.

Through the description of "the critic com[ing] to him [Turgenev]" (*Kritikeren kommer til ham*) Bang begins to insinuate himself. While for Bastien-Lepage, the failure to encapsulate "a whole century" becomes a critical failure (precisely because he is unable to realize his dream of painting Hugo), Bang does not intend to fail in the same way—that is, to fail at painting in words his portrait of Ivan Turgenev. As Bang discloses, "Derfor vil jeg . . . heller ikke forsøge (at gaa paa vanlig Vis frem overfor Ivan Turgenjevs Billede)" ([1885?] 7a) [Therefore . . . I will not attempt (to approach Ivan Turgenev's picture the accustomed way)]. Instead of focusing on the daunting task of trying to capture an entire authorship (which would only subject him to the same traps as Bastien-Lepage), Bang approaches Turgenev's authorship in a different way (as described in the quote from the beginning of this chapter): by neither succumbing to a biographical embellishment nor projecting a reading of an author's persona into his fiction. Interestingly, in his rejection of applying either approach to Turgenev's authorship, Bang is able to intimate how an authorship is to be approached, although the details of this approach are framed in a series of "will nots."

Bang's Critical Vision

Seen thus far, the formal issues (e.g., frames, delayed presentation of Turgenev, and lists of "will nots") in Bang's "Manuskript" show his ambivalence about how best to depict his unfolding portrait of Turgenev. In part, this is because Bang wants to do two things at the same time: in searching for the right way to communicate his impression of Turgenev, Bang also wants to read into the portrait he is making of Turgenev and fathom (like the psychological critic, "the translator of portraits") the impression Turgenev leaves behind in his (Turgenev's) fiction. Because of this tension between his desire to create a portrait and simultaneously interpret or translate the portrait he is writing, his scaffolding continues to rely on a series of "will nots" as a method of framing and thinking through his project.

Bang's list of "will not" assertions, wherein he transitions to and names his main subject (Turgenev), follows the Bastien-Lepage anecdote. Besides those already mentioned above, Bang also lists the following "will nots" to delineate his unfolding literary portrait of Turgenev:

> Jeg vil ikke forsøge at paavise hos Ivan Turgenjevs <u>Aristokratens</u> Blod i Strid med <u>Demokratens</u> tilkæmpede Overbevisning; en dyb Spaltning oiensynlig afgørende for hele hans Syn og hans Værk; jeg vil ikke løfte det Slør af Tungsind hvori Landflygtighed indhyller hans Digtning ligesom et Sørg[e]flor flyder med om en Statues Lemmer. (Bang 1886–88, 7a)[61]

> (I will not try to demonstrate that in Ivan Turgenev the aristocrat's blood [was] in conflict with the democrat's fought-for conviction; a deep split seemingly crucial for his entire vision and his work; I will not lift the veil of melancholy in which exile envelops his writing like a mourning crape flowing down a statue's limbs.)

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61. Note that I preserve Bang's original orthography, including his frequent use of underlining for emphasis both here and in subsequent quotations from "Manuskript."

Here Bang outlines two ways of reading Turgenev biographically, neither of which he endorses. First, there is the potential focus on Turgenev's personal politics; and second, there is the biographical reading of Turgenev's exile that falsely isolates exile from the melancholy that inevitably accompanies it. For Bang, both approaches are insufficient for capturing the essence or impression of the author. What he might mean by this kind of biographical reading is a model that relies on using fiction to construct a life story (i.e., portrait) of the author outside fiction (thereby bypassing the author's fiction) rather than a model in which the critic uses fiction to glean what life experiences impressed themselves into the author's consciousness or memory and thus subsequently inform not only the author's life but also the author's fiction. In other words, Bang seems to be arguing against a biographical model that endeavors to construct a story out of life *events* instead of a story about how *life* has impressed into the author certain events more than others. And while Turgenev's aristocratic heritage, exile from Russia, and political beliefs are important aspects of Turgenev's life, what Bang finds more relevant to his discussion is his impression of Turgenev *and* the impression of Turgenev he can see in Turgenev's work. This reiterates Jon Helt Haarder's point that Bang had an unusual understanding of the author as "ikke bag værket, han var *i* værket" (2003, 121) [not behind the work, he was *in* the work]. In reading the above passage with Haarder's point in mind, what becomes apparent is that, inasmuch as Bang is invested in impressing his impression of Turgenev (via the literary portrait), he is also invested in homing in on the extant impression of Turgenev *in* his (Turgenev's) work.

Bang's initial equivocation is informative: insofar as it sets the stage for what he will not do, it also draws attention—and even spotlights—what he is about to do: create a reading of an author's impression of life in the author's fiction. In this way, Bang's equivocation functions as a frame to substantiate and foreground what he is in fact doing with the medium of the literary portrait. As Fjord Jensen comments in regard to a collection of Bang's frequent allusions and references to Turgenev, these accounts of Turgenev procure "det ideelle førstehåndsindtryk af hans forhold til russeren" (1961, 225) [the ideal first-hand impression of his (Bang's) relationship to the Russian (Turgenev)]. While Fjord Jensen is here referring to the deductions one can make from reading Bang's thoughts on Turgenev, I think one can take this point a step further: it was Bang's own impression of Turgenev that he wished to record by *looking* to Turgenev's fiction and extrapolating the impressions of Turgenev that he could find therein.

In order to delineate the impressions Turgenev leaves behind in his fiction, Bang identifies three recurring motifs he finds central to Turgenev's fiction: exile/rootlessness, melancholy/sadness, and compassion/empathy.[62] Interestingly, by focusing on these three motifs, Bang is able to discuss how Turgenev created a mood or atmosphere in which Turgenev was able to impress (i.e., mark) his character, as I will discuss in greater detail below. Insofar as the motif of exile is concerned, Bang foregrounds how Turgenev's peripheral status as an exiled author uniquely informs and legitimizes him as "den største skjald om et raadløst Folk" (the greatest bard of a helpless people): Bang sees Turgenev's peripheral status as procuring Turgenev a more objective lens for portraying Russia's "raadløst Folk" (helpless folk). Alternatively, melancholy and sadness become, in Bang's reading of Turgenev, nuanced by the Russian atmosphere. While these motifs make, in Bang's mind, an appropriate comparison for the literature of "Norden" ([1885?] 7a) [the North] (here, referencing Russia and Scandinavia), wherein sadness and melancholy become shared categories of experience, Bang still sees Turgenev's ability to convey these emotions as uniquely informed by the author's ties to Russia.

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62. For more on the themes Bang indentifies in Turgenev's work, see Nilsson 1965, 94–95.

Men hos ham er der dog—hvad ikke spares hos de andre— en Følelse af <u>Sanseløsheden</u> overfor Livet, en dyb Graden af Handledygtigheden hos ham selv; en evig og smertelig Fornemmen af Raadløsheden overfor Vitterligheden. Det er en sorgfuld Forstaaen af denne Uformuenhed, som skrev paa hans Digtnings Sørgmodighed, som lægger Alkansten [*sic*] over hans Ord, og som har gjort ham til den største skjald om et raadløst Folk. (7b)

(But with him there is nonetheless—what is not spared in the others—a feeling of senselessness in relation to life, a deep degree of action [Handledygtigheden] in himself; an eternal and painful feeling of rootlessness in the face of the actual. It is a sorrowful understanding of this inadequacy, sprung from his writing's melancholy, that puts Alkansten [*sic*] over his words, and that has made him the greatest poet of a perplexed people.)

By associating the atmosphere of Turgenev's work with "the North," Bang is, I believe, trying to align himself with Turgenev and their shared "rootlessness" in exile, even if Bang's exile was only self-imposed. And yet, what interests Bang here is the parallel between the emotional atmosphere of Russian life and the North's remoteness and loneliness. Thus, while this passage initially appears to be an homage to Turgenev and an attempt to position Scandinavian literature ("Northern" literature) alongside the revered Russian author, what actually unfolds is an identification with the Russian novel of "rootlessness" and its capacity to convey a more nuanced emotional landscape or atmosphere.

Indeed, Bang frequently makes note of how Turgenev's attention to emotion is able to produce genuine—that is, without the flare of melodrama—portraits of Russian people and their lives within his fiction. As Bang states in a necrology from 1883, "Kun Turgenjevs Stil er jævn som en altid stigende Symfoni, mægtig uden Pretention, malende uden Overlæsselse. Livet speiler sig trofast i denne klare Strøm" (quoted in Fjord Jensen 1961, 230) [Only Turgenev's style carries itself like a rising symphony, powerful without pretension, vivid without over-reading. Life reflects itself genuinely in the clear current].[63] While Bang has already identified such an authentic reflection of life in Turgenev's style, Bang looks to Turgenev's characters in "Manuskript" to see how Turgenev is able to channel this impression of life into his characters. Accordingly, Bang sees an author's ability to depict the idiosyncrasies of a fictional character to be in direct proportion with his ability to feel compassion for others. For this reason, Bang's identifies compassion as the main kernel behind Turgenev's unique portrayals of both men and women in his novels: "Dette Folk har Turgenjev elsket, fordi det led. Men siden, da han kom ud i Livet, saa han at Menneskeheden levede ikke under lykkeligere Love end dette stakkels Folk, og han følte Medynk med alle" (quoted in Fjord Jensen 1961, 226) [Turgenev loved these people because they suffered. But then, when he came out in life, he saw that humanity did not live under happier principles than these poor people, and he felt empathy for all]. Turgenev's unique handling of the novel—via character portraiture, empathy, and the manipulation of atmosphere or temperament—imbues, for Bang, the Russian novel with a moral worth and enigma. As Bang reports:

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63. Even Prosper Mérimée, in his 1868 preface to a collection of Turgenev's work, comments on Turgenev's ability to attend to truth as a distinguishing characteristic of Turgenev's fiction: "That impartiality, that love for truth which is the distinguishing trait of Turgenev, never abandons him" (1989, 272).

Saa dybt har Turgenjev saa sandt har han malet <u>Vemodens Land.</u> . . .
    Men den russiske Litteratur beseirer os, den russiske Roman holder os fangen; vi vugger os i dens Ord, fordi den er ægte Barn af hele vore <u>Temperament</u>. I den hviler vi, fordi den er skabt af selv. Tidens Hoved—Temperament. ([1885?] 7c)

(So deeply has Turgenev understood, so truthfully has he painted the land of Sadness. . . .
    But Russian literature conquers us, the Russian novel takes us captive; we rock ourselves in its words, because it is [the] authentic child of our entire temperament. In it we rest, because it is made of itself. Time's main figure—Temperament.)

Here Bang is interested in how Turgenev uses the emotion of sadness coupled with the atmosphere of "time's main figure—temperament" to "truthfully" paint genuine portraits of his characters. For Bang, Turgenev's ability to capture the authentic temperament of its time—that is, capture the impression of a time and place (and transpose this into fiction)—is what makes Turgenev's novels so alluring. Bang's description of Turgenev's empathy (*Medynk*) for his characters highlights an important mechanism in Turgenev's fiction: the use of atmosphere or temperament to convey but not explain a character's emotions and thoughts. In his endorsement of this literary technique, we can see that Bang seems to share Turgenev's methodological investment in constructing a narrative around a character, while allowing for observations to function as impressions that create an aura or atmosphere around the character. Constructing a narrative around character nevertheless functions as a legitimizing device: it allows a character to develop organically in the course of the novel's narrative (indeed, is intimately and irrevocably connected to that narrative) instead of being constructed and superimposed into the novel's preexisting plot structure. As will be seen in the analysis below, it is the construction of the novel around character rather than plot that seems to make the Russian novel so bewitching to Bang.
    That the motifs of exile, sadness, and empathy become crucial to unpacking Turgenev's fiction are noteworthy precisely because they are the life impressions that inform how Turgenev delineates his fictional characters. For Bang, Turgenev's characters are not so much extensions of Turgenev himself, so much as evidence of Turgenev's ability to effectively impress his vision of a person (whether fictional or from memory) into a character. Because Bang sees Turgenev's characters as carefully constructed impressions, Bang then transitions into a closer reading and discussion of Turgenev's characters to unpack how Turgenev was able to create distinctive characters in a compelling manner. He does this by describing the atmosphere Turgenev creates around his characters, which he accomplishes by denying complete access to the characters' internal states of mind—the effect is a partial portrait of fictional characters. This technique ensures that there is room for a reader to discern from the surface (e.g., via a gesture, smile, nod of the head) what the character may be feeling. How Turgenev goes about impressing his characters accordingly is the subject of the next section.

Framing Character

Seen thus far, the formal techniques (e.g., delaying, scaffolding) and thematic frames (e.g., motifs of exile, sadness, and empathy) in "Manuskript" foreground how central portraiture is for Bang's discussion of both his own impression of Turgenev and the impression Turgenev leaves behind in his (Turgenev's) work. For Bang, this central concern necessitates exploring how the formal medium and frame of the literary portrait can gesture toward (and hence make

available to analysis) two sensibilities of *impressing*: the impression of an author and the author's impression *in* his work (i.e., his characters). In order to isolate the impression Turgenev leaves behind in his work, Bang searches within the characters' partial figurations or portraits for some trace of Turgenev.

Even though Bang is seen here admiring Turgenev's portrayal of characters—which Bang initially aligns with the visual model of portraiture (e.g., Bastien-Lepage)—Bang was by no means the only one to hold such a revered opinion of Turgenev's unique abilities. For example, Prosper Mérimée (1803–70), in his 1868 preface to Turgenev's collected works, already discusses how Turgenev is able to adjudicate the fine line between painting and poetry in his character portrayals. This preface verifies key characterological approaches in Turgenev's portrait-informed character composition, which Bang would also come to identify and expound upon in his manuscript:[64]

> A delicate, exact observer, sometimes to the point of minutiae, he creates his characters as a painter and a poet at the same time. Their passions and features of their faces are equally familiar to him. He knows of their habits and their gestures; he hears them speak and gives a stenographic report of their conversation. Such is the art with which he creates a physical and moral whole from all the parts, that the reader sees a portrait rather than an imaginary tableau. (Mérimée [1868] 1989, 271)

That Mérimée would here compare Turgenev's portrayal of character as bridging the media of painting and poetry ("as a painter and poet at the same time") speaks to the centrality of portraiture as blending both a visual and literary model within Turgenev's fiction. Moreover, as Mérimée goes on to say, what makes Turgenev's characters so compelling is that gestures, speech, and habits come to suggest, rather than tell, who the character is, thus allowing the reader to participate in discerning a "physical and moral whole" from the observational cues and parts (that make up the character's partial portrait).[65]

Mérimée's description of Turgenev's character portrayals bears a striking affinity with Bastien-Lepage's portraits, wherein jarring juxtapositions of poses, gestures, or finished and unfinished elements of the character's depiction in the portrait convey a dynamic tension that then involves the viewer. For example, in the same preface, Mérimée goes on to note the unusual juxtapositions Turgenev creates by attending to the discord in a character's physical extremities:

> In his [Turgenev's] novel *Fathers and Sons* he shows us a young lady who had large hands and small feet. Ordinarily there is a certain harmony among the extremities of the human frame, but exceptions are rarer in nature than in novels. Why does that nice Katya

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64. Fjord Jensen notes that Bang frequently cited Mérimée in his critical writings (1961, 225).

65. What is interesting in this passage is that Mérimée discusses how Turgenev's characters exist in Turgenev's mind, right in front of him. Because of this, Turgenev somehow has access to their "habits," "gestures" and speech. This bears a striking resemblance to Bang's own discussion of how characters both exist before his own imagination (that is, arising from his memory) and compel him to record them. Bang describes this process in his 1889 preface to *Tine*: "Jeg sér mine Personer kun i Billede efter Billede og kun i Situation efter Situation hører jeg dem tale. Jeg maa ofte bie i Timer, før de ved et Blik, en Bevægelse, et Ord forraader mig deres virkelige Tanker, som jeg jo kun kan gætte ligesom jeg gætter andre levende Menneskers—deres, som jeg omgaaes og kender" ([1889] 1986, 13–14) [I see my characters only in picture after picture and only hear them speak in situation after situation. I must often wait for hours before they, with a glance, a movement, a word, betray to me their real thoughts, which I can only guess just as I guess from other living people—those, whom I see and know].

have large hands? The author saw her thus and, through his love for truth, had the indiscretion of saying so. ([1868] 1989, 271)

Bastien-Lepage employed a similar technique of "paradoxical arrangement" within a portrait, one that suggests a dynamic vitality made "visible by its internal discordance" (quoted in Storm 2004, 413). Thus, just like Bastien-Lepage's portraits, which were known for their static and dynamic juxtapositions, Turgenev was able to construct portraits of characters that had the same jarring juxtapositions. For this reason, it makes sense that Bang would use Bastien-Lepage as his opening frame for a manuscript about Turgenev, precisely because it helped draw a parallel between the compatible techniques he saw in Bastien-Lepage's visual portraits (of subjects), and Turgenev's own literary portraits (of characters). While the portraiture of a subject assumes a different existence and shape in the visual arts than it does in the literary arts, the ability to portray such tensions within a literary portrait of a fictional person (even if the person was informed from a memory of a person from the author's life) helped give form to the author's impression of a character as the catalyst for an unfolding narrative. To this effect, Fjord Jensen contends that Turgenev was heralded as one of the greatest portraitists of men and women: "Det er blevet fremhævet, at Turgenjev som en af de få digtere i verdenslitteraturen udviste et lige mesterskab som kvinde- og mands-portrættør" (1961, 31) [It has been highlighted that Turgenev, as one of the few poets in world literature, showed an equal mastery as a female and male portraitist]. Turgenev's mastery as a portraitist can be traced to what D. S. Mirsky ([1958] 1989) describes as his ability to convey character via atmosphere: the impressions that connote a larger, more complex whole character. Turgenev is able to convey his characters through suggestion rather than pure dissection: "Turgénev does not analyze and dissect his heroes, as Tolstóy and Dostoyévsky would have done; he does not uncover their souls; he only conveys their atmosphere, partly by showing how they are reflected in others, partly by an exceedingly delicate and thinly woven aura of suggestive accompaniment" ([1958] 1989, 246).

Bang's interest in discussing and analyzing Turgenev's characters becomes the objective of the manuscript's latter half. As Bang himself writes: "Jeg har dvælet ved dette ene Karaktertræk, fordi det, mine Damer og Herrer, er evig Nerven i al Turgenjevs Digtning. Fra nu af vil vi forlade hans Liv og kun se paa hans Digtnings spejl af Livet" ([1885?] 7b) [I have stayed with this one character trait, because it, ladies and gentlemen, is the eternal nerve in all of Turgenev's writing. From now on we will leave his life and only look at how his writing mirrors life]. Life mirrored in writing becomes pivotal to discussing character portrayals. In fact, this works in tandem with his following description of character types wherein a character can be portrayed so authentically as to seem real and thus resonate with the reader's own experience of life: "En og anden Gang Lad os da holde frem de vigtigstes Typer fra Turgenjevs Digtning, lad os se hvem vi møder, og skulde vi under Masken [se] os selv, lad os da se os selv ind i Øjnene. For at naa dette Maal skriver de sande Digtere" (7d) [Once in a while let us then call forward the most important types from Turgenev's writing, let us see who we meet, and then shall we, under the mask of ourselves, see ourselves in the eyes. In order to reach this purpose, true writers write for]. Interestingly, the conflation between fictional and nonfictional life becomes a key issue, and while I will not delve into this here, it is important to keep in mind that Bang does see a connection between reproduced life and actual life insofar as reproduced life evokes in readers the feeling of shared life experiences.

To highlight his own methodological concern with character, Bang goes on to specifically identify and discuss several key characters, types, and temperaments within

Turgenev's authorship and analyzes them accordingly. One of the first character types Bang looks into is Turgenev's portrayal of the female figure.[66] Bang acknowledges the fallacy that often occurs when male authors attempt to depict female characters, but soon demonstrates how Turgenev is able to circumvent this issue:

> Vi kan begynde med Kvinderne. Vi vil i saa fald, naar vi naar Mændene, komme fra det ufuldkommen til det fulde Roman. Jeg tror ikke paa Mænds Skildring af Kvinder. Den er enten en Hymne af en Elsker, eller en Smertesang af en, der blev bedraget, eller en Fantasi, født af en Drøms Længsel. Det kan alt sammen være skønt, hvis den, som skriver, er i Sandhed Digter. Men Kvindes <u>Skildring</u> er det ikke. Madame Henri Griville har sagt os mere om den russiske Kvinde end Turgenjev.
>   Men naar vi opsøgte Tids Kvindeskikkelser har det alligevel Interesse nok: Vi erfarer jo, hvorledes en stor Digter har [*sic*] Kvinderne, hvad han har ment om dem, hvilken Plads han har skænket dem. Vi møder først Fru Odingoff i *Fædre og Sønner*. Vi kender Damen, Jakobsen gav hende os som Fru Boye. ([1885?] 7d)

> (We can begin with the women. We will in this way, when we reach the men, come from the imperfect to the complete novel. I don't believe in men's representation of women. It is either a lover's hymn or a sorrowful song of one, that was deceived, or a fantasy, born from a dream's longing. It can all together be beautiful, if the person, who writes [it], is in truth [a] writer. But a women's depiction it is not. Madame Henri Griville has told us more about the Russian woman than Turgenev.
>   But when we seek out the female representations of our time there is nevertheless enough interest: we learn of course, how a great writer has [*sic*] the women, what he thought about them, which place he has granted them. We first meet Fru Odingoff in *Fathers and Sons*. We know the woman, Jacobsen gave her to us as Fru Boye.)

In this passage, Bang explains why it is that Turgenev's portraits of women (i.e., his representations of female characters) are able to bypass the pitfalls to which other male authors often succumb, namely projecting their own fantasy about what a woman would think or feel. Instead of explaining how female characters feel, Bang finds that Turgenev shows their feelings through gestures, dialogue, reactions, and mannerisms and thus grants his female characters the same enigma and multidimensionality as his male characters. In this way, the reader is involved in trying to decipher what a female character's thoughts are from her mannerisms and other external observations made about her, rather than from the reader's getting wrapped up in the plot's actions or the novel's exposition of her thoughts or feelings. Yet because Turgenev's method of portraying both male and female characters employs the same technique—that is, they are both portrayed via showing rather than telling (i.e., modeled on the techniques borrowed from portraiture)—Turgenev's women are vicariously afforded the same semblance of autonomy as his male characters, thereby making way for such strong female characters as Fru Odingoff to emerge. Additionally, Bang's inclusion of J. P. Jacobsen's (1847–85) Fru Boye as a comparison

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66. Greene-Gantzberg notes that in his lectures, Bang discussed "Turgenev's ability to capture the ideas of repression and self sacrifice in the female character" (1997, 147).

to Fru Odingoff at this juncture allows him to draw a homology between Scandinavian and Russian literature while also appealing to a Scandinavian audience.[67]

By starting with a discussion of Turgenev's female characters, Bang is able to anchor his analysis of characters in what he sees as a crucial determinant of what constitutes characterological fiction: showing (conveying) emotion or feeling, but not explaining (or analyzing) it. To impart this effect, Bang thinks that an author must focus on the character's physical manifestations of emotion—that is, the character's gestures and mannerisms. These physical manifestations both are the impression and impart the impression. Because gestures and mannerisms are partial but evocative evidence of emotion that people would normally use to get insight into what another person is feeling and thinking—that is, how people experience other people's emotions—writing can mirror life.[68] For Bang, character portraiture that utilizes such impressions allows for authentic representation.

To further plumb Turgenev's literary approach to characters, Bang turns to one of Turgenev's male characters, Bazaroff, from *Fathers and Sons*.[69] Bazaroff, Bang notes, is a tormented man, emotionally distant, condescending, and rigid in his beliefs, taking comfort in the stoicism of rationality. As Bang describes Bazaroff:

> Han er en stor og kold Sjæl. Han skyer alle Følelser og gør dem latterlige ved at benævne dem Sentimentalitet. Han benægter Hjertets Ret til at leve og elske, og han skænker Hjernen den fuldkommen Herskermagt. I sit eget Liv praktiserer han sine Teorier ved at behandle sine Forældre med en overlegen Haan, der faar vort Hjerte til at snøres sammen; og ved at flygte for Kærligheden som for en Lidenskab, uværdig en Mand. ([1885?] 7h)

> (He is a great and cold soul. He shuns all emotions and finds them laughable to name them sentimental. He denies the heart's right to live and love, and he gives the mind the perfect governing power. In his own life he practices his theories by treating his parents with a superior scorn, which makes our heart cringe; and by running away from love as from a passion, unworthy [of] a man.)

Bazaroff's emotional distance, Bang suggests, is not only compellingly articulated, it is inseparable from the novel's (*Fathers and Sons*) plot, which, in this case, is centered around him

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67. Perhaps Bang makes this comparison because he finds Turgenev's Fru Odingoff and Jacobsen's Fru Boye similar in that it is unclear what these characters actually think or want. This creates opportunities in both novels for intriguing female character portraits to be made, as neither the male characters in the respective novels nor the reader can really know what the female characters are feeling. On another note, it is worth mentioning that Bang recorded his meeting with the dying J. P. Jacobsen in Thisted, Jutland in 1880 (published six years later on December 5, 1886). For this interview, entitled "En Møde med J. P. Jacobsen" (A meeting with J. P. Jacobsen), see Bang 1956, 105–7.
68. I am quoting the following passage from Bang's preface to *Tine* again (see also n. 65), because it demonstrates how Bang conceptualizes character: "Jeg sér mine Personer kun i Billede efter Billede og kun i Situation efter Situation hører jeg dem tale. Jeg maa ofte bie i Timer, før de ved et Blik, en Bevægelse, et Ord forraader mig deres virkelige Tanker, som jeg jo kun kan gætte ligesom jeg gætter andre levende Menneskers—deres, som jeg omgaaes og kender" [I see my characters only in picture after picture and only hear them speak in situation after situation. I must often wait for hours before they, with a glance, a movement, a word, betray to me their real thoughts, which I can only guess just as I guess from other living people—those, whom I see and know] (Bang [1889] 1986, 13–14).
69. It is important to note that Bang draws on other examples in "Manuskript"—namely, examples from *Rudin* and *Senilia*—alongside other pertinent examples from *Fathers and Sons*; however, for the purposes of this chapter, I focus on Bang's discussion of Turgenev's characters from *Fathers and Sons*.

as a rigid character. Despite Bazaroff's inaccessible disposition, Turgenev places readers at certain vantage points from which to sympathize with this rigid man. Because readers are forced to attempt to figure out Bazaroff on their own, they have the opportunity to *become invested* in him—even if he is an emotionally distant character. It is this investment on the part of readers that renders Bazaroff a sympathetic character. Demonstrating how Turgenev shapes a novel around a character (rather than around the plot), Bang adds that "vil jeg kun gøre opmærksom paa, at Turgenjev ikke har skrevet en Bog mod Fremskridtet, men mod Hr. Bazaroff, ikke noget Værk mod Udviklingen, men kun en Roman, der til Helt har en Omstyrter, navnet Hr. Bazaroff" (7g) [I will only point out, that Turgenev did not write a book against progress, but against Hr. Bazaroff, not any work against development, but only a novel that has a subverter for a hero, by the name of Hr. Bazaroff]. Bang further articulates this point by stating, "Bogens Fejl ligger i den for vide Titel, ti den er ikke en Roman om *Fædre og Sønner* men kun om visse Sønner: de Herrer Bazaroff" (7g) [The book's fault lies in the too broad title, thus it is not a novel about *Fathers and Sons* but only about certain sons: the Gentlemen Bazaroff]. Here Bang's point is that the novel's (*Fathers and Sons*) intent is not to describe generalized social processes (e.g., progress) but individual characters. If so, it then follows that Bang sees the character of Barazoff not only as a portrait but also as an artifact of its "time's main figure–temperament" (*Tidens Hoved—Temperament*). In other words, the portrait of an individual person impressed into a narrative form produces a literary artifact (e.g., the novel), which is a product of its time. The resulting problem then is that character becomes a function of form and is thus subject to the same problems of form that affect plot. In other words, the constraints a narrative imposes (a beginning and end) affect the representation of character.

Concluding Remarks on Bang's "Manuskript"

In returning to Bang's overarching fascination with the subject of character itself in "Manuskript," it becomes clear that Bang sees character as Turgenev's ultimate literary triumph. Nevertheless, given Bang's assessment of the literary portrait as a form for recording his impression of Turgenev and given Bang's unfolding analysis of Turgenev's method of impressing his vision of character upon his fiction accordingly, Bang ends up back where he started with the overarching issue of form. In other words, given all that he said he would not do—that is, what approaches he would not take in his literary portrait of Turgenev—Bang essentially arrives at a perplexing juncture: even character becomes a problem of form. This is because the literary portrait Bang employs in "Manuskript" is a metaphor for assessing the form of "an impression"—that is, what form is best suited to leaving a record (impression).

In this way, Bang situates his ethics in a methodological concern over how to best use the narrative form to relay an impression: whether it be the impression of an author (Turgenev), or how an author (Turgenev) impresses his impression of a character into his fiction. That Bang comes to see character as inseparable from form vis-à-vis his discussion of Turgenev is informative of his later literary projects, wherein he vicariously experiments with or orchestrates form to serve character. The partial portrait is a metaphor borrowed, in part, from the visual arts to explain his valuation of the impression, and it becomes an informative window into how Bang's investment with impressionism manifests and develops as an evolving current in his work. Moreover, Bang's ethically concerned aesthetics within his impressionism become pronounced when one takes into account how he is constantly attending to and evaluating the right way to document and record an impression.

Indeed, after reading the full manuscript, what becomes clear is that the formal problems—that is, the manuscript's form, and Bang's discussion of form via Turgenev's characters—make the author's task one of creating the semblance or impression of a character as discrete from the narrative form. Another way of reading this formal problem in Bang's manuscript is in light of his intimation of a partial portrait. In other words, it seems that as much as Bang would like to give a partial portrait of Turgenev, he is also concerned with how the impression of a character can be potentially lost once translated or placed into certain situations within a narrative. Thus, another way of interpreting "partial" is to view it as referring to what is lost in translation (that is, the act of translating or transcribing the impression of a character into an existence within the constraints of a narrative text). Accordingly, character is always a partial impression and, by this logic, only a partial portrait of a character can be given. Bang shows how character is the author's impression of a (fictive) person and, by extension, the impression *is* character. If so, then analyzing Turgenev's characters becomes a method of analyzing the impressions he has left behind in his character portraits. Regardless of whether this is the case, the evolving form of Bang's literary portrait of Turgenev becomes problematic but informative regarding Bang's attempt to articulate an aesthetic logic: the partial portrait is able to retain the quality of the life impression precisely because it allows a reader to fill in the missing gaps and, accordingly, animate the story with each rereading.

In this way, Bang uses the literary portrait as a vehicle to think through how the process of leaving an impression works in light of the need for mediation between two opposing poles: the author's aspiration to produce a portrait, and the necessity for that portrait to remain somehow unfinished, indeed permanently partial. Thus, while addressing what he will not do, what Bang does end up providing is his own partial literary portrait of Ivan Turgenev. Moreover, *within* this partial literary portrait of Turgenev, Bang foregrounds his own vision of character (vis-à-vis a discussion of Turgenev's characters) that ultimately identifies the importance of a partial portrait of *character*, namely that, in its incompleteness, it remains open to an audience's interpretation and permits an ongoing development of meaning.

This idea of the partial portrait can also be found in the works of Henry James. As Millicent Bell (1991) says about James's *Portrait of a Lady*, it is the promise of a portrait—that is, the plotting of a portrait of a character as his "germ" to the plot, but the slow sketch of only a partial portrait by the end—that creates such enigmatic and incomplete endings in James's fiction. As Bell contends, "the 'portrait' of this heroine [Isabel Archer] is never painted" (1991, 31). In this way, James, like Bang, uses the portrait as a metaphor for character, but never gives the full portrait by the end. Read alongside Bang's "Manuskript," James's discussion and understanding of "the portrait" and "the impression" in his "Preface" (1908) to *The Portrait of a Lady* help crystalize Bang's investment and method, both of which come into greater relief when juxtaposed with James's use of Turgenev in his own critical writing. Moreover, a consideration of James's work also reveals that his critical writing functions as a means of thinking through the aesthetic logic of his own fiction. In this way, Bang and James are alike—that is, they both use their critical writings to test out and fine-tune what they see as the respective role of literature in their literary projects. But before discussing this matter further, I will first turn to a brief comparison of James's discussion of Turgenev in his preface.

A Brief Comparison: Henry James on Turgenev

Like Bang, Henry James frequently references Turgenev to make his own claims about fiction writing, although unlike Bang, James situates this more specifically within the form of the novel. In his earlier publications of "Ivan Turgénieff" (1884, 1888) and in his preface to the 1908 New York Edition of *The Portrait of a Lady*, James articulates his own compositional choices centered around character vis-à-vis references and allusions to Turgenev. Additionally, James foregrounds the role of "the portrait" and "the impression" in his critical writings,[70] appropriating nomenclature traditionally attributed to the fine arts. This can be seen in the frequent use of art terms or references that speckle his preface, such as "canvas," "portrait," "foreshorten," "picture," and "image." Like Bang, James is intent on extrapolating the novel's compositional capabilities with reference to the fine arts. James's reliance on the formal fine-art discourse can be seen via his use of anecdotes and analogies borrowed from the visual arts. This results from the lack of a formal nomenclature specific to the novel. As Dorothy Hale insightfully puts forward: "The aesthetics of the novel have been missed, it seems, not because the novel isn't an aesthetic form, but because critical language derived from other literary genres can't register the novel's distinguishing formal features" (2006, 19).

While Bang and James are both indebted to the fine arts in their discussion of Turgenev, they show this in distinct ways. Bang uses Bastien-Lepage both to illustrate the principles of character portrayal and to show, using his own portrait of Turgenev, how the literary portrait can both emulate and exceed Bastien-Lepage's medium. James, on the other hand, in his preface simply quotes Turgenev on character and the "fictive picture". The connection with the fine arts is implied via the shared vocabulary ("picture"), but James does not refer directly to the discipline of the fine arts. A pertinent example of this is when James first mentions Turgenev in an anecdote, recalling Turgenev's discovery of character:

> It began for him almost always with the vision of some person or persons, who hovered before him, soliciting him, as the active or passive figure, interesting him and appealing to him just as they were and by what they were. He saw them, in that fashion, as *disponibles* [the unattached], saw them subject to the chances, the complications of existence, and saw them vividly, but then had to find for them the right relations, those that would most bring them out; to imagine, to invent and select and piece together the situations most useful and favorable to the sense of the creatures themselves, the complications they would be most likely to produce and to feel. (James 1995, 5)

Indeed, Turgenev's *disponible*—what James later calls "the unattached character"—fascinates James precisely because this kind of person is open to embellishment and thus allows the author more maneuverability. In James's account, Turgenev's characters are described as seemingly discrete—that is, almost autonomous from the author's imagination. Accordingly, James here envisions Turgenev's relationship to his characters as compulsory—that is, instead of choosing his characters, they instead are free to "solicit" and choose him. In this schema, the author's role is to "find the relations" that "would most bring [the characters] out" (5).

This passage has much in common with what James describes in his 1888 essay on Turgenev. In this example, James's analysis focuses not on the overarching "life" element in

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70 James directly references the importance of the impression in his conception of the novel in "The Art of Fiction" (1888), wherein he states: "A novel is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life" (1956, 9).

Turgenev's writing so much as on concrete examples of how Turgenev was able to capture such "life" within his characters. Indeed, as James later tells his readers, "the study of the Russian character absorbed and fascinated him, as all readers of his stories know" (1986, 141). What enthralls James is Turgenev's ability to capture "life" in his characters by composing a novel around a character rather than the other way around:

> The germ of the story, with him, was never an affair of plot—that was the last thing he thought of: it was the representation of certain persons. The first form in which a tale appeared to him was as the figure of an individual, or a combination of individuals, whom he wishes to see in action, being sure that such people must do something very special and interesting. They stood before him definite, vivid, and he wished to know, and to show, as much as possible of their nature. The first thing was to make clear to himself what he did know, to begin with; and to this end, he wrote out a sort of biography of each of his characters, and everything that they had done and that had happened to them up to the opening of the story. He had their *dossier*, as the French say, and as the police has of that of every conspicuous criminal. With this material in his hand he was able to proceed; the story all lay in the question, What shall I make them do? He always made them do things that showed them completely; but, as he said, the defect of his manner and the reproach that was made him was his want of "architecture"—in other words, of composition. (144–45)

Here James elucidates how for Turgenev, character came before the plot—and in that sense, the "germ of the story" was never plot, but character (e.g., "certain persons"). Like Bang, James expounds on Turgenev's characterological fiction as one that envisioned a character before the story, as evidenced by the "dossiers" on the characters biographies Turgenev had sketched out. Unlike Bang, however, James here sees Turgenev as "show[ing]" his characters "completely"— albeit, through what the characters do—that is, through action. What becomes clear in this passage is that James values how Turgenev is able to have the impression of a character standing "before him definite, vivid" and how Turgenev then tries to recapture this impression "completely" in his fiction. What makes Turgenev's record of the impression of character so effective to James is that it reconfigures how a novel is constructed—that is, around a character rather than plot. Still, James concedes, Turgenev's "want of 'architecture'" was his "defect." Accordingly, the issue becomes how to retain a similar method of capturing the impression of a character and constructing a story around the character without losing the narrative to the defects of a "want of 'architecture.'"

James's view of Turgenev's artistic method is premised on the idea that character is somehow discrete and thus has a life that must in some way be true for an author. Such a concern regarding the life of a character, however, is not just an aesthetic issue. An ethical engagement with identity is bound up in both the meaning of character and in the ideology of character in James's aesthetic logic. This is seen in his 1908 "Preface" wherein James quotes Turgenev as follows: "[characters] are the breath of life—by which I mean that life, in its own way, breathes them upon us. . . . That reduces to imbecility the vain critic's quarrel, so often, with one's subject, when he hasn't the wit to accept it" (1995, 5). Following Turgenev's example, Bang, like James, hoped to be as thorough with his knowledge and capacity to portray the character as he or she was, a goal that Bang identifies in Turgenev's work as an appreciation of character. In this sense, the sketches become documentations of aspects or qualities of the character, so that

when a novel starts, it represents genuinely a character's autonomy from outside the fictional world, and, in this sense, respects the initial impression of the character. Such a methodological concern in retaining the initial impression of the character is evidence of a growing authorial investment in character—that is, character is not fixed or predisposed but rather "alive" in the impression. How characters unfold in a narrative relies on the situations into which they are placed, and are thus the consequence of the decisions they make in those given situations. Nevertheless, such an approach to character also presents an unprecedented compositional problem—namely, how to frame the character (the "germ" of the story) within a narrative. Once placed within a narrative, the character is no longer seen as discrete or autonomous, and thus narrative form, in a sense, limits the impression (the initial "life") of the character.

For example, James describes his portrait or "framed" look into the life of Isabel Archer as "exactly my grasp of a single character—an acquisition I had made" (1995, 7). Yet, by using the word "acquisition," a sense of possession is implied, which problematizes the character's supposed agency and autonomy to *choose* what he or she will do. This would seem to contradict James's earlier claims about agency and character. What arises is a problem of composition, which highlights an underlying structural problem in the novel: character is subsumed by the architectural structure (plot) of a novel, albeit to different degrees of "acquisition." James makes it known that he is trying to establish a discourse on the novel with its center "in the heroine's consciousness and that its action was the development of her perception and awareness" (Baym [1976] 1995, 620). This is because for James, perception and awareness are in the service of character; but organizing a novel around character paradoxically transforms the subject into the object of the novel. This is seen, for example, when James at first describes character in the novel: "The novel is of its very nature an 'ado,' an ado about something, and the larger the form it takes the greater of course the ado. Therefore, consciously, that was what one was in for—for positively organizing an ado about Isabel Archer" (1995, 9). However, shortly thereafter he contradicts himself, saying "'The Portrait' wears for me: a structure reared with an 'architectural' competence, as Turgenieff would have said" (11). In other words, whether he wants to admit it or not, James's "portrait," despite its focus on character, will nevertheless conform to the inherent structure of a novel, framed by its beginning and end. Hence organizing a novel around character paradoxically makes the subject into an object framed *by* the novel.

James's contradiction is informative because it points out the duality of character: a character—the subject of the novel—can also become an object or "brick" (1995, 11) within the architectural enterprise of the novel itself. Considering this duality brings a nuanced aspect to the presentation of character within the novel; point of view is not only biased by its perspective, but also by what may be considered a moralistic lens through which the reader is granted access to the character. That is, the reader can stand back and watch or judge but not act on behalf of the character. In this case, such a view for the reader is not only framed around a novel's portrait of a character but also the privilege of being able to observe. As Hale contends, novel writing, for James, turns "into a negotiation between the viewer and viewed that relies as much on the worthiness of the view as on the viewer's capacity 'to see'" (1998, 28–29).

This type of viewing relates back to the issue of character, which James is careful to locate as a constituent of perception. James understands Turgenev's preference for the "morally interesting situation" as the birthplace of the morally interesting character:

> What he [James] did grasp about Turgenev was his preference for, and use of, the
> "morally interesting situation" and there is evidence enough that the kinds of morally

interesting situation which James himself was to choose bear close enough generic resemblance to Turgenev's for us to infer a significant influence. As James observed of Turgenev "what works in him most is the question of will" and from this hub radiate those elements and features of human behaviour which most frequently constitute the "morally interesting situations" of his novels—renunciation, missed opportunities (in both life and love), sexual attraction in relation to corruption and innocence. These are the recurrent constituents of Turgenev's novels, offering both dramatic potential and moral edification, and they are substantially the same elements of which James's moral dramas are composed. (Turton 1992, 65; quoting James 1956a, 232)

Interestingly, when applying this concept back to a concrete example of Turgenev's characters, failure stands out as a determining force in the morally interesting subject. As Cornelia Kelley confirms in *The Early Development of Henry James*: "Turgenieff answered the question for James in almost every one of his stories. Failure" (Kelly 1930, 179).

James's questions about what rightly constitutes a character resonate with Hale's insightful comment on James's point of view technique as "construct[ing] an ethics around the issue of point of view—what I am calling the appreciation of alterity—that has helped determine the course not just of novel theory but also of later theories about literature and identity that have invoked the novel as a privileged locus of evidence" (1998, 22). While Bang's and James's contradictions on character and the novel may be frustrating, they are also informative about the compositional problem or contradiction inherent in the novel itself. This contradiction links the issue of character and identity to the increased representational capacity for depicting the "other" within character-centered novels.

Conclusion

In summary, both James and Bang use Turgenev to scaffold their nascent interest in the impression of a character as a "germ" for a novel. While this does not mean that Turgenev himself was an impressionist, it does suggest that both James and Bang saw through his work the impression as a methodological tool—one that could orient literature toward its ethically concerned aesthetic imperative: to envision an effective way to channel an impression, depict character, and create a mirroring of "life" that tried to involve the reader in the process of constructing meaning. In this way, the experiential component maintained by the impression necessitated a threefold process: 1) the author's impression of a person (fictive or via memory), 2) the character's impression on the author (compelling the author to situate the character in a narrative), and lastly, 3) the author's desire to *give* or *record* his impression of character such that the impression can be fully realized or experienced *anew* by the reader. In this process, a conflation occurs between the author's subjective experience of a character and the attempt to portray character as discrete from the author's subjective design (that is, to present the character as objectively as possible), in order to reproduce the sense of an impression for the reader. To clarify, this does not mean that all readers experience the same impression; instead it means that Bang's vision of involving the reader was part of his aesthetic logic (regardless of whether readers were compelled enough to be actually involved).

While this chapter has focused primarily on Bang's discussion of Turgenev, a brief comparison with James has further elucidated how and why Bang's consideration of Turgenev centers on the impression and how it informs the arrival of and resulting delineation of character.

Although cursory, this comparison of James's and Bang's respective critical discourses on and around Turgenev brings into relief how they approach their own fiction and how they thought their fiction ought to be understood (vis-à-vis their nascent investment in drawing out the purpose of their and Turgenev's literary projects). Because they both envision how characters come to Turgenev, they also begin to outline how the impression of characters on an author governs how an author delineates them in his fiction. Read this way, both James and Bang structure their ethically concerned aesthetic enterprises on character *within* their fiction and *about* their fiction. Even though their finished novels diverge in style and composition, their critical discourses share a similar vision of character. That character would become the crucial nexus of ensuing questions on morality, authenticity, and ethics in novel theory speaks to the ethical potential of character in the novel that Bang anticipated and James theorized at the turn of the nineteenth century.[71]

In sum, this chapter has looked at how Bang's analysis of the literary portrait vis-à-vis Turgenev avoids a traditional biographical model in favor of exploring how an author can transpose or *impress* (i.e., mark) life into his fiction. As I have shown, the portrait becomes an ill-suited metaphor for what Bang does want to explore: how the author's impression is to be recorded such that it retains the dynamic quality of character—which, in a circuitous way, is also the transposition of an author's impression of character. Bang, like James, sees the partial portrait as a way of delaying and postponing full delineation, thus allowing for the gaps and fissures in the narrative to produce the "life" impression of a character that a reader pieces together. Thus, the first aspect of leaving an impression involves the proper means of recording character—for Bang, like James, this is the partial portrait. However, this leaves open the question of how an impression is transmitted to a reader once the partial portrait has been created. Just because a character has been recorded does not mean it will be impressed onto the reader. Another technique is needed, one whose strategy is to involve the reader in the text. That technique is called disorientation and is the subject of the next chapter.

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71. While character theory is by no means a new subject, it has only recently reemerged as a critical contender in current discourses surrounding the novel. Take *New Literary History*'s 2011 volume dedicated solely to theoretical concerns over character. In this volume, Julian Murphet aptly contextualizes how character has historically and inadvertently been the crucible of the field's maturing representational politics: character "conjures up interminable and properly ancient debates about literary form as such, and the various ways in which such form mediates psychology, ethics, and politics within the specific requirements of a given stage of literary development" (Murphet 2011, 255). Similarly, Marta Figlerowicz puts Deidre Lynch's (1998) *The Economy of Character* and Alex Woloch's (2003) *The One vs. The Many* into focus, positing that despite divergent ethical and social stakes in their respective theories of character construction, both "study the novel as a site of instruction in perception" (2011, 77). This is important because it identifies the role of perception in delineating respective characters.

Chapter Three

Exit Character, Enter Impression:
The Disorienting Finales of Herman Bang's "Irene Holm" and *Ved Vejen*

In this chapter, I turn to Bang's formal experimentation with finales wherein he appropriates a painterly portrait model of character delineation alongside a dramatic model of narrative endings. It is in this way that Bang attempts to move the aesthetic effect of the impression from its origination in character to its desired effect on the reader. In his efforts to achieve this, Bang uses a dramatic model of disruptive endings, or what I refer to as disorienting finales (given the dramatic model that informs his endings), which aim to involve the reader in the experience of the impression by the narrative's end.

For Bang, blending both a subjective painterly model of character portraiture with drama's objective presentation of character ultimately produces an aesthetic effect whereby a character seemingly has autonomy or a "life" outside the narrative. While this effect is essential for a reader to be drawn into the text, it also raises a formal problem: how does the author end the narrative such that the reader's belief in the character's existence beyond the narrative is not compromised? In this way, Bang is caught between two representational models (the pictorial and dramatic forms) as he attempts to work through and find the most appropriate way of recording the impression such that it can be taken in by the reader. Bang is drawn to the pictorial portrait model because he is interested in capturing the essence of a character and, likewise, he is drawn to the dramatic model because he is interested in both making the character's essence understood and allowing it to be internalized by an audience.

To unpack how pictorial and dramatic approaches inform Bang's unusual narration—and thus, narrative endings—I turn to a close reading of "Irene Holm" (1886, 1890)[72] and *Ved Vejen* (1886, By the wayside; 1990, *Katinka*). These two texts exemplify his application of literary impressionism across two narrative forms: the short story and the novel. Despite the different formal requirements necessitated by these genres, or perhaps because of them, these texts provide an intriguing case study for examining how Bang perceives a deficiency in character-based fiction—namely, an inability both to reach satisfactory closure and make a successful impression on the reader—that forces him to rely instead on more arbitrary forms of formal closure. To effectively move the impression into the reader's arena, Bang variously employs a technique of impressionism—disorientation.

Disorientation, as I am using it here, refers to the process whereby the reader's value laden system of viewing is disrupted. This is possible, in theory, because the observed object (the subject or main character) is not only seemingly "objectively" observed and recorded by the author but also perpetually re-observed by readers whose perception already orients them to see one way or another. The task of Bang's impressionism then becomes to introduce devices that

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72. Herman Bang first published "Irene Holm" as a serialized novella in *Nordstjernen* (The North Star) from November 21–28, 1886, under the title "Danserinden Frøken Irene Holm" (The dancer Miss Irene Holm). In 1890, "Irene Holm" was published in a compilation of short stories, entitled *Under Aaget* (Under the yoke). For more on the publication of "Irene Holm," see Dahl and Dalsgård 2010, 501–4.

impede the process of perception—that is, make perception difficult or strange—and thereby endeavor to reorient his readers accordingly.[73]

The disorienting devices of these texts appear in their conclusions, when the main characters recede from the story—either by exiting the town or dying—before the novel or short story ends. This creates a narrative space whereby the impression of the missing or absent character can retroactively be established. In this way, Bang's overarching effect of disorientation is achieved through Bang's careful manipulation and positioning of the reader to be in discord or at odds with the closure imposed on the story by the narrative's end. In other words, here the ending does not produce catharsis for the reader precisely because he or she is implicated in and assumed to inhabit a different perspective. Regardless of whether this disorienting device is successful, I aim to argue here that disorientation is the goal.

In this chapter, I show that while Bang uses these conspicuous experiments with delayed and abrupt endings to stage his project of formal disorientation, his use of them also reveals his own ambivalence about the constraints of narrative closure. And, as I hope to show, it is precisely this project of formal disorientation as a means of reorienting his readers to the author's initial impression of the main *character* that constitutes Bang's vision of literary impressionism.

Irene Holm

Background

Herman Bang's short story, "Irene Holm," appeared in *Nordstjernen* (The North Star) as early as 1886, under the title "Danserinden Frøken Irene Holm" (The dancer Miss Irene Holm) (Dahl and Dalsgård 2010, 503; Greene-Gantzberg 1997, 141; Nilsson 1965, 196). A month later it was published in *Framåt* (Forward) (Nilsson 1965, 196); and finally, in 1890, Bang published this same story as "Irene Holm" in his anthology, *Under Aaget* (Under the yoke) (Dahl and Dalsgård 2010, 503–4). During the four-year period between the initial appearance of "Danserinden Frøken Irene Holm" in *Nordstjernen* and "Irene Holm" in *Under Aaget*, Bang was said to have courted several versions of the story's famous last line before settling on the 1890 version: "Der drog hun hen—for at fortsætte *det,* man kalder Livet" (Bang 1972, 330) ["She made her way thither to continue *that* which we call life" (331)]. According to Torbjörn Nilsson, Bang's earlier drafts of "Irene Holm" flirted with at least three variations of the famous last line. This included one earlier last-line version, which introduced "some people" as a distancing technique—"for at fortsætte *det*, som en Del Mennesker kalder Livet" [to continue that which some people call life]—and a second version, which went further with its moralizing principle, saying that Irene "drog videre for at fortsætte det som menneskene *vaager* at kalde livet" [went thither to continue that which some people *dare* to call life].[74] The third version Bang was considering, however, was according to the critic Ronald Fangen, Bang's personal favorite: "drog hun saa videre for at fortsætte *den Rædslernes Elendighed*, som vi Mennesker . . . *vovver* at kalde Livet!!" (quoted in Nilsson 1965, 196) [she went on to continue *the frightful misery*, that

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73. Bang's emphasis on the value of seeing anew via disorientation bears much in common with Viktor Shklovsky's use of "defamiliarization" (*ostraneniye*, in Russian). For Shklovsky, defamiliarization was a necessary process of making perception strange, and thereby crucial to "impart[ing] the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known" ([1917] 1965, 12). This method reinforced the necessity of literary language to shock readers into seeing the familiar anew.

74. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

we people . . . *dare* to call life!!]. After situating these three incongruent endings, Nilsson posits that it is impossible to know which "Irene Holm" concluding line is the most original, and he does not provide any further material on this point (1965, 196).

Which closing line is Bang's favorite and which is the most original are hard to discern and will not be of concern here. What is of concern, however, is how the concluding-line variants read differently from the famous and often-cited concluding line of 1890. These concluding-line versions engender a series of questions: Does this short story still have the same affective ending with the concluding line of 1890 as it does with the three other variations? And, if so, how does the affective effect of the final concluding line from 1890 (the one Bang chooses to use in the end) position the reader in relation to Irene Holm's character? To answer these questions, I intend to begin where Nilsson left off; that is, to begin at the end of "Irene Holm." I contend that "Irene Holm's" incongruent last-line endings (between 1886 and 1890) speak to Bang's negotiation of the inverse relationship between plot and character which, in the 1890 conclusion of "Irene Holm," manifests as unresolved tensions that illustrate Bang's wrangling with formal closure and character in the short story.

While discussions of "Irene Holm" have often orbited around the biographical parallels with the Danish dancer Alvida Bak Hansen (Greene-Gantzberg 1997, 141; Eddy 1989, 17–18) or Bang's own failed stage appearance as Oswald (Osvald) in Henrik Ibsen's (1828–1906) *Gengangere* (*Ghosts*) in the summer of 1885 (Eddy 1989, 25),[75] such biographical readings tend to misidentify the relationship between Bang's lived experience and the genesis of his fictional characters. As Bangs put it: "Alle mine Skikkelser har jeg *set* og *hørt* i Livet, men jeg omskaber dem, som jeg føler Lyst til eller rettere, efter Bogens Handling, *den* skyldes som oftest *min* Fantasi mere end Virkeligheden, og Skikkelserne maa jeg altsaa skildre saadan, at de passer ind i Handlingen i Ydre som i Indre" (quoted in Eddy 1989, 19) ["I have seen and heard all my figures in life, but I transform them as I feel inclined or, more accurately, according to the book's plot; *it* usually is the work of my fantasy more than of reality, and therefore I have to portray the figures in such a way that they fit into the plot both outwardly and inwardly" (Eddy 1989, 19)]. Bang's fictional characters, even if based initially on real-life models, are not homologous with their real-life models once the character appears in a literary text for two reasons. First, a fictional character is made transparent—knowable and malleable both "inwardly" (*Indre*) and "outwardly" (*Ydre*). Secondly, the character is made to fit the author's "fantasy" (*Fantasi*) and the emerging plot (*Bogens Handling*). The important point here is that Bang's discussion of character and plot identifies a central ethical question: If a character is, as he suggests, granted inward and outward symmetry, is the character made to fit the plot or the plot made to fit the character? This issue is of critical concern to Bang because its resolution identifies how Bang could write an ending that imparts empathy when the formal demand of closure necessitates the dismissal of character.

Related to the problem of a main character's exit from the narrative before the end is reached is whether a certain degree of distance from the moment the character exits is in fact necessary to disrupt the reader's experience of, and, perhaps even desire for formal closure and meaning when the character is no longer accessible. Is this as Girard Genette had it, the fate of narratives that reject the motivation to finish (which oddly enough, is a motivation in itself) and thus "never to 'finish' . . . is, in one sense, never to start" (1980, 268)? Or, is it alternately, as Peer E. Sørensen's (2009) suggests, Bang's overarching ambivalence (e.g., between realism and allegory, irony and sentiment)? If so, do Bang's incongruent endings (as seen in the existence of

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75. For Bang's own account of his theatrical humiliation while playing Oswald, see Bang 1891, 151–65.

several concluding lines in "Irene Holm") speak to his inability to successfully negotiate the tension between formal closure and character; or, is this the necessary method for recalling the impression of a character (in the character's absence), paradoxically thus making a disorienting ending the most suited to honor character? To further explore how the tug-of-war between the semblance of a character's autonomy and the necessity for the narrative to end is key to Bang's literary experiments, I turn to a close reading of three moments of disorientation in "Irene Holm" to locate how these unresolved tensions underpin his short story.

Summary of "Irene Holm"

"Irene Holm" tells the story of an aging, 40-year-old dance instructor who arrives in a provincial town one day late in October. She is the instructor for a dance course, which is set to begin in November. While she teaches this course for seven young pupils, she boards with a blacksmith's family. There we are told of her morning rituals of crimping and curling her hair, her afternoon routine of sitting on a hamper while she crochets, and her evening routines of ballet exercises and stretches (which the blacksmith and his wife never fail to watch through a keyhole). Through flashbacks, mainly as she dozes off to sleep at night, we find out about her bygone days at the Royal Theater (*det kongelige Teater*) where she was often scolded by her dance instructor and never got the chance to perform the solo she wanted to dance, "La grande Neapolitaine" (The great Neapolitan).

As spring rolls around, Irene has her class hold a dance recital for the townspeople. After the recital, she is asked to dance and decides to perform "La grande Neapolitaine." She gets carried away with her performance, inhabiting so completely the role of the mute Fenella that only once she has completed the dance does she notice that the audience of townspeople are laughing at her. Dejected and humiliated, Irene walks back home that night accompanied by the Pastor and his daughter. They try to console her on their walk and the next day, Irene leaves for the next town, where she will instruct another dance course and "for at fortsætte *det*, man kalder Livet (Bang 1972, 330) ["to continue *that* which we call life" (331)].

What makes "Irene Holm" (1890) so compelling as a short story is the unusual character at the center of the narrative: the rather pathetic, helpless, eponymous character Irene. Bang is able to center a story around such a pathetic character precisely because he does not develop Irene through her actions in the plot (as one might typically expect in character-centered fiction) but rather through perspectival tensions—namely, an omniscient narrator, other minor characters' points of views, and frames (e.g. the blacksmith and his wife watching her dance at night through a keyhole) that construct her kaleidoscopically. This method of character development is further elaborated upon by Kenneth Burke, who writes: "It is customary to think that objective reality is dissolved by such relativity of terms as we get through the shifting perspectives (the perception of one character in terms of many diverse characters). But on the contrary, it is by the approach through a variety of perspectives that we establish a character's reality" (quoted in Harvey 1966, 5). With Burke's statement in mind, minor characters' points of view or perspectives help elucidate or expose Irene's persona and her unfolding reality. In this way, her depiction relies on the intersecting observations of *others* (e.g. minor characters), her audience of "spectators" (*Publikum*) at the dance recital, the observations of her narrator, and flashbacks conveyed via the omniscient narrator, followed by the intrusion of the conspicuously moralizing voice of the narrator in the final line which brings into focus the reality of her life of quiet resignation. It is important to note that while the omniscient narrator has narrated the story

all along, it is not until the finale that this voice becomes conspicuously moralizing, in turn interpolating and disrupting the narrative's ending. This effect functions as a dramatic device in bringing the short story to closure. And yet, despite this closing judgment on her mundane life, a sympathetic reception by the reader remains possible because of the reader's having been privy to her helplessness all along. In fact, it may be precisely the dissonance between the reader's experience of Irene and the narrator's moralizing voice at the close of the story that has the potential to jar the reader. Additionally, both the fictional audience (*Publikum*) watching Irene and the readers evaluating her see her only via frames and therefore are permitted only partial glimpses into her life. When the reader sees Irene from the perspective of the fictional audience, a frame-within-a-frame effect is produced, creating a fragmented view of her. Moreover, the views and angles the reader obtains include intimate settings—namely her bedroom—which place the reader in vulnerable, intimate spaces occupied by the character. That Irene seems to let the reader into her bedroom only reinforces the feeling of her passivity and powerlessness.

Such is perhaps the main kernel behind the tragic humiliation of Irene throughout the story: the narrative betrays her by exposing her as powerless before her humiliators, before the people that spy on or watch her (e.g., the blacksmith and his wife), and before the omniscient narrator that tells her story. The tragedy, therefore, is that Irene is a quiet and forgettable person (even though, ironically, she never forgets, but constantly re-remembers her humiliations) who is ultimately spoken for (or about) by others. Her lack of voice is not only echoed by the role she assumes as the mute Fenella in *Den Stumme fra Portici*, built on D. F. E Auber's 1828 opera *La Muette de Portici* (*The Dumb Girl of Portici*), but is also reinforced by the short story's ending where she is excluded from her own story. In this way, this short story becomes one way in which her otherwise unimpressive presence can effectively be written down and impressed (that is, marked) into posterity. Thus, by providing observations of Irene's character via compulsive flashbacks to scenes of humiliation, framed surveillance by other minor characters, and voiceless gestures that convey and speak for her (including Irene's final assumption of the role of Fenella), Bang records his impression of a wounded soul and immortalizes her in the unfolding narrative, allowing him to lift "the yoke" (*Aaget*) of humiliation that would otherwise marginalize her existence to perpetual oblivion.

The Disorienting Crescendos of "Irene Holm"

The finale of "Irene Holm" can be read as disorienting for two reasons: one, the narrative performs two progressively intensifying moments in which an ending appears to be imminent—what I am here calling narrative crescendos—before the actual ending of this short story (the coda) arrives; and two, a conspicuously moralizing voice comes in with the last line to effectively enforce narrative closure. The first narrative crescendo is achieved with Irene's performance as Fenella; a performance met with grimaces and laughs that prevent her from having the grand finale she desires. The second narrative crescendo is obtained when the pastor and his daughter walk Irene home after her humiliating performance at the dance recital. As they walk her home, they try to console her, explaining that the townsfolk do not understand such "tragiske" (tragedy). This particular scene can be read in three ways: the townsfolk do not understand the role she has played; they cannot separate her from her staged character; or they only can see one type of heroine (anything that deviates from this is seen as strange, different, nonheroic, and hence ludicrous). Finally, narrative closure is achieved with the narrative's coda—a concluding line that pulls the reader away from the plot line. With this concluding line,

the reader stands where the pastor's daughter stands, waving at Irene as she fades into the distance. Irene's fade-out into the horizon is punctured by the omniscient narrator's intruding remarks: "for at fortsætte *det*, man kalder Livet" (Bang 1972, 330) ["to continue *that* which we call life" (331)]. It is only with such a dramatic conclusion that Bang is finally able to impress upon the reader his character's (Irene's) absence and thereby reorient the reader to the impression she has left.

Narrative Crescendo One: Irene Holm's Performance

Irene's melodramatic solo performance during her students' dance recital dovetails with the climax of the story. At this point, the townspeople have gathered together to watch their children perform at the dance recital. Afterwards, they all eat and drink together at a dinner party, during which the schoolmaster gives a long and obsequious speech wherein he applauds and toasts "Frøken Holm og de ni Muser" (Bang 1972, 324) ["Miss Holm and the Nine Muses" (325)]. After his speech, the schoolmaster entreats Irene to dance a solo before the dinner guests:

> Saa sagde Skolelæreren: "Frøken Holm skulde egentlig danse—"
> —Hun havde jo danset . . .
> "Ja—men danse for dem—en Solo—*det* var noget . . ."
> Frøken Holm havde straks forstaaet—og en forfærdelig Lyst slog op i hende: Hun kunde *danse*. (324)

> Then the schoolmaster said, "Miss Holm really ought to dance . . ."
> "But she had been dancing . . ."
> "Yes, but . . . dance for them all . . . a solo . . . that would be really something."
> Miss Holm had understood at once, and a terrible desire welled up within her; she could *dance*. (325)

In this passage, Bang gives voice to three respective speakers: the schoolmaster, who articulates his desire to see Irene dance for the dinner party guests; the dinner party guests themselves, albeit constituted as one collective voice; and Irene, who initially hesitates but is then persuaded into dancing for the guests. Here the implied audience at the dinner party—denoted by "danse for dem" ["dance for them"]—is worth noting. This is because it reinforces how as a dancer and performer, her artistic merit is reliant on others to notice and judge her. But because Irene's disposition is so unassuming, her performance only reaffirms her marginal status as an already voiceless and unseen (or rather, unimpressive) subject among others. Accordingly, even in this passage where the dinner guests coax her into dancing for them, her voice is not heard at all by the guests—and yet the reader, privy to this whole scene, can infer how she feels: "[Hun] havde straks forstaaet—og en forfærdelig Lyst slog op i hende: Hun kunde *danse*" ["(She) understood at once, and a terrible desire welled up within her: she could *dance*"]. In fact, some of the dinner guests even attempt to make a case for her, assuring the schoolmaster that Irene had already danced; but, even so, she remains spoken for by others. This makes her response in the following lines, wherein she laughs off the request that she "skulde egentlig danse" ["ought to dance"] all the more important, for even though she is initially spoken for by the guests, she is now granted the opportunity to prove herself to them—not simply as someone who can *dance* but as someone who can be *seen* in the process.

This is why she takes great care in dramatizing her entrance, before dancing the solo: "Præstefrøkenen begyndte at spille, og alle saae mod Døren. Efter den tiende Takt gik den op, og alle klappede: Frøken Holm dansede med Kjolen bunden op med et romersk Skærf" (Bang 1972, 326) ["The vicar's daughter began to play and everybody looked toward the door. After the tenth beat it opened, and everyone clapped: Miss Holm was dancing with her dress shortened by a Roman sash" (327)]. Here Bang has Irene delay her entrance, using the opening counts of the piano interlude to build anticipation and lend gravitas to her performance on the makeshift dance floor. But the ironic touch is found in her minute costume change upon entering. With such a dramatic entrance, one would expect greater attention to her costume, but because the costume change is so meager (merely hiking up her skirt with a sash), her transformation from Irene to that of her assumed dancing role, Fenella, remains incomplete. Put another way, she is unable to transport her audience by virtue of an assumed persona. This is what makes her decision, in the following excerpt, to take on the role of the mute Fenella not only so compelling and appropriate for her own character but also so jarring.

> Det var "La grande Neapolitaine."
> Hun gik paa Tæerne, og hun svingede. Tilskuerne saae beundrende paa Fødderne, der gik rapt som et Par Trommestikker. Der blev en Klappen, da hun hvilede paa ét Ben.
> Hun sagde: "Hurtigere"—og begyndte at svinge igen. Hun smilede og vinkede og viftede og viftede. Det blev mer og mer med Overkroppen, med Armene, det blev mer og mer det mimiske. Hun saae ikke Tilskuernes Ansigt mer—hun aabnede Munden—smilede, viste alle sine Tænder (nogle græsselige Tænder), —hun vinkede, agerede, —vidste, følte kun "Soloen" — —
> Endelig Soloen.
> Det var ikke længer "La Neapolitaine." Det var Fenella, Fenella, der knælte, Fenella, der bad—den tragiske Fenella . . . (328)

> It was "La Grande Napolitaine."
> She tiptoed and gyrated; the spectators looked admiringly at her feet as they moved nimbly on a pair of drumsticks. There was applause as she held still on one leg.
> She said, "Faster!" and began to gyrate again. She smiled and waved; and fluttered and fluttered. More and more she moved the top of her body, her arms; more and more it became mimicry. She no longer saw the faces of her spectators; she opened her mouth, she smiled, she shewed all her teeth (they were horrible teeth), she waved, she acted her dance—she knew and felt only the solo.
> The solo at last.
> It was no longer "La Napolitaine." It was Fenella, Fenella kneeling, Fenella pleading, tragic Fenella . . . (329)

As seen above, Irene switches not only between identities (from Irene to Fenella) but also between two performing roles. By switching between her performing roles from the ballerina dancing "La grande Neapolitaine" to "den tragiske Fenella" [the tragic Fenella], Irene inadvertently conflates and blurs the fine line between (fictional) reality and (fictional) illusion (in both instances fictional because we are referring to what happens in the text). In this way, she breaks the fourth wall.

There are two other significant things that happen in this scene: first, Irene's gestures are documented by an unknown observer and (omniscient) narrator, and second, the role of Fenella (as she performs it) calls into question what constitutes a tragic heroine. The importance of the first point is that physical gestures in this short story orient the reader to Irene as she moves through the imaginary space of the town hall in an exaggerated and seemingly grotesque manner during her performance.[76] Yet it is unclear who is recording her gestures and relaying the impressions that her gestures invoke. For example, her actions are coupled with pointed commentary such as "nogle græsselige Tænder" ["they were horrible teeth"] and "viftede og viftede" ["fluttered and fluttered"]. In spite of Irene's own command, "Hurtigere" ["Faster"], the reader gets the sense that Irene is less in control of her performance than it perhaps appears at first glance. She seems to become possessed by a force that drives her faster and faster and with more and more intensity, so much so that she no longer can see the faces of those in her audience: "Hun saae ikke Tilskuernes Ansigt mer" ["She no longer saw the faces of her spectators"]. Interpreted in this way, the reader understands that she (as the performer) is losing control of her performance. Every verb and adjective we read delineates her dance sequence as *already* primed and dictated by an anonymous and unsympathetic narrator. Thus, the readers' access to Irene, in her humiliating dance solo, is given in a prescribed and pointed way. Accordingly, the reader is forced to read and thereby witness the humiliation that is Irene's fate.

The way in which gesture both controls and delineates Irene becomes paramount to addressing the second point I want to make: Irene conspicuously slips between the roles of "La grande Neapolitaine" and the pleading "tragiske Fenella" ["tragic Fenella"].[77] By having Irene inhabit the role of Fenella, Bang hereby references Auber's 1828 opera *La Muette de Portici* and its revolutionary reconstruction of what constitutes a true operatic heroine. Mary Ann Smart's (2004) *Mimomania: Music and Gesture in Nineteenth-Century Opera* provides an insightful analysis of the role of Fenella and the operatic renovations behind *La Muette de Portici*. Here she unravels the problematic role of Fenella as "almost certainly the only operatic heroine who neither speaks nor sings, a distinction that has made her the object of extravagant fantasies about the meaning, precision, and sincerity of her silent discourse" (2004, 32). Indeed, what is most intriguing about the role of Fenella is that she is mute. This is especially concerning in an opera, where an opera singer's primary form of expression is voice. Accordingly, by denying the opera singer a voice, this opera subverts traditional models and expectations of the operatic heroine, forcing the ballet dancer who plays Fenella to rely on her body and its gestures (that is, miming) to speak for and articulate the absent arias. Yet Smart does not think this mute role binds Fenella in silence or an objectified gaze; instead "by refusing to adhere fully to the conventions of either of her art forms, she draws attention to our assumptions about what is expected of an operatic

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76. According to Sara Ahmed (2006b), bodies are always already oriented in space. How bodies are oriented in space can be seen in "Irene Holm" when looking at how Irene is described as moving or dancing through the imaginary space of the town hall during her solo. This is because, as Ahmed has it, space is impressed onto physical bodies. As such, bodies are "shaped by contact with objects and otherwise, with 'what' is near enough to be reached" (2006b, 552). Or, as Kimberly Engdahl Coates succinctly summarizes, Ahmed looks at ways in which spaces "impress" themselves upon "and in turn take shape within bodies whose orientation disorients hegemonic assumptions about the experience of temporality and space" (2010, 66). For more information regarding how bodies acquire orientation, see Ahmed 2006b, 543–74.

77. Given Bang's theatrical expertise, he was well aware of Betty Hennings's (1850–1939) and Johanne Luise Heiberg's (1812–90) adaptations of Fenella's (the mute heroine) role in D. F. E. Auber's five-act opera, *La Muette de Portici* (*The Dumb Girl of Portici*). This is evidenced in Bang's essay on this opera, which appeared in *Nationaltidende* (National times) on May 6, 1883. For this essay, see Jürgensen 2007, 400–5.

heroine and of the musical discourse that surrounds her" (68). To Smart, this means that Fenella serves a special purpose in orienting perception. This is because "without a voice to supplement her body and to release it from the frame of gaze [*sic*], Fenella nevertheless manages to propose an alternative mode of perception—a response to her body as a musicalized, infectious, irresistible force" (68).

While performing as Fenella, Irene's body does become "musicalized" and "infectious," but hardly an "irresistible force." In other words, her odd performance is perceived as ludicrous: "— — — Hun vidste ikke, hvordan hun var kommet op, hvordan hun var kommet ud . . . Hun havde kun hørt Musiken, der med ét holdt op—og *Latteren*—Latteren, mens hun pludselig saae alle disse Ansigter . . ." (Bang 1972, 328) ["— — — She did not know how she had got to her feet, how she had withdrawn from the room. She had only heard the music as it suddenly ceased—and the *laughter*—the laughter as she suddenly saw all those faces" (329)]. Indeed, for the dinner guests, there is something incredulous about Irene's casting of herself in the role of Fenella. Whether this is the result of her grand entrance absent a grand costume change or her choice to dance a part that is too resonant with her actual character (thereby preventing the illusion of a performance) is unclear. What is clear, however, is that her performance is different or strange and, as such, is not met with admiration but with laughter—thereby marking this grand moment not as Irene's desired impressive exit from the town, but rather as another humiliating moment in a series of humiliations. At the same time, if we read the role of Fenella as managing "an alternative mode of perception," this scene can be read as the inability of others to perceive what they see as anything but strange or odd. Accordingly, their default reaction is to laugh, prompting the reader to fill in the gaps and figure out what was in fact performed and how. Ultimately, the humiliation scene stages a sacrifice. Irene is sacrificed so that others *can laugh,* just as Fenella sacrifices herself in *La Muette de Portici* by jumping into an active volcano.

Narrative Crescendo Two: The Walk Home

Because Irene's dramatic performance does not provide the effect she was hoping for, she is thus unable to produce the impression she wanted; in other words, she fails to exit on a high note. Accordingly, Bang cannot bring the story to a close at this narrative juncture, as to do so would be to abandon his character-based story. Instead, Bang delays the short story's ending by a few more pages with a second crescendo. In the second crescendo, Bang attempts to use the minor characters to move the story toward closure in the wake of the protagonist's unimpressive and humiliating performance.

In the following scene, the pastor and his daughter walk Irene home. To break the silence, they attempt to console her, explaining that the townspeople just cannot comprehend tragedy:

> De gik tavse hen ad Vejen. Præstefrøkenen var rent ulykkelig og vilde gøre en Undskyldning og vidste ikke, hvad hun skulde sige. Og den lille Danserinde blev ved at gaa ved Siden af dem, stille og bleg.
>> Saa sagde Kapellanen, pint af Tavsheden:
>> "Ser De, Frøken—De Folk har jo intet Blik for det tragiske."
>> Frøken Holm blev ved at gaa stille. De kom til Smedens, og hun nejede, da hun rakte Haanden.

Præstefrøkenen slog Armene om hende og kyssede hende: "Godnat, Frøken," sagde hun—hun var ikke sikker paa Røsten . . .

Kapellanen og hun blev ude paa Vejen, til de havde set Lyset tændt i Danserindens Kammer.

— — — (Bang 1972, 328, 330).

They walked along the road in silence. The vicar's daughter was most unhappy and wanted to apologize, but did not know what to say. And the little dancer went on walking at their side, silent and pale.

Then the curate, distressed by the silence, said,

"You see, Miss Holm, these people have no eye for tragedy."

Miss Holm continued to walk on quietly. They came to the blacksmith's house and she nodded and shook hands.

The vicar's daughter flung her arms round her and kissed her.

"Good night!" she said; she was not quite sure of her voice.

The curate and she remained outside in the road until they had seen the candle lit in the dancer's room.

— — — (329, 331)

The strain between what is said and not said becomes audible in the tension between what the characters see and do not see, as described by the narrator and the few lines of direct discourse that the pastor and his daughter speak. Thus, one can say that this passage is organized according to voice (what is spoken or not spoken) and vision (what is seen or not seen). By mixing these two sensory forms of input, the reader is left with a kaleidoscopic intersection of nonverbal cues that underline the characters' unexpressed emotions. Moreover, because Irene's performance fails to move the narrative toward resolution in the previous scene, Bang comes to rely in this scene on his minor characters to nudge the narrative toward some kind of closure.

Take the aforementioned passage as a case in point. Here the pastor and his daughter walk in silence beside Irene, and the silence becomes increasingly unbearable. For the pastor's daughter the silence is unbearable because she pities "den lille Danserinde" ["the little dancer"][78] and yet cannot come up with the right words with which to apologize on behalf of the townspeople. Instead she resorts to flinging her arms around Irene, hugging her—an overtly expressive and physical gesture—as a way of communicating how she feels. Even the pastor's famous line, "Ser De, Frøken—De Folk har jo intet Blik for det tragiske ["You see, Miss Holm, these people have no eye for tragedy"], serves less to reassure Irene than to confirm for her that what she had just experienced really was humiliating. The pastor's phrase that the townspeople had no "eye" for tragedy emphasizes that the tension is located in the townspeople's inability to *see*—that is, *perceive*—and hence, comprehend tragedy.

According to Peer E. Sørensen, the pastor's remark provides evidence that Irene's existence is not tragic, but rather, meaningless.

Bemærkningen gør i stedet opmærksom på, at verden har mistet det tragiske, og at Irene Holm ikke er en heroisk, tragisk elskende, men en fattig, mislykket stakkel i den sorteste

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78. Here it is worth noting that Bang uses "den lille Danserinde" [the little dancer] to refer to Irene Holm at this juncture in the story; a phrase that was part of the original title of his 1886 serialization of this story: "Danserinden Frøken Irene Holm" [The dancer Miss Irene Holm]. See Dahl and Dalsgård 2010, 503.

danske provins. Hendes drøm om selvudtryk er ikke bare uden talentets bæredygtighed; den er grundlæggende hjemløs i verden. Derfor er Irene Holms optræden dybest set meningsløs. Og derfor er Irene Holms historie ikke en tragedie. Tragedien hører ikke hjemme i Bangs univers. Bangs verden er snarere en melodramatisk verden, og det vi kalder tragisk, er blot melodramatiske attituder uden substans. (Sørensen 2009, 184)

(Instead the statement emphasizes that the world has lost tragedy and Irene Holm is not a heroic, tragic lover, but a poor, failed wretch in the darkest of Danish provinces. Her dream of self-expression is not only without the viability of talent; it is basically homeless in the world. Therefore, Irene Holm's performance is basically meaningless. And so Irene Holm's story is not a tragedy. The tragedy is not at home in Bang's universe. Bang's world is closer to a melodramatic world and what we call tragic is just melodramatic attitudes without substance.)

While "melodramatic" attitudes "without substance" seems like an appropriate reading of the ironic elements in Bang's "Irene Holm," it does not account for the humiliation that Irene experiences as a theatrical failure. While her failure may be due to an inability to maintain the illusion of performance in the (improper) dining hall setting (on a proper theater stage, the anticipation and suspense of dramatic effects would be maintained through costume changes and properly timed entrances and exits), it does not account for the audience's orientation and (mis)judgment of Irene's performance and person in the first place.

Indeed, orientation—that is, how one is oriented to see and allocate values accordingly—becomes the key issue at hand. By not being oriented to see tragedy in the first place, Irene's performance is not only not seen (i.e., misrecognized) but also perpetually misunderstood by the townspeople. And because her performance is not understood as tragedy—but rather as something strangely different, even oddly comical—Irene is unable to guide her audience vis-à-vis Fenella's role to her own status as an unheard, unimpressive heroine. Thus, the pastor's remark points the reader to an alternative explanation: perhaps the audience, rather than Irene, has failed. They do not know the genre (tragedy) and consequently misread both her gestures and her entire performance. By suggesting that the problem lies with the townspeople's inability to see or perceive, Bang points to a strangeness not only in what has been performed but also in what has been experienced and construed. In other words, the pastor's statement forces the reader to reconsider the strangeness of all that has transpired (including, one could posit, the strangeness of the narrative strategies employed).

The Finale of "Irene Holm"

This brings us to the actual finale of "Irene Holm." As can be seen by the two narrative buildups or crescendos, neither the main character (Irene) nor the minor characters (the pastor, his daughter, and the townspeople) can successfully end the narrative. Because the townspeople misperceive Irene's performance and because the pastor and his daughter are unable to express what they *saw* or *perceived*, both of these narrative crescendos are prevented from functioning as cathartic endings. As such, these failed attempts to conclude the narrative demand that a conspicuously moralizing narrative voice step in and end the story in the characters' absence. The significance of using the moralizing narrative voice after the two failed narrative crescendos is that it directs the reader's attention toward what is strange: the arrival of formal closure in

Irene's fadeout into the horizon as she exits the town. In other words, by repositioning the reader via these failed crescendo moments, the finale is able to record the impression of an otherwise unimpressive person: Irene Holm herself. Take the following lead up to the final line as a case in point:

> Præstefrøkenen blev staaende paa Vejen og saae efter den gamle Paraply, saa længe hun øjnede den.
> — — Frøken Irene Holm havde indbudt til et "Foraarskursus i den moderne Selskabsdans" i en nær Flække.
> Det var tegnet seks Elever.
> Der drog hun hen—for at fortsætte *det*, man kalder Livet. (Bang 1972, 330)

> The vicar's daughter remained standing in the road and watched the old umbrella retreating for as long as she could see it.
> — — Miss Irene Holm had given notice that she would be holding "A Spring Course in Modern Ballroom Dancing" at a nearby place.
> Six pupils had enrolled.
> She made her way thither to continue *that* which we call life. (331)

Here the reader is left with two impressions. The first is produced by the image of Irene's umbrella fading into the distance as she moves further away from the town, the story's focal point. The second is created by including an announcement of Irene's new dance class, followed by the omniscient narrator's concluding verdict: "Der drog hun hen—for at fortsætte *det*, man kalder Livet" ["She made her way thither to continue *that* which we call life"].

When Irene retreats into the distance, the narrative employs a framing technique that is very similar to the opening lines. For example, the opening lines situate the reader within the town, awaiting the arrival of their dance teacher. The first focal point is the town, not Irene. She only arrives in the third paragraph—that is, "en Aften sidst i Oktober" (Bang 1972, 306) ["one evening toward the end of October" (307)] alighting at the inn "med sin Bagage, en gammel Champagnekurv, der var bundet sammen med et Reb" (306) ["with her luggage—an old champagne hamper tied up with a rope" (307)]. Now compare this opening with the ending, where the focal point is again the town, not Irene: "Præstefrøkenen blev staaende paa Vejen og saae efter den gamle Paraply, saa længe hun øjnede den" (330) ["The vicar's daughter remained standing in the road and watched the old umbrella retreating for as long as she could see it" (331)]. The image of the pastor's daughter standing alone watching Irene go off into the distance is a framing device. Like the beginning, wherein Irene's arrival in the town is recorded, here the reverse occurs: she departs from the town. In both instances, the frame is the town. At the beginning of the story, the reader is still in his or her own world, outside the town, looking in; with Irene's arrival into the town, the reader is drawn into the fictional storyworld. At the end of the story, the reader is still inside the town but is now looking out, watching Irene's umbrella fade into the distance, as the narrator intervenes to say: "Der drog hun hen—for at fortsætte *det*, man kalder Livet" (330) ["She made her way thither to continue *that* which we call life" (331)]. In this way, Bang produces an aesthetic effect whereby Irene's character is granted the

semblance of autonomy. Bang accomplishes this by telling the reader, before he or she has left the fictional storyworld of the town, that Irene's life continues, even after she has left the town.[79]

In returning to the last lines of "Irene Holm," and the intrusion of a moralizing and omniscient narrative voice stating, "Der drog hun hen—for at fortsætte *det*, man kalder Livet" (Bang 1972, 330) ["She made her way thither to continue *that* which we call life" (331)], Bang recalibrates the ending as disorienting precisely because this line offers narrative closure without the subjective perspective of Irene or the minor characters. As such, it assumes a disinterested if not distant portrait of Irene, leaving the reader surprisingly in the dark as to what has befallen her and how her humiliating experience is to be interpreted. And yet, even though the ending pans outward and gives a dramatic bird's-eye view of Irene's exit from the town—showing how Bang must rely on drama to grant his characters the objective presentation accordingly—the "objective" narrative voice betrays a subjective bias with its moralizing voice at the end. The buildup to this ending makes the reader anticipate catharsis, but this is not the case. Instead, the finale of "Irene Holm" leaves the reader exactly where he or she started: in the spatial plane of the town looking out to Irene who fades out and exits before the reader knows what to make of her brief but humiliating story. This positioning of the reader at the end (at the same place where the story started) solicits the reader to see how the endings presented have failed. These endings appear this way because the story has successfully guided the reader to reach certain conclusions based on observations of and partial access to the main character provided and hinted at throughout the story. Accordingly, the endings are presented to fail, and only the finale essentially positions the reader at a vantage point from which to notice how the endings (these prior crescendos) do not resonate with his or her accrued perspective on the character. In this way, Bang attempts to place the reader in a position whereby the reader must produce his or her own impression of the character—in this case, the reader's own impression of Irene.

Ved Vejen

Background

Ved Vejen was initially published in a collection, entitled *Stille Eksistenser: Fire Livsbilleder* (1886, Quiet existences: four life pictures),[80] which was released just a month before

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79. Other framing and orienting devices employed in "Irene Holm" include the season (she arrives in the fall and leaves in the spring); Irene's possessions (a battered umbrella and the champagne hamper), which reappear and are re-described or mentioned throughout the story; and, lastly, the inn, where she arrives at in the beginning of the short story and where she performs her humiliating final dance as the tragic Fenella. Another orienting device can be seen with the pastor's daughter standing out on the road watching Irene leave the town at the end, which is a repetition of a similar scene seen just a few lines earlier. In the earlier scene—demarcated in the text by a few hyphens—the pastor's daughter stands outside of Irene's house while waiting to see if Irene will light her candle. Such repetition orients the reader's attention to his or her developing connection with Irene. However, by constantly shifting the reader's focus to Irene via outside vantage points (namely, minor characters' perspectives and observations of Irene Holm), Bang thereby disorients the narrative progression, seemingly repeating a scene already described and thus disturbing how a reader reads the story.

80. *Ved Vejen* was initially distributed as part of a compilation entitled *Stille Eksistenser: Fire Livsbilleder* (Quiet existences: four life pictures) on October 27, 1886, by Andr. Schous Forlag (Dahl and Dalsgård 2010, 444). It was not until 1898 that *Ved Vejen* was published in a separate edition by Det Schubotheske Forlag and with illustrations by Knud Larsen (Dahl and Dalsgård 2010, 444). For more information regarding the publication history of *Ved Vejen*, see Dahl and Dalsgård 2010, 417, 444, 448.

the first serialization of "Irene Holm" (then entitled "Danserinden Frøken Irene Holm").[81] Interestingly, there is a bit of uncertainty about whether *Ved Vejen* should be categorized as a novella or a novel. Per Dahl and Birgitte Dalsgård argue that despite being one of Bang's best-known works, *Ved Vejen* can be categorized as either a long novella or a novel (2010, 417).[82] Indeed, Bang himself seemed to be uncertain whether this story was to be a novella or a novel when he first began drafting the manuscript. His initial proposal was for an 80–128 page manuscript, which shortly thereafter morphed into a manuscript of double that length (Dahl and Dalsgård 2010, 421). This gradual transition from short story to novel makes a convincing case for identifying the finished *Ved Vejen* as a novel—or, put another way, a short story that developed into a novel. While I agree with Dahl and Dalsgård that *Ved Vejen* can be categorized as either a short story or a novel, I think that the development and maturation of this short story into a literary form that became increasingly novelistic is suggestive of Bang's experimentation with the impression in character-based fiction. I believe this is also indicative of Bang's seeing the novel as a particularly suitable medium in which to carry out such experiments with character.

The transition from novella to novel suggests that Bang was carving out and developing a story that was centered around character. In his foreword to *Stille Eksistenser,* he confesses to the determining role of character that inspired *Ved Vejen* in the first place. The foreword, entitled "Et Par Ord" (1886, A couple of words), explains how the inspiration for Katinka's character came to him from a particular train journey he took between Aalborg and Randers in the spring of 1884, where he saw a woman's face that left a lasting impression on him: "Dette Ansigt er i to Aar uophørligt og atter og atter vendt tilbage i mit Minde. Det blev derinde i mit Hoved, og det beskæftigede mig uafladeligt" (Bang 2008–10, 7:21)[83] [Unceasingly, for two years this face has returned over and over again to my memory. It stayed in there in my head, and it preoccupied me incessantly]. As Bang goes on to describe, the reason he finds this woman's face so compelling is predicated on how he comes to see it:

> Og mellem Blomsterne stirrede et blegt Ansigt—Hagen laa i to smalle, hvide Hænder—ud mod Toget med en Sygs store og glansfulde Øjne. Den unge Kvinde bevægede sig

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81. Beverley Driver Eddy notes that "*Ved Vejen* and 'Irene Holm' were written at the same time (1886), although 'Irene Holm' did not appear until 1890" (1989, 27).

82. Per Dahl and Birgitte Dalsgård introduce *Ved Vejen* as follows: "den meget lange novella eller lille roman, "Ved Vejen," som skulle blive Herman Bangs bedst kendte tekst" (2010, 417) [The very long novella or short novel, *By the Wayside*, which would become Herman Bang's best-known work]. Alternatively, Hakon Stangerup and F. J. Billeskov Jansen cite *Ved Vejen* as a "lille roman" (1966, 247) [short novel] and as one of Bang's "første *sceniske roman*" (248) [first theatrical novel].

83. Dahl and Dalsgård provide more information regarding the inspiration for *Ved Vejen*: "Den umiddelbare inspiration til "Ved Vejen" skyldtes et indtryk fra et kort ophold ved en jysk station mellem Aalborg og Randers under en foredragsrejse i foråret 1884, først gang skildret i en kort avisnotits . . . og siden udfoldet i bogens forord. Undervejs trak Herman Bang ikke alene på barndomserindringer fra Horsens (skildringen af Katinka Bais barndomsmiljø) og fra Tersløse . . . men også fra den periode i 1883, da han logerede i Nørregade sammen med Peter Nansen hos en værtinde, hvis døtre hed Ida og Louise" (2010, 421–22) [The immediate inspiration for *By the Wayside* was due to an impression from a short stay at a station in Jutland between Aalborg and Randers during a lecture tour in the spring of 1884, initially portrayed in a short newspaper notice . . . and since unfolded in the book's preface. While writing Herman Bang didn't only draw from childhood memories from Horsens (the depiction of Katinka Bai's childhood environment) and from Tersløse . . . but also from the period in 1883, when he lodged in Nørregade together with Peter Nansen with a landlady, whose daughters were named Ida and Louise].

ikke. Stille, med Hovedet i Hænderne stirrede hun blot ud paa Banen, saa længe jeg kunde se hende . . .

Paa hele Rejsen siden saa' jeg for mig dette Kvindeansigt mellem dets Blomster. Det var knap Længsel, der laa i Blikket—*Længslen* havde maaske flagret sig død ved at slaa Vingen mod snævre Vægge—kun en stilfærdig Resignation, en forstummet Sorg. (7:21)

(And amid the flowers a pale face peered out—the chin held by two small, white hands—to the train with the sick stare of big and glossy eyes. The young woman was quite still. Silent, with her head in her hands she simply stared at the train tracks, as long as I could see her . . .

For the entire trip I saw before me this woman's face amid the flowers. It was hardly the gaze of longing—the *longing* had perhaps fluttered dead by a blow to its wing against narrow walls—only a quiet resignation, a silenced sorrow.)

Interestingly, here he describes the face in isolation from the woman's body. In this way, her face is captured as if a lens (that is, Bang's view of her) zooms in, revealing a seemingly disembodied face framed by flowers. One by one, her features are seen through this frame (through the flowers): first a face, then a chin, then hands, and lastly, "store og glansfulde Øjne" [big and glossy eyes]. By describing her in this way, Bang creates the effect that we are seeing her face through a series of increasingly zoomed-in snapshots, where one more feature of her face comes into further relief or focus with each new shot—perhaps the result of capturing snippets of her image while moving past in a speeding train. What emerges is a "Billede" [picture] of a face without a body (i.e., a disembodied face)—a necessarily partial view. Her face seems to leave an impression on him for two reasons: firstly, the face itself is seen as a canvas (i.e., picture) where emotions are conveyed via her eyes, betraying to him her deep resignation and sorrow; and secondly, the way in which he remembers this face is further embellished both by the distinct frame (of flowers) and the serial appearance of her chin, hands, and eyes. These together paint her portrait "in words" (as the next quote will show), compelling him to decipher her life story from this *still* "life" accordingly.

With this haunting face in mind, Bang goes on to discuss how this face perpetually beckons him to inscribe her existence into a story, subsequently inspiring him to produce a series of sketches and fictional permutations that could affix and attend to her strange and unusually lasting impression on him:

Og jeg tegnede det i Ord i en lille Skitse; og efter en Maaneds Forløb tegnede jeg det atter. Og hver Gang jeg igen beskrev en Kvindefigur, saa' jeg, naar Billedet laa færdigt for mig: det var atter hende. Jeg forstod, jeg blev ikke færdig med det besynderlige Ansigt paa den Maade. Disse Øjne fordrede, at man kom til Ende med deres Historie.

Et saadant Billede inde i vort Hoved er som en stor Svamp. Det suger stille, i lange Tider og uden at vi véd det, til sig alt, hvad der passer for det, alt, hvad der harmonerer med det—alt, hvad vi har af Erindringer, Oplevelser, Stemninger; Iagttagelserne, vi gør bevidst og ubevidst, alt suger Billedet til sig og drager Næring deraf og vokser. Og en smuk Dag har dette løsrevne Billede samlet om sig et mægtigt Stof, et stort Materiale, der pludselig viser sig for os baade som en Rigdom, vi knap anede, at vi ejede, og en Byrde, for hvilken vi maa befri os.

Og man tager det opsamlede Raastof i sin Haand og begynder Fremstillingens møjsomme Arbejde. Det Øjeblik er kommet, hvor man *skulde* gøre den døde Skat levende. (Bang 2008–10, 7:22).

(And I drew it in words in a little sketch; and after a month's time I drew it once more. And every time I again described a woman-figure, I saw, when the picture lay finished before me: it was once more her. I realized that I would not be done with this peculiar face this way. These eyes demanded that I would get to the end of their story.

Such a picture inside our head is like a big sponge. It absorbs quietly, for a long time and without us knowing it, everything, that it relates to, everything, with which it harmonizes—all of our recollections, experiences, feelings; the observations, we do consciously or unconsciously, from all of this the picture absorbs, draws nourishment and grows. And on a beautiful day this detached picture has gathered invaluable subject matter, some great material, that suddenly appears before us both as a richness, we hardly knew we possessed, and a burden, from which we must release ourselves.

And one is to take the accumulated raw material by the hand to begin the painstaking work of representation. The moment has come, where one *should* make the dead treasure come alive.)

Here Bang examines the powerful effect this particular woman's face has on him, noting specifically how this impression perpetually compels him to transpose it into and animate it with a story. And yet, what makes her fascinating to him, is how this "Billede" [picture] of her takes up residence in his mind—becoming, effectively, his impression of her. As his impression of her, she is described as both independent of and dependent on him. For example, her autonomy is seemingly called forward in the evocative power of her image to haunt him. This can be discerned in how every time he sketches out a character, "det var atter hende" [it was once more her]. Moreover, this image has power over him, something that is further revealed when he comments: "Disse Øjne fordrede, at man kom til Ende med deres Historie" [these eyes demanded that I would get to the end of their story] or "uden at vi véd det" [without us knowing it]. Describing her in this way grants her a degree of autonomy, thus allowing her, in his mind, to haunt him until he can give her character a place in his story. In this sense, he describes her as a specter haunting him until he can find the right story for her. But because, as Bang recounts, the impression meshes with his own imagination and memories, she is not exactly as autonomous as he at first makes her out to be. In any case, at this stage in the impression process, she must wait for him to find the right story for her character, and in waiting for him to find the right story for her, she no longer has autonomy. For this reason, he describes her impression—"dette løsrevne Billede" [this detached picture]—as both a richness and a burden for him as an author. When, for Bang, the right "Øjeblik" [moment] does arrive to bring "den døde Skat" [this dead treasure]— the character now inhabiting his mind—to life in a fictional story, it is almost as if fiction redeems not only her (Bang's impression of her) but Bang as well (for giving her life and thus releasing him of the obligation to give her life in a fictional story). The question that remains is whether he can find the adequate story to bring this face to life. Read accordingly, Bang seems to be playing with the idea of how to continue to animate this impression of her (the face behind the character Katinka) as a character. To do so, as *Ved Vejen* comes to suggest, will necessitate the use of a dramatic model within his narration.

Based on Bang's description of the impression left behind by the anonymous woman he encounters while traveling, one can deduce that it is not so much the permanence or stability of character that intrigues and motivates Bang's writing, but rather the potentiality of the impression for depicting a *developing* character. In other words, the impression is so powerful precisely because it is not stable, but mutable. Because the impression is not stable, it is perfect for gestating a developing character—that is, waiting for the most opportune moment for the character's emergence. Moreover, it is interesting to note that for Bang the impression finds fruition in a real-life experience, which suggests not so much a biographical parallel but rather the way in which life experiences imprint themselves on the author and effectively move him to transmute or record the experience, such that the effect of reading becomes impressed similarly on the reader. It is almost as if he describes his characters as being on standby until the right situation is provided for them. In this way, the formation and transmission of the impression of a character takes place in three steps: 1) the author has an impression of a person, which 2) the author tries to record (via sketches) but 3) must wait for the right form and method to dramatize this impression of a person such that the impression can live on in the reader's mind.

However, in order to animate the impression and thus involve the reader in the experience of the impression (which is just part of his vision of impressionism; not that every reader actually experiences it as such), Bang comes to rely on a dramatic model within his narration to animate and convey the unfolding impression of a character to his reader. Bang confesses that in order to attend to the impression, a fine line must be maintained such that the writing itself does not become subsumed by the literary project of recording the impression—something he thinks he at times fails to do. Take, for example, Bang's description in an undated letter to Peter Nansen of how impressionism affects his writing:

> Ja—*Stilen*, min kære! *Der* har vi Skandalen. Jeg lærer saagu aldrig at skrive. Jeg skriver jo endnu i Forskriftbog som de otte Aars Unger. "Impressionistisk" er netop Ordet. Jeg anstrænger mig vildt for at faa Indtrykket, hvert *enkelt* Indtryk klart og nøie og karakterfuldt, og saa tænker jeg aldrig paa Helheden—og Stilen springer i tusind Stumper og er saa usammenhængende og saa haard som en Stenbro. Græsseligt at tænke sig. (Bang 1918, 225).

> (Yes—*the style*, my dear! *There* we have the scandal. I certainly never will learn to write. As you know I still write in a model's book like eight-year-old kids. "Impressionistic" is exactly the word. I try extremely hard to get the impression, every *single* impression clear and intimate and full of character, and then I never think about the whole picture—and the style breaks into a thousand pieces and is so disjointed and as hard as cobblestone. Shocking to think about.)

In this passage, Bang makes note of how the impression is made manifest in his writing—striving to show that even recording an impression recreates the subsequent *effect* of "the impression" in the language itself. In this way, Bang is foregrounding the problem of character-centered fiction, which for him is made manifest in the way his style shatters or splinters, suggesting that this produces the dramatic power or aesthetic effect needed to convey his impression from the page to the reader. In this passage, Bang even notes how he strives to find the right impression that is "karakterfuldt" [full of character]—so that even if his impressionism is made manifest at the level of language and style, it is also made manifest in its objective: to

use impressionistic language to carve out a space whereby a character's lasting impression may be emphasized. One can see that character (the subject) still remains the primary placeholder in Bang's impressionism, even if, as he confesses, this means losing stylistic coherence in favor of conveying character.

Given Bang's aforementioned musings, it is not surprising to find that character becomes central to understanding the manifest tension between character and formal closure in *Ved Vejen*. Moreover, with a character already in mind, his goal becomes to find the right story to animate this character. In this way, Bang's project becomes clear: to transpose an impression of a character into a story that can affix and animate her impression appropriately. Such is evidenced in a letter to his acquaintance Fru Ferslew written on December 28, 1885, wherein Bang points out that the book he is working on orbits around a particular character—the impression of the woman he saw from the train: "Den Bog, jeg skriver paa—er hint Sujet, De kender, det uskyldige om Stationsforstanderens Kone. De sagde en Gang, at det vist blev sentimentalt. Aaa-nei—Livets egen Galgenhumor vil flette sig forfriskende om Emnet" (Bang 2008–10, 7:422) [The book I'm writing—is that topic, you know, the innocence of the station master's wife. Once, you said it probably would be sentimental. Oh-no—life's own sardonic humor will weave itself refreshingly around the topic].[84]

But if so much emphasis is placed on character, then the ending of *Ved Vejen* is at odds with this. After all, the main character, Katinka, dies before the novel comes to an end, leaving the resulting last chapter (chapter seven) to describe the lives of the other minor characters, who for the most part, seem rather unaffected by Katinka's absence. Beverley Driver Eddy similarly finds the ending abrupt, describing it as follows: "The novel *Ved Vejen*, for example, does not end with the death of its heroine, but only after it is clear that her life 'has not mattered'—that all those people whom Katinka Bai knew and loved have gone on without her, almost as if she had never lived" (1989, 19).

So what is happening at the end? If Bang took such pains to inscribe his impression of a character into this novel, why does he drop or abort his character focus so abruptly by the end? Is this the aesthetic effect he seeks or is it the result of the novel's demand for formal closure, thus subverting the autonomy effect of Bang's character-centered novel by the end? While there is evidence to suggest that such an abrupt ending is actually in the service of character, the question still remains: Why and how does such a disorienting ending benefit Bang's project of orienting the reader to Katinka's character? To answer these questions, I turn to a close reading of *Ved Vejen*'s disorienting endings. Interestingly, like, "Irene Holm," *Ved Vejen* also has two crescendos and a coda that progressively lead toward narrative closure. By analyzing these three narrative attempts at closure, we come closer to answering how character becomes the troubled center of Bang's literary experiments in this impressionist novel.

Summary of Ved Vejen

Ved Vejen is a novel about the "quiet existence" of a beautiful, young dying woman named Katinka Bai. While many minor characters populate the novel, Katinka is the major character, and we get snippets of her life though a series of flashbacks about her youth, threaded intermittently throughout the novel. She lives in a sleepy provincial town, and is married to the stationmaster, Bai, who is a boorish, self-absorbed, self-indulgent ex-lieutenant, wistful about his

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84. Dahl and Dalsgård (2010) cite this particular line from a letter Bang had written in Berlin on December 28, 1885. For the full letter, see Levin 1932, 169.

bygone youth and charm. As the novel unfolds, it becomes clear that Bai pays little attention to who Katinka is as a person; in other words, he does not seem to understand her. He does not share her quietness and love of beautiful things in life; instead he overindulges himself in food, and, as we come to find out, has also had a child with another woman in the same town, unbeknownst to Katinka. Despite being well liked by the many minor characters that populate the town, Katinka has only one close friend: Agnes, the pastor's daughter.

One day, a foreman named Huus arrives in town to help out Landowner Kier as a substitute foreman. From the start, it is apparent that Katinka and Huus have much in common, and as the novel progresses, they grow closer to one another. In one scene in particular, on their way back from dancing at the fairground, Katinka, Bai, and Huus cross a cemetery late at night. While walking through the cemetery, Katinka reads the inscriptions on the tombstones and is moved by how others are remembered after their death. This scene draws an important correspondence between her increasing love for Huus and her realization of her own need for love—which conversely is realized through how others are remembered and loved beyond the grave. Here her imminent death is foreshadowed.

By weaving together various scenes that depict small, intimate spaces shared by Katinka and Huus (e.g., the Panorama at the fairground, the gazebo), the novel frames and focuses on the growing intensity of their love for one another. However their love is only intimated, and we can only infer the emotional depths from observations of their gestures, their dialogue, and mannerisms. In this way, their love provides a tense atmosphere or texture upon which Katinka's unfulfilled desires, capacity for love, and longings are further illuminated. Accordingly, even though they fall in love, their love is never consummated.

Once Huus's job is finished, he leaves the town and Katinka dies shortly thereafter. Bai and the townspeople bury Katinka and continue to live their lives as before. A wreath from Huus arrives, albeit too late as it is withered by the time it is placed in Katinka's grave. In the last chapter, Bai goes to Copenhagen with Landowner Kier to buy a gravestone for his wife. Bai ends up buying a gravestone with only a depiction of a marble handshake beneath a butterfly—there is no epitaph. This is ironic given that Katinka earlier in the novel walked through a cemetery, admiring the messages of love and remembrance on the inscriptions on the gravestones. That there is no epitaph bears witness to the fact that she is neither loved nor remembered after her death. Instead, the novel becomes her metaphorical epitaph. What is striking about the ending of *Ved Vejen* is that life in the town continues on much as before—albeit, without Katinka. The last scene depicts Agnes, Katinka's friend, playing at the piano and singing a folksong as the pastor dozes off.

The Disorienting Crescendos of Ved Vejen

The ending of *Ved Vejen* is disorienting precisely because it extends and draws out the story after the main character, Katinka, dies (in chapter six). In this way, the reader is subjected to an entire chapter (chapter seven) without the orienting figure of the main character. The reader does not know on whom or what to focus after Katinka has exited the novel. Moreover, before arriving at the end, the reader has to experience an entire chapter where the main character is absent not only from the narrative but also from the memories of the minor characters (save Agnes). This is not what one would anticipate after reading an entire novel built around Katinka (the main character). Such an ending, absent any articulated remnant of Katinka in the lives of the minor characters, produces an atmosphere of strangeness in its seemingly partial or

incomplete narrative closure. This sense provokes readers to look for what is missed—that is, to consider retrospectively what has just happened and fill in the gaps to reach some sense of meaning. In this way, the reader is forced to *see anew* by revisiting and trying to find meaning—that is, decode the narrative—in the absence of any explicit meaning or resolution in the ending.

Because Bang finds it difficult to construct endings that cater to the impression of the character, he ends up relying on more dramatic models that force the narrative to arrive at formal closure. Accordingly, the ending of *Ved Vejen* can be read as disorienting both because the ending is suspended and delayed by the arrival of two narrative crescendos that occur before the actual ending (the finale) of the novel arrives and also because a folksong's lyrics are interpolated into the last lines of the novel. The first narrative crescendo is with Katinka's death, which is coupled with the jarring contrast of the discussion between two minor characters, Tight Pants and Little Bentzen, on the train platform in the aftermath of Katinka's death. Here is a prime example wherein the potential to end with the character's death—a plausible ending for a character-based novel—is interrupted and seemingly hijacked by the mundane routines of the town, which are punctuated by the train's arrival and departure at the town's train station, much as before Katinka's death. This leads the reader to the second narrative crescendo, which, in the main character's initial inability to end the novel with her death scene, relegates the responsibility of closure—seen here with Katinka's burial—to the remaining minor characters. However, even in this instance, as Agnes (one of the minor characters) experiences, the juxtaposition between mourning (remembering) and life (forgetting) do not provide, in Bang's mind, the right note on which to end his character-centered novel.

In the novel's finale, it is only via the intrusion of an omniscient voice and the overt interruption of the English folksong "Poor Mary Anne" that Bang is able to impose a semblance of closure upon the novel. And yet, while the interpolating song does become the determining force in moving the novel toward narrative closure, it also produces an effect whereby Katinka's conspicuous absence from a novel centered around her is made noticeable by the song's authority to recall her (since Katinka used to play this song) even when other minor characters (other than Agnes) cannot. This reliance on a diegetic intrusion to solidify such an ending around a novel once centered around character conspicuously points out that the orienting perspective once anchored by Katinka is no longer in place. As such, the song must intrude and take control of the novel's ending. Accordingly, the song is disorienting precisely because it is both unexpected and the result of disorientation (the lack of an orientation at the novel's end). And while disorientation is the aesthetic effect of a technique of impressionism, it nonetheless functions in Bang's fiction as a method for recalling what was once at the center of the novel: (his impression of) the character Katinka. In this way, Bang mixes in aestheticism (the need for artificial narrative devices to intervene) to produce an impressionistic novel that implements disorientation as a technique whereby perception is made difficult, thereby involving the reader in its ethical objective.

Narrative Crescendo One: Katinka's Death

In *Ved Vejen*, the first narrative crescendo is achieved with Katinka's death scene in chapter six. Interestingly, Katinka's death scene does not conclude the chapter itself. Instead it is followed by three distinct dashes that punctuate the arrival of an abrupt scene shift: the comings and goings of the railroad conductor, Tight Pants,[85] and his conversation with Little Bentzen

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85. In *Katinka* (1990), Tiina Nunnally translates "Den indiskrete" as "Tight Pants," rather than "The Indiscreet."

about Katinka's recent departure. By introducing the jarring contrast between the emotive death scene and the railroad conductor's routine entrance and exit at the train station (to continue his shift as usual, even after finding out about Katinka's death) in the next scene, Bang effectively stages a disorienting juncture within the narrative:

> —Se Solen, sagde hun—se Solen over Bjergene.
> Hun løftede Armene, de faldt ned igen, og gled ned ad Tæppet.
> Doktoren bøjede sig hastigt frem over Sengen.
> Agnes knælte ved Fodenden med Hovedet ind mod Sengen ved Siden af Marie Pige.
> Man hørte kun en høj Hulken.
> Doktoren løftede de hængende Arme op og foldede Hænderne over den Dødes Bryst.
> — — —
> —Hm—De har s'gu ikke sovet ud, Bentzen. Den indiskrete sprang af Trainet.
> —Hvordan staar 'et?
> —Hun er død, sagde Lille-Bentzen; han talte, som om han frøs.
> —Hva'?
> —Satan — — —
> Den indiskrete stod og saa' lidt paa den lille Stationsbygning: alt laa som vanligt.
> Saa vendte han sig og steg stille op paa Trainet.
> Toget skjultes af Vintrens Taager over Markerne. (Bang 2008–10, 7:274–75).

> "Look at the sun," she said. "Look at the sun on the mountains."
> She lifted her arms; they dropped again and slipped off the blanket.
> The doctor quickly bent over the bed.
> Agnes knelt at the foot with her head against the bed, next to Marie.
> The only sound was a loud sobbing.
> The doctor lifted the limp arms and folded the hands across the dead woman's breast.
>
> "Hm, looks like you haven't slept much, Bentzen." Tight Pants jumped down from the train.
> "How are things?"
> "She's dead," said Little Bentzen; he spoke as if he were freezing.
> "What?—The devil . . ."
> Tight Pants stood there for a moment, looking at the little station building: everything was the same as usual.
> Then he turned around and quietly climbed onto the step.
> The train was hidden by the winter mists over the fields. (Bang 1990, 156–57)

Here the abrupt juncture between Katinka's death and the conversation held between Tight Pants and Little Bentzen is punctuated by a series of small, albeit, noticeable juxtapositions: Katinka's direct discourse juxtaposed with the silence of those around her, which is made noticeable by the exception of Agnes's sobbing; Tight Pants's casual small talk juxtaposed with Little Bentzen's blurting out that Katinka has died; and Katinka's transient impression juxtaposed with the fading

impression of the train hidden by the winter mists in the concluding line of chapter six, "Toget skjultes af Vintrens Taager over Markerne" ["The train was hidden by the winter mists over the fields"]. Here the parallel between Katinka and the train orients the reader to how everything remains relatively the same despite Katinka's untimely exit.

The abrupt juncture between Katinka's death and Tight Pants's entrance and exit in the following scene is indicated by the routine look and appearance of things: "Den indiskrete stod og saa' lidt paa den lille Stationsbygning: alt laa som vanligt" ["Tight Pants stood there for a moment, looking at the little station building: everything was the same as usual"]. The fact that Tight Pants's next action is to climb up on the train steps and depart with the train without another word to Little Bentzen, makes this scene particularly dramatic, putting into stark relief the awkwardness and disconnectedness that circumscribes the minor characters of this provincial town. In other words, Tight Pants and Little Bentzen do not explicitly respond empathically and sympathetically, as one would expect following the major character's death. Instead, life seems to continue on, just as before, showing not only the inability of the main character (Katinka) to leave a lasting impression behind but also the inability of the other characters to adequately retain the memory (that is, the impression) of the main character in the main character's absence.

Thus, by the end of chapter six, there is an example wherein the main character's death is followed by a scene that is strikingly disconnected from the emotive response one would expect from the remaining minor characters in the aftermath of the main character's death. As such, Katinka's death, while tragic, does not conclude the novel, and it is precisely the jarring contrast between Katinka's death scene and the conversation between Tight Pants and Little Bentzen that demarcate this as one of the three disorienting attempts to conclude the novel.

Narrative Crescendo Two: Agnes's Vigil

The process of *remembering* and *forgetting* becomes more pronounced in the second crescendo, which occurs in chapter seven. In this scene, Agnes, the pastor's daughter, stands above Katinka's newly dug grave. The funeral party then leaves her behind, and she is left to contemplate how quickly life moves on after the burial of her dearly departed friend:

> Agnes stod alene ved Graven. Hun saa' ned paa Kisten med dens Kranse, plettede af Sandet . . .
> > Og bort ad Vejene, hvor alle Folk gik hjem til Livet igen . . .
> > *Det* var Bai mellem de to sørgeslørede Damer—de lange Slør—og de to Herrer med Fodposerne . . . det var Katinkas Brødre . . . som havde takket paa Familiens Vegne — —
> > Lille-Jensen skulde spise paa Møllen efter Anstrengelsen . . . Frøken Helene ømmede sig i for smaa Støvler . . .
> > Der gik de . . .
> > Og skyndte sig . . .
> > Agnes bøjede Hovedet. Hun følte et vredt Ubehag mod dette Smaaliv, som skyllede videre—hjem ad alle Veje. (Bang 2008–10, 7:279)

> Agnes stood alone at the grave. She gazed down at the casket with its wreaths, spotted with sand.

And she stared out over the roads, where all the people were walking home to life again.

There was Bai between the two women dressed in mourning—the long veils—and the two men in footwarmers. They were Katinka's brothers, who had thanked everyone on the family's behalf.

Little Jensen was going to have dinner at the miller's after her exertions. Miss Helene was suffering in boots that were too small.

There they went, all of them . . .

And they were hurrying.

Agnes bowed her head. She felt an angry dislike for this petty life that was rushing on home down all the roads. (Bang 1990, 161)

In this passage, dashes and ellipses come to speak for the unspeakable: that life *could* go on so seamlessly. Indeed, four sets of ellipses and four sets of dashes mark up the same six lines. The abrupt interruption both to the storyline and the text itself becomes more pronounced in the novel form (in comparison to the short story form of "Irene Holm") precisely because one would expect the novel's main character to be important or valued more, especially since the reader has taken the entire length of the novel to grow accustomed to and emotionally invested in the main character. Denied a moment of consummate grief, the reader finds him or herself in the same place as Agnes, watching the minor characters retreat to their homes, consumed by small trials and tribulations (e.g., Little Jensen's dinner party at the miller's later that evening and Miss Helene's need to nurse her sore feet after having worn shoes that were too small for her). Without a space to grieve the end of the main character's existence, the reader stands aghast in much the same way as Agnes, who wants to hold vigil over the newly dug grave, while the others are happy to continue on with their lives. This sentiment is reinforced by the following line: "Agnes bøjede Hovedet. Hun følte et vredt Ubehag mod dette Smaaliv, som skyllede videre—hjem ad alle Veje" ["Agnes bowed her head. She felt an angry dislike for this petty life that was rushing on home down all the roads"]. Here Bang attempts to reorient the reader, not to the absent main character's life but to the tragedy that life continues without her. While on the one hand this could signify life's moving forward and the minor characters' grieving constructively, it could also speak to the lack of emotional connection the minor characters have with one another. Still, because the reader is given access to Agnes's perception that people are returning to their lives seemingly unaffected by Katinka's absence, the reader is thus reoriented to remember Katinka. In this way, Katinka's conspicuous absence is felt even more, precisely because it draws attention to what is not said or discussed: Katinka's fading impression on others.

The withering away of the memory of Katinka is further revealed by the tardy arrival of Huus's funeral wreath, which has roses on it that have already begun to wilt and fade.

Lille-Bentzen tog Kransen ud af Æsken:
—Den er fra Huus, sagde han.
—Fra Huus, sagde Agnes. Hun tog Kransen og saa' paa de halvvisnede Roser: Hvor den har været smuk.
—Ja, sagde Bentzen. Køn har den været.
De stod lidt. Agnes knælte halvt ned og lod Kransen glide læmpeligt ned paa Kisten. Rosernes Blade spredtes i Faldet. (Bang 2008–10, 7:279)

> Little Bentzen took the wreath out of the box.
> > "It's from Huus," he said.
> > "From Huus," said Agnes. She took the wreath and looked at the half-withered roses: "How beautiful it was."
> > "Yes," said Bentzen. "It was pretty once."
> > They stood there fore a moment. Agnes knelt halfway down and let the wreath slide gently down onto the casket. The rose petals were scattered in the fall. (Bang 1990, 161–62)

Here Agnes's and Little Bentzen's comments draw attention to the parallel between Katinka's fading impression and the faded flowers—just as too little has been done to preserve the flowers, so has too little been done to preserve Katinka's memory: Huus's flowers arrive late and fall apart, and the funeral party departs shortly after the funeral to continue on with their own lives. The parallel is drawn out even further in this instance, as Bang draws the reader's attention to how the petals scatter during their fall to the bottom of the grave. This reinforces the transient nature of life and the impermanence of retaining Katinka's memory. However, what is important is that despite the fact that Katinka has faded from the memories of the minor characters, Bang has written her into the literary form of the novel. That is, he is able to impress (i.e., mark) her into posterity via fiction and thus remember her—even when the characters around her do not. To mark her impression (that is, her memory) into the text, Bang relies on the formal closure of the novel's ending to orient his readers to his otherwise unimpressive heroine, Katinka.

The Finale of Ved Vejen

In the finale of *Ved Vejen*, Bang ends up having to rely on a more pronounced formal manipulation to effectively recall the impression of Katinka and subsequently lead the narrative toward closure. This is necessary because the other two narrative crescendos do not produce the expected dramatic finale—that is, the main character's death does not end up providing closure, nor does the minor character Agnes's attempt to hold a vigil over Katinka's grave produce an affective endnote. Instead, to create the dramatic power of a finale, Bang dramatizes the formal interruption of a song into the last lines of the novel, thereby using the song's authoritative voice to lead the novel effectively toward closure. As such, the formal progression toward the novel's ending is staged by the interpolation of a folksong's lyrics into the last lines:

> Agnes lod Hænderne glide lidt, langsomt, op og ned ad Klaviarturet. Saa sang hun med halv Stemme—med sin mørke Alt—Sangen om Marianna.
> > Under Gravens Græstørv sover
> > > Stakkels Marianna—
> > Kommer Piger, græder over
> > > Stakkels Marianna.
> > Der blev stille i den mørke Stue.
> > Gamle Pastor blundede lidt med foldede Hænder. (Bang 2008–10, 7:292)

> For a moment Agnes let her hands slide slowly up and down the keyboard. Then she sang in a low voice, in her dark alto, the song about Marianna:

> Beneath the turf of the grave sleeps
> Poor Marianna—
> The girls come and they weep
> for poor Marianna.
> It was silent in the dark room.
> The old pastor dozed a little over his folded hands. (Bang 1990, 174)[86]

Here the song's intrusion into the conclusion successfully directs the novel's ending. This is because the interpolating folksong authorizes a sense of closure—thereby replacing the main and minor characters' inability to produce such closure on their own—by promising to *remember* where the minor characters (exempting Agnes) cannot. The authority of this song is emphasized by the fact that Agnes sings the song "med sin mørke Alt" ["with her dark alto"] while sitting in the otherwise silent and "mørke Stue" ["dark room"]. In other words, it is as if Agnes becomes partially possessed, becoming a vessel or even instrument from which the folksong's message can emanate. That the last line ends with the "Gamle Pastor blundede lidt med foldede Hænder" ["The old pastor dozed a little over his folded hands"] almost lends an air of enchantment to the ending, suggesting that the song has a hypnotic, if not soothing quality that puts the minor characters under a spell (that is, puts them to sleep). And yet, as Bang's irony would have it, the power of the song is missed by the pastor. This effect produces the necessary juncture for the narrative to reach formal closure, thereby pointing out how a song must come in to provide the resolution that both the main character and the minor characters seek but are unable to formulate on their own.

In looking more closely at the interpolating song's success in drawing the novel toward formal closure, another interesting parallel between "Sangen om Marianna" ["the song about Marianna"] and Katinka can be discerned: the theme of thwarted love. Developed from the English folksong, "Poor Mary Anne," this song tells the story of a betrayed lover who, after discovering what it means to live with love, realizes she can no longer live without it and, subsequently, expires.[87] Interestingly, the song's lyrics relay not only the story of an abandoned lover named Mary Anne but also the town's remembering and honoring her after her death.[88] In other words, the song becomes a warning tale of unrequited love that honors, rather than forgets, and hence, pays heed to forsaken life.

While the theme of this song is—as in *Ved Vejen*—thwarted love, Katinka's death does not elicit the same emotional response and communal act of remembering as does Mary Anne's

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86. In *Ved Vejen,* this song appears three times, offset from the main text in full stanzas. For a discussion of Bang's song inlays in Bang's novels, including in *Ved Vejen*, see Schoolfield 2013, 321.
87. "Sangen om Marianna" (the song about Marianna) is derived from an English folksong, "Poor Mary Anne," which begins with the following line: "Here beneath a willow weepeth poor Mary Anne" (Dahl and Dalsgård 2010, 462). Note that the full lyrics are included in the n. 88. H. C. Andersen (1805–75) later adapted this English folksong into Danish, under the title "Stakkels Mary Anne" (Poor Mary Anne) (Dahl and Dalsgård 462). For the Danish version of this folksong written by H. C. Andersen, see Dahl and Dalsgård 2010, 460.
88. The lyrics to the English folksong "Poor Mary Anne," as seen in John Struthers's *The Harp of Caledonia*, are as follows: "Here beneath the willow sleepeth/ Poor Mary Anne, /One whom all the village weepeth, /Poor Mary Anne!/ He she lov'd her passion slighted, /Breaking all the vows he plighted; /Therefore life no more delighted /Poor Mary Anne. /Pale thy check grew, where thy lover, /Poor Mary Anne! /Once could winning charms discover;— /Poor Mary Anne! /Dim those eyes, so sweetly speaking, /When true love's expression seeking; — /Oh! We saw thy heart was breaking, /Poor Mary Anne! /Like a rose we saw thee wither, /Poor Mary Anne!— /Soon a corpse we brought thee hither, /Poor Mary Anne!— /Now, our evening pastime flying, /We in heartfelt sorrow vying, /Seek this willow softly sighing /Poor Mary Anne!" (1821, 44).

death in "Poor Mary Anne." Unlike the song's story, the novel's minor characters are unable to *see* what has happened to Katinka—that her life is not worth living without love (just like the song recounts)—save Agnes.[89] In this way, there exists a striking contrast between the folksong's ability to *remember* and *honor* the dead lover, and *Ved Vejen*'s ability to record the opposite: that life goes on, unhindered and untouched by the death of Katinka. It is precisely in the tension between the novel's record of a town that does not adequately remember or value its recently deceased and the song's record of a town that does remember and pay homage to its recently deceased that produces a jarring and therefore disorienting ending to a novel centered around character (Katinka). These incongruous messages coupled with overtly disorienting formal manipulations within the novel's concluding lines provoke an ending that forces the reader *to see* the fate of the unimpressive character, thus reorienting the reader to the impression of a character, even in the character's absence.

Conclusion

A comparison of the endings of "Irene Holm" and *Ved Vejen* shows us that while more arbitrary forms of reaching narrative closure are in fact employed by Bang, he only does so in order to record or impress character (the subject) into the narrative. As such, Bang's impressionist technique of disorientation becomes a method of redirecting or reorienting readers to the "quiet existences" (*Stille Eksistenser*) of otherwise unimpressive characters, whose strangeness would otherwise predispose them to be perpetually overlooked or forgotten. Thus, by impressing such marginal lives into the fictional artifacts of novels and short stories, their lives are not only recorded but also granted the space to be remembered.

It is important to note that Bang's literary experimentations with disorienting endings also speak to his interest in disrupting normative constructions of temporality. This becomes manifest in delayed endings or characters that inhabit multiple temporal planes, further affirming his investment in literary impressionism as a method of disorientation so as to reorient his audience. For example, Katinka also inhabits two temporal planes throughout the novel: her current life "by the wayside" (*Ved Vejen*) and her childhood memories. Because Katinka is the only character that can effectively inhabit two temporal planes, Bang provokes the reader to simultaneously occupy two strange temporal planes along with her, thus contributing to the reader's sense of disorientation. This same temporal technique is employed in "Irene Holm." Because Irene is the only character in the story simultaneously inhabiting two temporal planes, the reader is given a multifaceted perspective and therefore an intimate understanding of her. While temporal jumps between her past and present do not actually provide that much concrete detail about Irene, the ability to *see* glimpses into her past (even if the reader cannot know exactly what it signifies) privileges the reader's access to the main character and, by virtue of staging such intimacy, is able to expand, and thus add depth to her unfolding character.

In his dissertation, "The Character of Attention," Jacob M. Jewusiak demonstrates that "Victorian novelists manipulate temporality as a means of encouraging or discouraging attention to marginalized characters and social groups" (2012, vi). Building his account of character on Deidre Lynch's (1998) and Alex Woloch's (2003) contributions, Jewusiak comes to see temporality rather than spatiality (the amount of space in the novel devoted to the character) as offering a more constructive approach to resuscitating otherwise marginalized characters.

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89. Here it is worth noting that Bang originally considered "Kærlighed" [love] as a possible title for *Ved Vejen* (Dahl and Dalsgård 2010, 418).

"Instead of showing how the novel's temporality bears witness to a certain cultural practice or ideology, I argue that time is inherently political insofar as it is used by novelists to enable or disable attention to characters" (2012, 11). Thus, another way of looking at why Bang's endings are so disorienting is that the spatial and temporal planes occupied by the main characters and to which readers are oriented throughout the narrative, collapse into a present absent these characters.

In the aforementioned finales of "Irene Holm" and *Ved Vejen*, disorientation as a means of reorientation not only becomes evident but also is part of a larger ethically concerned aesthetics. Bang's ethics springs from an oriented seeing that privileges disorientation as a means of exposing and reorienting his readers to "seeing 'slantwise'" (Coates 2010, 69). This is based on a definition of queer that, as Eve Sedgwick tells us in *Tendencies*, is "relational and strange" (1993, xii). Privileging perception via disorientation in this way is what Coates calls "a politics of perception" (2010, 69). To apply such "a politics of perception" to Bang's case, however, would necessitate that his literary impressionism be conceptualized not only as an aesthetic style but also as a method responding to the politics of its time. By restoring a historical dimension to literary impressionism and revisiting Bang's ethical mission within it, is to, as Paul Giles notes, "effectively reconstitute ethics as politics, to recognize how moral imperatives involve not universal truths but partial perspectives that develop and fluctuate over time. Literature in this sense is valuable precisely because it fictionalizes ethical dilemmas, suggesting the complex and variegated conditions of a world in which particular choices have to be made" (2013, 107).

In summary, this chapter has shown how Bang uses character as his orienting device for the impression. Based on an impression originating from his life, the impression comes to mingle with his imagination and once placed into a text (fiction), is granted the effect of autonomy. Because Bang wants his reader to be involved in the impression, he comes to rely on dramatic or more arbitrary forms of narrative closure to shock his reader to see anew. In the next chapter, I discuss an example where these disorienting shock effects take the form of violent literary language.

Chapter Four

"My God, the Poor Devils":
Performing Violence through Language in Herman Bang's "Les quatre Diables"

This chapter turns to another disorienting ending,[90] that of Bang's novella "Les quatre Diables" (1890, 1899, "The Four Devils"),[91] which showcases literary language's capacity to record violence, using it to defamiliarize or impede the reader's perception such that seeing is made anew or reoriented (or, at least, envisioned as such). In this particular novella, violent language becomes a means of impressing—that is, stamping—the reader.

While violence is not often associated with impressionism, the dual function of the word *impression*—to both mark (impress) and be marked (impressed)—suggests violent potential. After all, as I have pointed out at various junctures in previous chapters, the word "impress," as Adam Parkes notes, has "etymological roots in *impressio*, the Latin word for 'irruption, onset, attack'" (2011, 4). Literary impressionists recognized that an impression produced by language was capable of both recording (the literary text itself) and reenacting (the act of reading such a text) the violence of modern life. To highlight the ways in which violence can leave traces behind via the impression, literary impressionists experimented with disrupting narrative form (e.g., violent rhetoric, narrative cutting, disruptive temporal sequencing).

For Bang, the violent potential of the impression was aligned with the dramatic potential of his technique of impressionism—disorientation. While envisioning a method of shocking readers had much to do with his own appropriation of a dramatic model (which may also be read as his attempt to use drama as a way of mobilizing the impression in what he saw as the deficiencies of endings in character-based fiction) it also exposed the capabilities of the literary medium to simulate the intensity of drama (Booth 1983). To begin a discussion of Bang's experimentation with the impression vis-à-vis the disruptive, even violent rhetorical effect of literary language on envisioned readers, I turn to the strange and disorienting ending of his 1890 novella.

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90. Note that a version of this chapter was published as an article in *Scandinavian Studies* 86:4 (Winter 2014). For this article, see Hidalgo 2014, 398–424.

91. I categorize "Les quatre Diables" as a novella rather than a short story because of its complicated publishing history (appearing with two different titles both in independent book editions and in anthologized editions), its structural layout into nine distinctly marked chapters, and the temporal jumps made within the narrative itself. These are but a few distinct formal characteristics that situate "Les quatre Diables" as a novella.

"Les quatre Diables" was initially serialized in the newspaper *København* between August 24–September 17, 1890 (Kielberg 2010, 348). About a month later, it was published independently as a small book under the same title—"Les quatre Diables." It was not until 1895 that "Les quatre Diables" was published as *De fire djævle: Excentrisk Novelle*. In 1899, it was published once more under the French title "Les quatre Diables" in *Udvalgte Fortællinger* (Selected stories), and then, in 1906, it was published yet again, this time under the Danish title, "De fire Djævle" (Kielberg 2010, 357–58).

In sum, "Les quatre Diables" was published three times with the original French title (twice in 1890, once in 1899) and three times under the Danish title "*De fire Djævle*" (twice in 1895 and once in 1906) (Kielberg 2010, 357–58). While initially met with mixed reviews, "Les quatre Diables" is considered to be one of Bang's best works (Rosenberg 1912, 66–68), resulting in several film adaptations. The first film version was based on a screen adaptation by Carl Rosenbaum, which premiered in 1911 (Greene-Gantzberg 1997, 175), another was a German film version by A. W. Sandberg under the title *Die Benefiz-Vorstellung der vier Teufel* in 1920, followed by a Hollywood film version by F. W. Marnau in 1928, and Anders Refn's filmed adaptation, *De flyvende djævle*, in 1985 (Kielberg 2010, 354).

 "Les quatre Diables" ends on a provocative note: during a trapeze routine performed by the four-member acrobatic troupe, *Les quatre Diables* [The Four Devils], Aimée—one of the four acrobats—unhooks her partner's (Fritz's) swing and watches him plummet to his death onstage, only to jump to her own death beside him moments later. Silence is followed by screams as the audience comes to realize that this was not part of the act. One might think that such a catastrophic spectacle would be the most opportune moment to conclude the novella, but instead of ending here, the narrative immediately shifts to an exterior view of the theater house, where two gentlemen discuss "Begivenheden" (Bang 1899, 234) [the incident]:[92]

> Den ene af dem slog med Stokken ned i Brostenene:
>> "Naa," sagde han: "*Mon dieu, les pauvre diables.*"
>> Og lidt efter begyndte de at nynne igen med Øjnene ud mod den myldrende Mængde:
>>> *Amour, amour,*
>>> *oh, bel oiseau,*
>>> *chante, chante,*
>>> *chante toujours.*
>> De sølvknappede Stokke lyste. Unge Mænd slentrede frem i lange Kapper . . . .
>>> *Amour, amour,*
>>> *oh, bel oiseau,*
>>> *chante, chante,*
>>> *chante toujours.*
> Der var netop den Aften meget livligt paa Markedet. (234)[93]

> (One of them struck his walking stick against the cobblestones:
>> "Well," he said "Mon dieu, les pauvre diables."
>> And shortly after, they began to hum again while looking out toward the teeming crowd:
>>> *Amour, amour,*
>>> *oh, bel oiseau,*
>>> *chante, chante,*
>>> *chante toujours.*
>> The silver-headed walking sticks glittered. Young men strolled out in long cloaks . . . .
>>> *Amour, amour,*
>>> *oh, bel oiseau,*
>>> *chante, chante,*

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92. Note that the translations in this chapter are my own, unless otherwise noted. In the final scene of Herman Bang's "Les quatre Diables, one gentleman spectator comments: "*Mon dieu, les pauvres diables*" (1899, 234) [My god, the poor devils], before joining his friend to hum the love song associated with Aimée and Fritz's trapeze performances.

93. In this chapter, I refer all quotations to "Les quatre Diables" from *Udvalgte Fortællinger* (1899) rather than the 1890 serialized version. The reasoning behind this is that Bang's 1899 edition includes ten additional interpolations of Aimée and Fritz's love waltz—their "Kærlighedsvals"—resulting in a total of seventeen, not seven, song interpolations. Furthermore, the 1899 version adds one final line to the novella. These changes suggest that Bang was intentionally trying to produce a particular effect, one that is the subject of this chapter's investigation. Note that all quotations from "Les quatre Diables" provided in this chapter retain Bang's original orthography, including his liberal use of ellipses.

chante toujours.
That particular evening it was quite lively in the market.)[94]

Such a conclusion is disconcerting for two reasons. First, the lyrics to Aimée and Fritz's "Kærlighedsvals" [love waltz] intrude upon and disrupt the textual layout of the novella's finale. This intrusion is surprising because in the beginning of "Les quatre Diables," the same song appears as the synesthetic representation of Aimee's and Fritz's onstage performances. However, as the story progresses, the song begins to bleed into offstage moments, taking possession not only of the main characters but also of innocent bystanders who unknowingly begin to hum its tune even after Aimée and Fritz have died. Moreover, as the song interjects more frequently, it ends up increasingly defacing or disfiguring the textual layout of the unfolding narrative. The accelerating interjections of this song into the text, interpolates the narrative tempo and speeds it up, creating the literary equivalent of a musical crescendo as the novella approaches its own end. With the intensity produced by the accelerating interpolations, the song seemingly attains symbolic portent as a diabolical force governing the narrative. Put another way, the song no longer functions as an accompaniment to the narrative, but as an omniscient conductor, orchestrating the characters' demise and punctuating the last lines of the novella with its crescendo effect, thereby authorizing itself as the *last to speak* (as was similarly seen in the ending to *Ved Vejen*). This effectively produces what Bang's contemporary, Ford Madox Ford called a *progression d'effet*—a term he used to denote the gradual buildup of tension by which the story can be "carried forward faster and faster and with more and more intensity" (Parkes 2011, 100).

Second, there is the unexpected intrusion of two unnamed gentlemen. By switching scenes from the theater to the anti-climactic aftermath of two anonymous men chatting outside, Bang denies his readers the sensational affect of literary rubbernecking. In this way, the conclusion becomes unsettling because there are two competing finales—the characters' horrific demise onstage versus the narrative's blithe finale offstage: "Der var netop den Aften meget livligt paa Markedet" [That particular evening it was quite lively in the market]. Here the two endings essentially detain or slow down the arrival of the novella's end. Along these lines, "Les quatre Diables" stages what Ian Watt calls *delayed decoding*[95]—"the presentation of immediate sense-impressions without an explanatory framework" (Parkes 2011, 100) so that the reader is given the interpretative responsibility of decoding the narrative's meaning. By making the narrative's meaning and hence perception difficult or even "strange"—as in Viktor Shklovsky's definition of "defamiliarization" in his 1917 essay "Art as Technique"—Bang reorients his readers to the violence circumscribing his artistic medium: language.

While extant scholarship on "Les quatre Diables" identifies moments such as the protagonists' silence as advocating a certain skepticism toward language (Dines Johansen 2003; Heitmann 2011), or the characters' violent ending as essentially "katastrofisk" (Sørensen 2009, 194) [catastrophic], or as "the ultimate expression of being in control and at the same time totally

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94. I leave the French untranslated here so the reader can see the effect of the French juxtaposed with the Danish. I provide a translation later in this chapter.

95. Ian Watt (1988) uses the term "delayed decoding" in his essay, "Impressionism and Symbolism in *Heart of Darkness*." Watt sees "delayed decoding" as a narrative device that negotiates two different narrative movements: the forward-looking, temporal progression of the human mind, with the slower retrospective or reflective act the human mind engages to make meaning. Because "delayed decoding" lets the reader follow the immediate sensations relayed by the narrator, the reader participates or rather, experiences, the narrative and is thus "'made to see' [what a character may *not* see at that moment]" (1988, 317).

out of control" (Lindén 2009, 259), I examine Bang's experimentation with language to *impress* violence upon the narrative and thereby on the reader in "Les quatre Diables" as indicative of his larger *theoretical* investment in literary impressionism.[96]

Bang disorients his readers in "Les quatre Diables" with two endings (the characters' finale versus the narrative's actual ending) in an attempt to reorient his readers to the violence of language when it becomes a barrier rather than a vehicle to communication and connection. Put simply, Bang makes his readers aware of the violence in language. In light of the capacities of language to *mimetically* represent and *diegetically* reproduce violence (Austin 1975; Bourdieu 1992; Butler 1997), this chapter will address how Bang experiments with language as a form of violence in "Les quatre Diables." By exploiting techniques meant to *defamiliarize* (Shklovsky 1965) or impede the reader's perception, namely, 1) interpolating repetitions, 2) calculated representations of the pained physical body, and 3) perceptual redirection generated by the characters' penetrating looks or gazes, Bang intentionally misdirects in order to reorient his readers. To examine these proposed links between language and violence within Bang's prose, I will first define violence and then address how violence is used as a form of literary disorientation in "Les quatre Diables."

Defining violence

The medium used in this novella, language itself, renders Aimée and Fritz's final performance in the first conclusion—the one performed by the characters themselves—ever more violent precisely because it can be read and hence forced back into "life" (i.e., replayed or rewound) with each new reading. For Jacques Rancière, such is the power of literary language: "Literature lives only by the separation of words in relation to any body that might incarnate their power. It lives only by evading the incarnation that it incessantly puts into play" (2004, 5). What this means is that words become powerful precisely because they postpone "coming into flesh" and thus both mystify and violate meaning accordingly. Consequently, violence can be traced back to the narrative's language itself—where each word has a meaning or body that is acted upon and subsequently forced into context (Rancière 2004; Žižek 2008). As such, words struggle for meaning, a meaning that is not fixed but rather altered by each situation. The result is either damaged or distorted meaning, which in turn, may be seen as violence. Accordingly, words become constituents of violence.

While violence is often understood as a physical manifestation of harm, the definition for violence provided by *The American Heritage Dictionary* offers four subdefinitions: violence is "(1) a physical force exerted so as to cause damage, abuse, or injury; (2) an instance of violent action or behavior; (3) intensity or severity; (4) a detriment to meaning, content, or intent" (3rd

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96. Because Bang was invested in literary impressionism, it is not surprising that "Les quatre Diables" would bear some resemblance to other literary works similarly cleft between the naturalist and decadent discourse and similarly interested in exploiting the literary medium to effect an impression. As Vivian Greene-Gantzberg (1997) has pointed out, intriguing plot parallels and compositional similarities can be found between Bang's "Les quatre Diables" (1890) and Edmund de Goncourt's 1879 *Les Frères Zemganno* (*The Zemganno Brothers*). In sharing the circus as a setting, they share "the domain of illusion, disguise and deception," which Katherine Ashley sees as Goncourt's "implicit rejection of mimetic representation" (2005, 105). Such mimetic rejection is noticeable in the hyperbolic employment of italics and ellipses, which draws attention to the text as a spectacle. In this way, Bang's own experimental use of rhetorical violence in "Les quatre Diables" echoed Goncourt's spectacle-making via "'violent' syntactical experimentation" (Dowling 1986, 134). As such, Bang was not alone is his experimentation with language as a formal impression of violence during the fin de siècle.

ed., s.v. "violence"). This chapter is concerned with the fourth subdefinition, which suggests that violence can be made manifest at the level of narration insofar as a narrative is conceived of as a totality whose meaning, content, or intent is vulnerable to damage or detriment. For example, a narrator can present the story in a particular way (e.g., choosing to include specific scenes, enabling access only to some characters and not others) such that the ultimate truth is distorted, or the intention of the narrator remains concealed. Examining Bang's "Les quatre Diables" through the lens of this fourth definition exposes how language can be violent on two fronts: the actual words exchanged and used by the narrative and the gestured, non-verbal language the narrative directs and thereby ventriloquizes in the absence or failure of verbal communication. Accordingly, the calculated presence or even absence of language can be violent insofar as it disguises meaning.

Applying this definition of violence back to Bang's story, one can see the presence of violence in the aforementioned finale of "Les quatre Diables." Here, the characters' deaths can be read as the result of their inability to communicate effectively. Effective communication would entail using words rather than actions to communicate. Instead of effective communication, their unspoken desires and repressed emotions result in a palpable tension that pushes Aimée to appeal to death: "En tusindedel af et Nu ventede Aimée i sin Gynge: Hun vidste ikke, at Døden var Vellyst før nu. . . . da hun slap og skreg og styrtede" (Bang 1899, 232) [For a thousandth of a second Aimée waited on her swing: until now, she did not know that death was pleasure. . . . then she let go and screamed and plummeted]. In this moment, Aimée chooses death not only for herself but also for her beloved, Fritz, and in doing so, realizes her own autonomy for the first time; paradoxically, her moment of realization coincides with her cessation as a character.

What the acrobats' final act demonstrates is that both the presence and absence of language are similarly marked as disruptive and violent and thus, language is not only performing or staging violence *within* the story but also performing *as* a form of violence on the narrative itself. This is because Aimée's moment of realization coincides with her murder of Fritz and her suicide, which, in turn, cuts off narrative access to the two main characters (Aimée and Fritz). Readers are thus left with the following line: "— — — / Nu var der stille i Cirkus" (Bang 1899, 232) [— — —/ It was silent now in the circus]. Here, the dashes denote a break in the narrative, drawing the readers' attention to the indented line as the final line in Aimée and Fritz's story (albeit not the final line of the narrative). Accordingly, the narrative is marked with grammatical signs such as dashes and ellipses that come to *perform* and *speak for* those emotionally charged situations that would otherwise defy or evade localization in language. This unusual syntax is but one example of Bang's many experiments with language at the sentence level. As will be seen, the language of "Les quatre Diables" becomes further punctuated with pauses, gaps, and ellipses, creating temporal discontinuities that control the narrative order, speed, frequency, and voice (Genette 1980), thus damaging the narrative's textual layout. In this way, the language of "Les quatre Diables" can be seen as violating the narrative and disrupting meaning, thereby performing both in and as violence.

The Interpolating Love Waltz

In the aforementioned discussion of language as a form of violence, it is important to note that, contextually speaking, it is power that grants violence authority. In other words, language is pushed toward its potentiality to violence when, as Pierre Bourdieu elucidates, "authority comes

to language from the outside" (1992, 147). Bourdieu's assertion applies to Bang's "Les quatre Diables," for even in this novella, authority comes from the song's interference with the textual layout, an authority that the song obtains from outside the narrative. This interference can be seen in the abrupt shifts between inside and outside points of view. These shifts are blurred by the song's meta-diegetic interruptions both onstage and offstage. What these shifts expose is not an internal and subjective (interiorized) world where power emanates from the characters, but one in which many impressions (such as the song) seek to come into the narrative and disrupt its performance. In a sense, such interruptions referencing a world outside the storyworld (that is, a world from which this song supposedly originates) thereby authorizes the song—Aimée and Fritz's "Kærlighedsvals"—to hijack meaning and thereby control the unfolding narrative.

Authorized interruptions originating outside the text are made manifest via the iterative interpolations of the "Kærlighedsvals,"[97] which appears seventeen times as a four-line French stanza, set off from the rest of the prose. Interestingly, the love waltz's interpolations were not always as numerous. While "Les quatre Diables" was originally serialized in 1890 and bore both a French title, "Les quatre Diables," and seven instances wherein the song's French stanza interrupted the otherwise Danish prose, it was not until it was published in 1895 that it adopted a Danish title, "De fire djævle," and thirteen instances wherein the same French stanza intercepted the Danish prose.[98] By 1899, the novella was published yet again, now under the original French title, "Les quatre Diables," in *Udvalgte Fortællinger* (Selected stories)—and this time with seventeen interpolations of the French stanza and an additional line of prose after the last iteration of the "Kærlighedsvals" in the finale. So what happened? Why did Bang include more song interpolations in the 1899 version of "Les quatre Diables" than he had in the 1890 version? What is the significance of increasing the frequency of the song's interruptions? What type of effect is the song trying to produce? Moreover, if the song is supposed to be a synesthetic accompaniment to Aimée and Fritz's acrobatic performances, why then does the song appear when they are offstage; and, more importantly, why does the song intrude even after Aimée's and Fritz's deaths?

Given the aforementioned discussion of violence and language, the anonymous and untitled French song becomes an intriguing case study. While Aimée and Fritz's French "Kærlighedsvals" does not seem to hold much meaning on its own, its persistent reappearance insinuates a sinister meaning, if not ulterior motive. Like a broken phonograph record, the song repeats: "*Amour, amour, / oh, bel oiseau, / chante, chante, / chante toujours* [Love, love, / oh, beautiful bird, / sing, sing, / sing forever]. In the "Kærlighedsvals" stanza, love is personified as a bird that not only sings but sings "*toujours*," meaning both "always" and "forever." As such, the song sings its characters toward a "*toujours*" that not only foreshadows its stated predilection to repeat "always" but also portends the characters' fate, wherein death binds them together "forever." Interestingly, the more this song repeats (for a grand total of seventeen stand-alone stanzas), the more it damages or distorts not only the textual layout of the narrative itself (sometimes appearing two or three times on just one page), but also the original meaning of the song: idealized "*amour*" [love]. Here the song is teeming with impositions of probable but not definite meaning and accordingly, accrues more tension as it impresses itself into and violates

97. In *A Baedeker of Decadence: Charting a Literary Fashion, 1884–1927*, George C. Schoolfield draws attentions to Bang's inclusion of song inlays in Bang's novels. For example, in *De uden Fædreland*, thirty song inlays are included, "often quoted at stanzaic length" (Schoolfield 2003, 321).
98. For more information regarding the evolving versions and published editions of "Les quatre Diables" (1890, 1899) and "De fire Djævle" (1895, 1906), see Heitmann 2011, 68. See also Esther Kielberg 2010, 343–63.

the narrative without any explicit rhyme or reason.

The "Kærlighedsvals" not only performs violence through its imposition of meaning and interruptions throughout the narrative, but also in *what* or *whom* it excludes. This is most evident in the language of the song. Because the song is in French and is not translated into Danish, the narrative imposes a foreign language onto its unassuming reader. While foreign phrases in nineteenth-century texts are not unusual, the persistence of the same untranslated phrases and stanzas in Bang's "Les quatre Diables" merits attention. Even the original title was in French— "Les quatre Diables"—which stands out in an otherwise Danish text. The intrusion of French phrases are also seen in the acrobats' commands: "*du courage*" [have courage], which the acrobats tell each other before each performance, "*en avant*" [let's go] ; "*ça va?*" [how's it going?]; and "*voyez, donc voyez*" [look, just look]. Conversely, other members of the circus are depicted parsing German phrases such as "er wäre schon 'kalt' geworden" [he would already have become "cold"] and "'auch schändlich hoch'" (Bang 1899, 216) [also shamefully high], in response to Aimée and Fritz's attempts to perform ever more dangerous stunts.[99] By not translating these French and German lines into Danish, Bang excludes his less educated readers. In this way, language, even foreign language, is integral to the narrative and, moreover, is critical to understanding the irony behind Aimée's name as "the (be)loved one,"[100] ironic precisely because she is not the loved one, but rather the one who loves.

Beyond excluding classes of readers (those who are not familiar with foreign languages), the song also excludes the context from which the song originates. As the stanza suggests, "Kærlighedsvals" is but a mere fragment of a whole song, and subsequently, the stanza itself is but a remnant of the complete love waltz it once belonged to. As such, the reader does not know whether the song continues past this stanza or whether the repetition, like that of a skipping phonograph record, is meant solely to produce an eerie or haunting effect. Thus, by inserting this one four-line stanza throughout the novella, Bang demarcates this song's interpolations as visible altercations that inflict violence on the narrative's textual layout, using the song's revenge-seeking momentum to mirror Aimée's drive toward killing herself and Fritz.

Furthermore, there is the question of who sings the "Kærlighedsvals" or is implied as singing it. The reader is never told who originally sang this song, rendering it haunting precisely because it is bodiless. Accordingly, the song can move between (and possess) different bodies, depending on who sings it. For example, at one point, other men from the circus hum the song when they are leaving a pub, providing a body or bodies from which the song can emanate:

> Det var Trip som begyndte at synge. Og pibende, fløjtende, kaglende faldt de Alle i; med Klowngrimacer, med Gebærder fra Manègen, med vrængende Munde sang de:
> > *Amour, amour,*
> > *oh, bel oiseau,*
> > *chante, chante,*
> > *chante toujours.* (Bang 1899, 229–30)

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99. Annegret Heitmann contends that the foreign language employed in "Les quatre Diables" marks the distance between the circus and the reality that surrounds it. For more on this, see Heitmann 2011, 67–82.

100. In Carsten Jensen's foreword to *Les quatre Diables*, Aimée's name is identified as meaning "the loved one": "Her name resonates with irony—it means the loved one—but she isn't. She is rejected in art and in love" (1998, 89).

(It was Trip who started to sing. And wheezing, whistling, cackling they all joined in;
with clown grimaces, with gestures from the ring, with sneering mouths they sang:
> *Amour, amour,*
> *oh, bel oiseau,*
> *chante, chante,*
> *chante toujours.*)

This particular scene is noteworthy because the policeman, who is at first alarmed at the racket made by these drunk men, then joins in: "Saa gav ogsaa Ordenens Vogter sig til at le, lige paa én Gang, uden at vide hvorfor" (230) [Then the guardian of public order also gave into laughing, all of a sudden, without knowing why]. Hence, the song seems to have a powerful effect, casting a type of spell over its victim, who is unaware ("uden at vide hvorfor") of its destructive and violent nature. Therefore, the song not only appears to cue in Fritz and Aimée's performances, it also begins to leak into other characters' lives (such as Trip's) and into offstage moments. These appearances both onstage and offstage attest to the song's omniscience, enabling it to cue in even after the curtains have fallen on the acrobats' final performance. In this way, the song continues past their deaths and seemingly outlives them. As Axel Lindén affirms: "Ljudet av akrobaterna lever vidare efter deras död" (2009, 85) [The sound of the acrobats lives on after their deaths]. Nevertheless, I would add, it is not the song's *sound* but its *words* that have such power. The reader *must see* this one refrain again and again, even after the characters have died. Here, violence is invested in the imposition of *making* the reader *see* its embodiment in an iterative four-line stanza and ultimately forcing itself into a symbol on the page.

As the song gains momentum as a symbolic power or even force for the narrative, it gains the ability to recall traumatic scenes, wherein pain is either produced or aggravated. Accordingly, the song functions as an aural memory that recalls the acrobats' shared, painful past. For Aimée, the song actually hurts her. An example of this is when Aimée is listening to Fritz hum their song louder and louder until these words emerge:

> Højere og højere nynnede han, nu sang han Ordene:
> > *Amour, amour,*
> > *oh, bel oiseau,*
> > *chante, chante,*
> > *chante toujours.*
> Hvor glad han sang, hvor lykkelig. Hver Tone smertede hende, og dog blev hun staaende:
> det var, som om denne Sang genkaldte hende hele deres Liv. (Bang 1899, 193–4)

> (Louder and louder he hummed, now he sang the words:
> > *Amour, amour,*
> > *oh, bel oiseau,*
> > *chante, chante,*
> > *chante toujours.*
> How cheerfully he sang, how happily. Every note hurt her, and yet she remained
> standing: it was as if to her, this song recalled their entire lives.)

Here she is not only hurt by the words; she is also transfixed or immobilized by the type of pain they recall. What this suggests is that the song's power is rendered by an authority that comes

from outside the text and outside the temporal time frame given by the narrative; it is the power of language, via the lyrics of the song, to inflict and re-inflict pain that distinguishes the song as violent. Ultimately, the song performs violence, for it makes manifest the power inherent in words—the power of recollection, of meaning, and how meaning is, in turn, constructed and reconstructed—to repeatedly conjure up pain.[101]

Performing Violence *on* and *through* the Pained Body

Aside from the interpolating love waltz, rhetorical violence surfaces in calculated representations of the pained physical body. Framed by the increasingly dangerous feats the acrobats perform onstage, "Les quatre Diables" constantly attends to the interactive dynamics of the acrobats' performing bodies,[102] as body language is crucial for their art form. Every gesture, movement, or touch becomes a telling sign, signaling the lack of verbal communication. Although the acrobats yell orders and encouragements to each other while on the trapeze swings—"*du courage*," "*en avant*," and so on—the rest of their dialogue is scarce, to say the least. The near absence of more complex dialogue (other than shouts, screams, and orders) means that it is the physical body and its actions that perform and, hence, communicate what the acrobats are incapable of expressing in words. Since the descriptions of the body communicate (through words on a page), the acrobat's body is then just another medium used to speak via the text itself. This is seen in the plethora of images and descriptions of the body in pain. These descriptions are integral, for the body succeeds in communicating an unspoken intensity. Take the following passage, wherein the acrobats' bodies play out a telling dynamic between Aimée and Fritz:

> De favnede hinanden, de fangede hinanden, de æggede hinanden ved Skrig; det var, som de hvide og sorte Kroppe elskovsfuldt knyttedes sammen og løstes, knyttedes og løstes i en æggende Nøgenhed. Mens Kærlighedsvalsen lød med sin søvnig smægtende Rytme, og Kvindernes Haar, naar de fløj gennem Luften, udslaaet, faldt flagrende ned om den sorte Blottelse — som en Atlaskeskaabe. (Bang 1899, 183–4)

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101. The same can be said of "Damen fra Logen" [the lady of the loge], when she reprimands Fritz for a total of eight times in Chapter 4 alone, "Du, dumme Mand" (Bang 1899, 207) [You stupid man]. Likewise, the signature of "*Les Quatre Diables*" in Chapter 8 functions like the song's repetitions. It only appears three times; however, its presence and repetition are noteworthy for the signature marks that inscribe the characters into a contract—as in a contract made with the devil. Furthermore the verb *tegner* [to draw] is used. Like the song, their signature intrudes into and breaks up the textual layout with three consecutive instances of "tegner vi ærbødigst/ *Les Quatre Diables*" (225–26) [We undersign most honorably/ *Les quatre Diables*]. In her insightful article "'Blodet suser': Melodrama og Emotioner i Herman Bangs 'De fire Djævle'" ("The Blood Rushes": Melodrama and Emotions in Herman Bang's "De fire Djævle"), Annegret Heitmann suggests that "the acrobats' bewilderment in response to seeing their names signed in a language foreign to the acrobats is in fact one of the ways this narrative signals its skepticism concerning language" (2011, 79).
102. For Dines Johansen (2003) and Axel Lindén (2009), attention paid to the body belies the acrobats' reliance on their bodies to produce an art form that an audience can consume and, thereby, earn their keep from the audience's proceeds. However, this interpretation is later problematized when one considers that Bang similarly employs the acrobat's body for his own economic profit (i.e., publication and hence profit). Accordingly, I believe a more pertinent question is whether rhetorical violence happens precisely because Bang makes the narrative into a spectacle to be consumed by his readers.

(They embraced each other, they caught each other, they egged each other on with screams; it was as if the white and black bodies passionately were fastened together and unfastened, fastened and unfastened in a provocative nakedness. While the love waltz played on with its drowsy, languishing rhythm, the women's loose hair fell fluttering down, as they flew through the air over the black expanse — like a cloak of satin.)

Here, the two bodies (Fritz and Aimée) are seen colliding into one another, clasping and egging each other on while hanging on the swings. Not only is their dynamic captured by the description of their actions but also by the subtle word repetitions at play, which mimic the back-and-forth rhythm of the swings. For example, "hinanden" [each other] is repeated three times in the first sentence. Also, the phrase "knyttedes sammen og løstes" [were fastened together and unfastened] is immediately repeated, only without the word "sammen" [together]. This is significant because the acrobatic performance depends on the perfect synchronization and connection between the bodies. One line has them "knyttedes sammen" [fastened together] and then only "knyttedes" [fastened], illustrating the coming together and drifting apart of these two characters, both in their own lives and on the swings.

However, this synchronization is short-lived. After their first performance, the dynamic between Aimée and Fritz changes when the anonymous "Damen fra Logen" [lady of the loge] enters the picture. The lady seduces Fritz and the resulting enchantment diminishes his ability to perform both as an acrobat and a lover. The acrobats' changing dynamic becomes noticeable in their rehearsal: "Det var ikke Arbejde mer. Det var en Kamp. De mødtes ikke mér, de greb ikke, de favnede ikke mer. De brødes kun og tog Tag som Dyr" (Bang 1899, 214) [It was not work anymore. It was a battle. They did not meet each other anymore, they did not clasp, they did not embrace anymore. They only wrestled and grappled like animals]. Here their work—trapeze art—has now turned into "en kamp" [a battle], one that can only be resolved savagely—a battle to the death. Their devolution into animals attacking one another on the swings accords with Fritz's later pronouncement that an animal lives in every human; it is just a matter of mobilizing it: "og en Dag har Dyret rejst sig, Dyret i os, som vi er" (229) [and one day, the animal has reared up, the animal within us, as we are]. This "animal within" is conjured when man is without language or speech, as the capacity to both know and use language distinguishes man from animal. The loss of language destroys the realm of meaning and the possibility for connection, resulting in the violent disintegration of the human subject. But if the loss of language feeds into an animal instinct for violence, does this imply, then, that "humans exceed animals in their capacity for violence precisely because they *speak*?" (Žižek 2008, 61)? The idea that language can assist violence is thus central; in other words, it is the potential to speak and gain agency that situates human aggression as infinitely more calculated, planned, and hence violent.

If both the presence and absence of language can contribute to violence, then Aimée's desire to use language to harm or hurt another becomes a case in point.

Aimée bed i sit Lagen, krammede sin Pude, fandt ikke Ro for sine feberhede Hænder.
Hendes Tanker vidste ikke afmægtige Skældsord nok, ikke vredt harmfulde, ikke raa Beskyldninger nok, indtil hun græd igen; og atter følte hun al den lamme Smerte, som fulgte hende Døgn og Dage, Døgn og dage. (Bang 1899, 204)

(Aimée bit into her sheet, hugged her pillow, found no peace for her feverish hands.

Her mind did not know enough feeble curse words, not enough angry indignation, brutal enough accusations, until she cried again; and she felt once more all the paralyzing pain that followed her day and night, day and night.)

Here language fails Aimée precisely because there are no words that could adequately express the intensity of pain that she is experiencing. Because of this, her anger remains unspoken and therefore resides within her until it destroys her, as the reader later sees with her murderous and suicidal actions at the end of the novella. As the aforementioned passage describes, then, the only way of expressing pain at this point in the narrative is via her already pained and worn-out body. The narrative first focuses on her tears, which then draws the reader's attention to the rest of Aimée's body. Here, the body is the only thing that is able to communicate how she feels. Unable to find words sufficient to encapsulate how much pain she feels, she exposes not only the failure of language but also how violence comes in when language fails. First, her pain becomes mediated by the violent actions of biting and hugging her pillow forcefully; however, this does not suffice as a way to relay the intensity of her pain, as indicated by her finding "ikke Ro for sine feberhede Hænder" [no peace for her feverish hands]. Accordingly, with both descriptions of her body and her mind failing to capture her pain, the reader is left only with the narrative language itself, relaying the intensity of Aimée's pain through a series of repetitions and alliterations as seen, for example, with "Døgn og Dage, Døgn og Dage" [day and night, day and night]. In this phrase, violence exists in the persistent repetition of specific words, sounds, and phrases.

Aimée's suffering in the aforementioned example illustrates an important point about the violent nature of pain expressed verbally. As Elaine Scarry posits in *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, "physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned" (1985, 4). This state "anterior to language" is like that of Fritz's "dyret" [animal], an entity without language. Hence, describing Fritz's body as that of an animal might have been an attempt to take his body out of the domain of language (humanity) and to express pain in a domain without language and its violent potential (animal savagery). Scarry asserts "the inexpressibility of physical pain" (3)—that is, the lack of words to adequately describe pain, the feeling of pain. While this does not allude to suffering but rather to actual physical pain, the failure of language to describe pain itself poses another paradox. Describing or locating pain—that is, trying to fix words to the experience of pain—ultimately redirects the violence of language back onto language itself. In other words, by describing or attempting to describe pain, language falters and thus fails to encapsulate the depth or intensity of pain. This breakdown of language is seen with sentences and words that begin to fragment in their attempt to describe pain. For Bang's "Les quatre Diables," violence is already discernable in the fragmented quality or disjointed rhythm of the prose occurring within this text.

When pain is described through the medium of violence—language—it becomes doubly violent. Such violence becomes noticeable in the third chapter, wherein the novella recounts the first meeting between Aimée and Fritz, their established bond through mutual suffering, and eventually how their bodies (their youth) were exploited onstage for entertainment (the circus). Their adopted father, Master Cecchi (the ringmaster), trained them in a brutal manner for the circus, leaving an indelible mark on their childhoods (Fritz later acquires the last name Cecchi and perhaps even the identity or alter-ego of this once cruel and domineering master). An emblematic instance wherein descriptions of pain become mediated via literary language is when

Master Cecchi beats Fritz's body, forcing him to perform, and subsequently destroying not only Fritz's humanness and dignity but also the body that defines him: "Fritz' Legeme var kun én Vunde. Han faldt igen, faldt igen, sparkede i Sandet af Smerte, faldt igen. . . . Stønnende af Smerte gemte Fritz sig som et Dyr bag en Stabel Tøndebaand" (Bang 1899, 197) [Fritz's body was one big ache. He fell again, fell again, kicked the sand in pain, fell again. . . . Groaning in pain, Fritz hid himself like an animal behind a stack of barrels]. Here, Fritz is likened to an animal, hiding because he is ashamed of his own body, a body that will not perform the way Master Cecchi wants him to. The pain resulting from such humiliation surfaces in the language employed, which becomes audible through the alliterative words used to describe his pained body: "stønnende af Smerte" [groaning in pain].

In "Les quatre Diables," inflicting pain on the human body also becomes doubly violent when described through fantasies of domination, physical abuse, and murder. Such violence is magnified in Fritz's fantasy: "Og han saae sig selv dængende hende til med Slag, sparkende hende med Hælen, krumpinende hende, saa hun bøjede sig, saa hun krympede sig, saa hun laa halvdød af hans Vold: hun, Kvindemennesket, hun" (Bang 1899, 190) [And he saw himself pelting her with blows, kicking her with his heels, crushing her, until she gave in, until she winced, until she lay half-dead from his violence: she, that woman, she]. In fantasizing about abusing the lady of the loge, he attempts to regain control over his body. Nevertheless, the women in his life demand his body, continually taking away the one power he has left. For Fritz, his energy or vitality as an acrobat is so significant to him precisely because his dignity and humanity have already been taken away (seen earlier in the story when Fritz was sold to the circus and whipped by Father Cecchi). Even his lover, the lady of the loge, admonishes him, calling him "a stupid man": "Du dumme Mand, du dumme Mand . . . . ." (207) [You stupid man, you stupid man . . . . .]. The lady of the loge repeats this phrase to Fritz eight times, mimicking the repetition of the love refrain with the "Du dumme mand" refrain. As the following line relates: "hun blev ved at hviske de samme tre Ord, der blev som deres Elskovs Omkvæd (en Elskov, hvis eneste Sjæl var Instinktet): / 'Du dumme Mand'" (208) [she kept whispering the same three words, which became their love's refrain (a love, whose only soul was instinct): / "You stupid man"]. His fear that women might use him for his body—the only thing he has left—is described in the following passage:

> Han betragtede dem som mystiske Fjender, der laa paa Lur, fødte for at eftertragte hans Kraft. Og naar han en sjelden Gang hengav sig — pludselig, greben af det uovervindelige Instinkt — var det med en Slags fortvivlet Desperation, med et hævnsygt Had til den Kvinde, som tog og røvede ham et Stykke af hans Legeme, en Sum af hans Styrke — det, som var hans dyrebare Værktøj, selve hans Middel til at leve. (189–90)

> (He regarded them as mystic enemies that lay in wait, born to covet his power. And when on a rare occasion he succumbed — suddenly, grasped by that invincible instinct — it was with a sort of hopeless desperation, with a vengeful hatred for that woman, who took and robbed him of a piece of his body, a portion of his strength — that which was his precious instrument, his very means to live.)

Fritz's fantasies of inflicting pain on another, namely, the lady of the loge, are doubly violent because they are described through another medium of violence—language. Fritz's violent intentions are embedded in a need to gain agency; nevertheless, he desires to do so by destroying

his newly acquired master, who, in this case, is also his lover, the lady of the loge: "Men som han var ødelagt, kunde han ødelægge hende. Han kunde" (218) [But just as he was destroyed, he could destroy her. He could]. Here, his agency depends on dismantling hers; he must dehumanize and destroy her agency in order to regain his. The violent fantasy he imagines doing in words alone authorizes him with the power to hurt another to mask the pain he feels but fails to express.

If language fails to adequately describe pain (Scarry 1985), then "Les quatre Diables" symptomizes this failure via the prose's occasional distillation into fragmented words, dashes, and ellipses—a disintegration that speaks to the violence that occurs when language fails. Since a substantial amount of dialogue is either withheld or absent, the body begins to stand in for the lack thereof. One could say that the pained body becomes the fictional body or text itself, pained by its existence *via* its entrapment *in* language, and thus forced to speak for characters who are unable to do so themselves. This occurs not only between the characters, but also in the bodies of the words themselves. When this happens in the narrative language, fragmentation occurs: "Hele hendes Liv, Stykke for Stykke, Minde for Minde, Tanke for Tanke brødes sønder, slugtes op, lagdes øde, sank bort i det eneste: Begæret, den Forladtes jammerlige Begær" (Bang 1899, 220) [The entirety of her life, piece by piece, memory by memory, thought by thought, came asunder, swallowed up, destroyed, washed away in that one thing: desire, the forsaken one's wretched desire]. Here the words are set apart by commas, which make visible the coupling of certain words and sounds: "Stykke for Stykke, Minde for Minde, Tanke for Tanke." In this passage, repetition becomes explicit, similarly mimicking the excessive repetition of the love waltz, albeit at the micro-level of a sentence. Such excess plays an important function in negotiating the difference between aggression and violence. According to Žižek, "'violence,' here, is not aggression as such, but its excess, which disturbs the normal run of things by desiring always more and more. The task becomes to get rid of this excess" (2008, 63). Accordingly, fragmentation takes care of this excess (of language)—slashing away and cutting sentences into disparate parts. Right before the readers' eyes, language becomes a subject of violence, while simultaneously remaining an agent or medium for violence itself.

Performing Violence through Penetrating Looks and Gazes

Just as the body comes to stand in for and materialize the unspoken tensions present, eyes become conduits, expressing that which cannot be said or put into words. Such focalization is made paramount in looks or gazes that redirect the readers' attention from one character to another and thus act as a substitute for dialogue or other forms of verbal exchange. Even though these looks are made in silence and hence imply the failure of the acrobats' verbal communication, this type of silent viewing is crucial to the narrative's staging of tension, which it relays in succession: one character (Aimée) looks at another character (Fritz) who is looking at another character (the lady of the loge).

Because these visual trajectories occur so often within the text, eyes and their corresponding glances or gazes begin to function as a form of surveillance. This trajectory of stolen glances and gazes intensifies the constellation of power governing the characters' surveillance of each other: Aimée's surveillance of Fritz and Fritz's surveillance of the lady of the loge. As such, the glances accrue power over the characters themselves, in turn demanding to speak for them and their silent suffering as the ones who look but are never looked at. In this way, looks (or gazes) become pregnant with meaning, creating vivid images that scream out to

the reader and beg to speak—that is, attempt to articulate the unspoken tension. Take the following passage, which portends Aimée's fate: "Aimées Øjne hang paa ham—store og matte i Glans som et Par Lamper, der snart vilde slukkes. / Valsen steg, og Gyngernes Leg blev voldsommere" (Bang 1899, 232) [Aimée's eyes hung on him—big and dull in luster like a pair of lamps, that would soon go out. / The waltz accelerated, and the play of the swings became more violent]. Here, we have a description of Aimée's eyes, which foretell death with "der snart ville slukkes" [that would soon go out] and thus, speak for her even if she does not. They warn of impending death; the only thing she thinks she has left to unify herself with Fritz. Aimée is ready for death and her eyes are vacant, implying that some part of her has already resigned itself to death. Accordingly, Aimée's next step is only to meet death *physically*.

Similarly, Fritz's eyes are described as "empty" in an earlier passage; nevertheless, his eyes are described through what Aimée sees in them. Thus, the reader sees what Aimée sees in Fritz's eyes. The layering effect here complicates the once-linear dynamic of observer and observed: "Saa længe havde hun ikke forstaaet—ikke, hvorfor hans Øjne var blevet tomme, naar han saae paa hende" (Bang 1899, 193) [For so long, she had not understood—not, why his eyes had become empty, when he looked at her]. The emptiness of his eyes indicates his vast separation and disconnectedness from Aimée. They cannot communicate (this is seen in the lack of dialogue between Fritz and Aimée) and even their body gestures and eye contact speak of the disintegrating connection between them. Aimée witnesses the man she loves (Fritz) desire another woman (the lady of the loge), and every new gaze and look affirms this for her. Aimée no longer exists in Fritz's eyes, for he does not return her gaze or look her in the eyes anymore. The mutual acknowledgment or exchange usually produced by another's gaze is no longer reciprocated, and since no one is looking at Aimée, her identity is at stake: "Der blev intet tilbage: ikke hendes Hengivenhed, ikke hendes Ømhed, ikke hendes Offervillighed—intet . . . . . Det 'simplificeredes' under Ulykken, det depraveredes under Forladtheden, det faldt tilbage til den store 'Urform'" (220) [There was nothing left: not her affection, not her tenderness, not her self-sacrifice—nothing . . . . . It was "simplified" by misfortune, it was depraved by forsakenness, it regressed to a great "primitive form"]. She is stripped of everything; even her presence is not acknowledged by the very fact that Fritz does not return her gaze. Communicating with the gaze no longer works and this leads her to perform and thereby communicate differently (that is, speak with her actions), this time with "intet tilbage" [no going back]. For Aimée, death speaks the loudest, and it is by choosing death for both Fritz and herself that she finally gains his recognition.

As in the aforementioned discussion on language and violence, what becomes of interest here is whether the gaze supersedes and is able to say more than language through the gesture of looking. Nevertheless, since this gaze is written down and narrated within a literary text, the power and violence inherent in language still apply and accordingly, are still of concern. In turning to the gaze itself, a dynamic emerges that simulates violence (and the violence of language). Take, for example, Fritz, the male acrobat, who gazes at the woman he is infatuated with, the lady of the loge: "Men hans Øjne rugede ved Kanten af hendes Kjole, paa hendes udstrakte Haand, med Blikket hos de stærke Dyr, der tæmmes, et Blik, der lurer og hader og véd sig afmægtigt paa samme Tid" (Bang 1899, 189) [But his eyes brooded over the hem of her dress, on her outstretched hand, with the look of one of those wild animals, that is tamed, a look, that glares and loathes and knows itself to be powerless at the same time]. Here, Fritz's gaze is like that of an animal. This passage presents an interesting exchange, since it is an example of the one who gazes—Fritz, in this case—having become disempowered by the act of gazing. In

fact, he is so captivated by the lady of the loge (the object of his gaze), that he becomes her victim. Accordingly, she obtains power, like Medusa, to immobilize or petrify her victim, deconstructing and disassembling his existence through a look; a look that is doing more than simply looking precisely because she is aware that he is looking at her for affirmation that she is looking at him. Her power also rests in the fact that she is immortalized through language (descriptions), and thus, her gaze lives forever within the text. Fully aware of her power over Fritz, she asks him, "Er De bange for mig?" (189) [Are you afraid of me?]. Such a question within the already sparse dialogue between characters in "Les quatre Diables" instigates rhetorical violence because the question interrogates and implicitly demands an answer. Fritz's answer embarrasses him; he humiliates himself before her and thus renounces his own agency and power. Here, the dynamic of master-slave is established through dialogue—one asks, the other *must* respond. Furthermore, by asking if he is afraid of her, the lady of the loge is implying his inferiority. Accordingly, her question is a violent act, stripping Fritz of his own power as a subject.

The power dynamic between Fritz and the lady of the loge is later transposed into another passage wherein Fritz reinstates his power by performing for her. His insight into the power obtained from being the one admired or gazed at empowers him: "Fra Trapezen saae han hendes Ansigt—som han ligesom mægtede at se med en anden Sans end Øjets" (Bang 1899, 190) [From the trapeze he saw her face—as if he were able to see with another sense than his eyes]. In performance, he gains the power he lacks in real life: he is performing not just for her; he is performing for all who see him onstage. Moreover, the stage demarcates his domain of power and agency; a sphere she can only access as an audience member. As such, she is placed in a position where she must look at him, return his gaze, and thereby recognize his agency. The tragedy, however, lies in the fact that this only occurs when he is onstage and when there is an audience to watch him.

It is important to note that Fritz and Aimée are always being watched. They perform for an audience of spectators and readers who ultimately watch and witness their unfolding tragedy. As their last act describes: "Tusinders Øjne fulgte dem" (Bang 1899, 231) [A thousand eyes followed them]. Here, the reader is given the image of spectators, and, accordingly, the reader can question whether he or she has also become a spectator vicariously. Performances are instigated by a series of gazes. In this case, the linear progression starts with Aimée's gaze (the one who looks), then secondly, Fritz (the object of Aimée's gaze), and finally, the reader or, rather, the spectator, who observes this dynamic of looking. Thus, the reader must not only interpret the text, but he/she must also participate in *looking with* and eventually even *back at* Aimée (which repeats the action she is performing on Fritz). Hence, the reader is made into a type of spectator.

In order to continue a discussion concerning the gaze and the spectator, I turn to Jacques Rancière's (2009) book, *The Emancipated Spectator*. According to Rancière, the spectator faces a paradox. Theater or performance cannot exist without a spectator; nevertheless, being a spectator is usually perceived negatively for two reasons: firstly, "the spectator is held before an appearance in a state of ignorance about the process of production of this appearance and about the reality it conceals," and, secondly, "to be a spectator is to be separated from both the capacity to know and the power to act" (Rancière 2009, 2). Hence, the spectator, unlike the actor, is passive. This leads one to question whether the reader's role in this instance is also that of a passive spectator. However, for Bang, the reader is a meta-*spectator* (the spectator/reader is

assumed and already integrated into the narrative dynamic), *actively engaged* in the narrative rather than passively watching.

Bang draws readers into the narrative through this myriad of gazes. The readers are essentially transported into the seats of those spectators—albeit spectators with a particularly privileged view into the minds of Fritz and Aimée as well as access to the drama occurring both onstage and offstage. Therefore, readers are not passive spectators; rather, they are continually put in positions wherein they must negotiate language and, subsequently, meaning. Despite this immersive experience, a performance is still taking place because readers must appropriate the narrative into their own contemporary time, place, and spectrum of meaning while going back to the text and replaying that which the author has directed. Hence, performance is made through a dialogic exchange. The author directs the reader, and the reader redirects the narrative into posterity (as long as the text is still read). However, the question that still remains is whether readers (as spectators) can actually learn to *see* (more) through reading literary language, or whether they only see what they have been trained to see—an oriented *seeing* mediated by thoughts constructed through language.

Conclusion

Given Bang's investment in impressionism, it follows that Bang's narrative economy of rhetorical violence is in fact analogous with his contemporaneous literary impressionists (e.g., Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford) who saw literary impressionism as both "a record of historical experience and as a rhetoric seeking to define the manner in which that history is to be imagined" (Parkes 2011, 4), and, moreover, supports Bang's own claim that modern life essentially determines the narrative form (Stern 2008). As Michael Stern notes, "for Bang, it was the same insights into the human condition that have accompanied modernity that highlighted the inability of the author to accurately depict the emotional life of his characters" (2008, 41). In order to highlight the emotional life of his characters, Bang confronts how language has certain mimetic limitations in rendering sensation or sensory affect. Accordingly, he experiments with language, creating a prose that is accentuated by details—such as gaps, dashes, ellipses, or a meta-diegetic intrusion of a stanza—that seem to take over certain poignant moments in the novella to sing or perform itself into a spectacle (as seen, for example, with the love waltz that continues to sing past the characters' deaths).

In many ways, Bang's prose anticipates a literary style later adopted by Virginia Woolf, and thus I think it is useful to consider Bang's realist aesthetics in relation to international literary criticism of the early twentieth-century formalist school, of which Viktor Shklovsky was the figurehead. Just about two decades after the publication of "Les quatre Diables," Viktor Shklovsky published an essay in 1917 entitled "Art as Technique." In this essay, Shklovsky advocates for "defamiliarization" (*ostraneniye*, in Russian) as a rhetorically disruptive or violent device necessary to the realization of art. Using this term to describe this business of making perception strange, Shklovsky saw language as performing a necessary intervention. For him, defamiliarization is crucial to identifying the purpose of art as one that "impart[s] the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known" (Shklovsky [1917] 1965, 12), thereby forcing readers to take notice. If reinforcing awareness is the purpose of art, then the purpose of literary language is to shock its readers into seeing the familiar anew. Accordingly, defamiliarization is a form of violence made noticeable by literary language, and it is only vis-à-vis literary language that the purpose of art is subsequently made manifest.

Defamiliarization is a mode of perceptual learning conterminous with Bang's discussion of a reader's perceptual capacities in his own timely essay on impressionism from 1890 (appearing in the same year that "Les quatre Diables" was first serialized), "Impressionisme: En lille Replik." Here, as I have shown before, Bang posits the following, worth repeating in full:

> Og naar han paalægger sig al denne Møje, er det netop, fordi han tror, at Læserens "Hjærne er et overmaade drevent Redskab"—saa drevent et Redskab, at den overfor denne "levende" Kunst vil magte det samme som overfor selve Livet: Læseren vil ogsaa i Kunsten "se mere end hans Øjne er i Stand til at sanse, forstaa mere, end han netop har Ævne til at opfatte." (Bang 1994, 47)

> (And when he imposes all this struggle upon himself, it is precisely because he thinks that the reader's "brain is an exceedingly astute tool"—so astute a tool, that in facing this "living" art, it will manage the same as in life: in art the reader will also "see more than his eyes are used to sensing, comprehend more than he actually has the ability to perceive.")

As this passage illustrates, Bang's belief in a reader's capacity to learn to see anew suggests that he shared an affinity with Shklovsky's conceptualization of defamiliarization as a narrative device crucial to restoring perception. Thus, for Bang, this process of perceptual restoration entails positioning his readers not only to see anew but also to experience emotions anew. What this suggests is that the impressionistic fragments or composites in his work do not indicate a tendency toward abstraction but instead reinforce his larger investment in literature as a mode of perceptual orientation: to value life in all its perceptual richness, by using literary language to disorient and thereby reorient his readers to a larger spectrum of life and the people that populate it. As such, his literary sketches and fragmented writing speak to a larger ethical engagement underlying his fiction. Thus, like Shklovsky, Bang saw literature as directing and hence restoring human perception; however, unlike Shklovsky's mission, Bang's mission appropriated a social rather than solely literary mission: disorientation in the service of reorienting the perception of his readers toward marginalized others. As such, the aim of Bang's rhetorical violence was not simply to reorient perception but rather to demonstrate and hence impress upon his readers how impressions affect certain sensibilities; in other words, to humanize narratives.

Herman Bang's *impressionistic* and *pre-cinematic*[103] writing brings into focus the unique performances of language, performances that ultimately become violent in Bang's verbal landscape. As this chapter has shown, focusing on these *impressions* left by small blots or words (violent marks made by language) yields significant insights into the narrative economy and

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103. It would be interesting to see whether Bang's pre-cinematic quality of writing was in some way anticipatory of the experimentation of later montage work, a central concern of Sergei Eisenstein and early film. As Sergei Eisenstein says of montage, "Formal tension by acceleration is obtained here by shortening the pieces not only in accordance with the fundamental plan, but also by violating this plan. The more affective violation is by the introduction of material more intense in an easily distinguished tempo" (1949, 74). This helps articulate the affinities among fragments, cutting, and montage due to the underlying violation or violence that is expressed in the collision of different images or emotions. Indeed, in many ways, one could say that montage procured a similar visual dramatization and effect as Bang's fragmented and collage-like writing style did; that is, both experimented with the tension of juxtaposed images and the violence that can ensue from such forced encounters. Accordingly, Eisenstein's montage expresses a similar reliance on violence, albeit, for Bang, this would specifically manifest itself as rhetorical violence.

stylistics of "Les quatre Diables." Read this way, the novella stands out as a particularly powerful and violent masterpiece that attests to Bang's larger theoretical investment in literary impressionism, one in which queering perception through violence reorients his readers to the mission of literature at the end of the nineteenth century.

Concluding Remarks

> The author makes his readers. If he makes them badly—that is, if he simply waits, in all purity, for the occasional reader whose perceptions and norms happen to match his own, then his conception must be lofty indeed if we are to forgive him for his bad craftsmanship. But if he makes them well—that is, makes them see what they have never seen before, moves them into a new order of perception and experience altogether—he finds his reward in the peers he has created.
> —Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*

A consistent contention of this dissertation has been that Herman Bang's impressionism aims to involve readers in the deciphering of meaning in his work. Indeed, after looking at the ethical implications of Bang's impressionism through the lens of disorientation, it becomes increasingly clear that his vision of readers has less to do with actual readerships and more to do with mobilizing an aesthetic logic. For this reason, I would now like to turn to how we can understand Bang's vision of readers.

Looking to Adam Zachary Newton's (1995) *Narrative Ethics* proves fruitful at this juncture. Newton provides a crucial way of apprehending how authors can be understood as viewers in their own "houses of fiction" (1995, 146), wherein the author's fictional constructs or scaffolds (e.g., "houses of fiction") are populated by fictional beings that situate the author as a viewer of his own fiction. If this is indeed the case, then one could posit that Bang's readers are vicariously situated as viewers who look into the same "house of fiction" (James 1995, 7) and thus participate in the viewing process by looking through the "house's" various windows or frames, each of which provide glimpses of a character, and, in the aggregate, form an impression. It is in this way that the reader and the author come to share the same fictional space in witnessing and apprehending a fictional "other."

Bang's involvement of readers within his aesthetic logic (that is, in participating in viewing character) via a technique of impressionism—disorientation—anticipates a critical approach to literature exemplified by Viktor Shklovsky and his concept of defamiliarization, whereby literature is evaluated on the basis of its ability to disrupt perception by making the familiar seem strange. As Shklovsky explains, "the purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged" ([1917] 1965, 12). Whether difficulty is maintained by defamiliarization or disorientation, both strategies seem to value perception that is made difficult, as this invites a reader to think critically about what he or she has just read, thereby opening up the possibility of coming to see anew. In his 1890 essay on impressionism, Bang discusses this process by noting how the impressionist assumes a reader who can be brought to "se mere end hans Øjne er i Stand til at sanse, forstaa mere, end han netop har Ævne til at opfatte" (1994, 47) [see more than his eyes are used to sensing, comprehend more than he actually has the ability to perceive]. In this way, impressionist narrative art assumes the responsibility of making the reader see anew.

Bang's impressionist aesthetic logic comes to embrace a rhetorical strategy discussed by Judith Butler (2003) in which difficult language is seen as helping readers think critically. In her

insightful essay "The Values of Difficulty" Butler explains that rather than using simplistic language to simultaneously have a reader read and understand, using complex or difficult language makes it such that the reader *first* reads and *then* understands. While simple language may be seen as more persuasive, difficult language demands that the reader think critically. By positing difficulty as a method of having a reader confront the unknown, Butler situates an ethics underlying the importance of how one apprehends or comes to know or not fully know an "other." Such disruptions of meaning—that is, of making meaning or perception difficult—perform an ethical function, for, as Butler states, "if we are unwilling to be disarmed and to become, suddenly, unknowing, we assume instead a posture of dogmatism that may well sidetrack us from the evanescence, if not the ineffability, of a life" (2003, 214). Butler's essay helps situate how an aesthetics can be ethical.

Butler's claim resonates with Bang's distinct application of disorientation in that disorientation aims to disarm or challenge the reader to rethink and reorient him or herself when confronted by endings where meaning is not necessarily spelled out. As Butler writes about the readers' potential response to Henry James's main character, Catherine, at the end of *Washington Square*: "The reader is also left, in a sense, exasperated, cursing, staring. As readers we are effectively asked whether we will judge her, supply her with a motivation, find the language by which to know and capture her, or whether we will affirm what is enigmatic here, what cannot be easily or ever said, what marks the limits of the sayable" (2003, 206).

The disorienting endings in Bang's fiction position the reader at a crossroads where he or she can do one of two things: exercise judgment and try to arrive at some type of meaning, or, instead, stand back and admire the enigma or "ineffability"—that is, the impression—of a fictional "other's" life. For Bang, positioning the reader at this crucial juncture is achieved by presenting the reader with partial glimpses into a character's life (e.g., via flashbacks, minor characters' perspectives, or a description of the character seen through a keyhole or window) while also drawing out the limits of the reader's degree of intimacy with the character (e.g., via abrupt or disconcerting endings). It is precisely because impressionism incorporates into its aesthetic logic these partial views that it is especially apt at conveying the limits of knowing an "other." Thus, the ethically concerned aesthetic of Bang's literary impressionism is demonstrated precisely by suspending judgment in the face of the unknowable, conveyed via the partial and thus incomplete portrait of a character.

What I have attempted to do in this dissertation is begin a recuperation of Bang's own stated literary goals in order to understand vis-à-vis impressionism both the construction and role of character in his works, which he saw as central to the ethical question of how best to leave an impression on the reader such that the reader could experience the impression of the character envisioned by the author. The fact that disorientation, a technique that attempts to involve the reader, would become a key part of Bang's impressionism, highlights the ethical potential of literature that Bang continually returns to throughout his works. In this way, I set the stage for my dissertation's main objective: trying to recapture what Bang wanted to accomplish with literary impressionism by looking at how his various critical and fictional pieces gesture toward an ethically concerned aesthetics.

In chapter one, I began with a discussion of recent scholarship on literary impressionism, which I arrive at by tracing the historical and conceptual valence of impressionism's ethically concerned aesthetics from the visual to the literary arts. By looking at impressionism's permutation within the literary arts, it becomes evident that literature could implement an impressionist aesthetics to a particular ethical end: to disarm, disorient, or jolt the reader into

experiencing an emotive response to a fictional "other." Evidence for this is seen in what Bang identifies as the literary impressionist's aesthetic mission in "Impressionisme: En lille Replik." This essay is of particular importance because it is here that Bang outlines his own take on the objective of the literary impressionist as engaging the reader's mind to decipher meaning and thus be implicated in a method of seeing anew. Given Bang's implication of a reader in his aesthetic logic, I then examine how he attempts to disorient said reader by appropriating dramatic elements into his own writing. The fact that literary impressionism appropriated elements from both the visual and dramatic arts further spotlights how the literary medium could collapse these two representational modes to fulfill two outcomes: to solicit a reader's emotional response (dramatic model) and to do so while preserving the enigma of a character (visual model). For this synthesis of representational media, Bang's "scenic novel" (*den fremstillede Roman*) becomes a case in point.

In chapter two, I looked at how Bang, like James, comes to rely on a traditional visual metaphor to impart the task of impressionism: the "portrait." Even though Bang and James are interested in new ways of seeing, they each invoke as their central metaphor a traditional art form—the portrait. They employ the portrait to outline what they see as the ethical undercurrent of literature: drawing out the impression of a character, which, for Bang, collapses into a discussion of an impression of an author (Turgenev) and the impression Turgenev leaves behind via his characters. Thus, a traditional visual medium becomes the foil for both a new conceptualization of and experimentation with the impression that the literary medium could perform: the partial portrait as a way of conveying rather than explaining character, and thus respecting the ineffability of character. That Bang and James both implement a portrait model in their critical writings and that they both look to Turgenev is evidence that Bang, like James, was endeavoring to delineate his own aesthetics of fiction. By looking at my transcription and translation of Bang's "Manuskript til foredrag om Ivan Turgenjev," I was able to examine how Bang uses the literary portrait as a method for framing his own ethical concern about how to best record the impression of a character. What emerges is that although the *full* literary portrait, due to its static nature, is an ill-suited metaphor for recording the author's impression such that it retains the dynamic quality of the character from which the impression originated, the *partial* portrait can accommodate the incomplete portrayals needed to preserve the character's or subject's semblance of autonomy, which is the aesthetic effect of conveying a character in parts (i.e., partially). Looking to Bang's manuscript helped situate his emerging thoughts about depicting character impressionistically.

To examine how Bang variously implements a technique of impressionism—disorientation—the second part of my dissertation revolved around close readings of three works by Bang: "Irene Holm," *Ved Vejen*, and "Les quatre Diables." In chapter three, I examined more closely the problem of narrative endings in character-centered fiction. Here Bang tries to negotiate how to construct endings that can still do justice to his main characters, even if they exit or die before the narrative's end. For him, disorientation in the form of a disorientating ending becomes a way of reorienting his readers to character even after plot has taken control and formally led the narrative toward closure. In "Irene Holm," this is made explicit via the conspicuously moralizing voice of the omniscient narrator, which reorients the reader to the need not to judge Irene, since the moralizing voice is already doing so. In *Ved Vejen*, a song intrudes into the text, thereby dramatizing the fading impression of Katinka's memory after her death, even if the other characters (other than Agnes) are unable to remember her. In this way, the reader is compelled to remember and recall the impression of Katinka. Thus, even if Katinka or

Irene have already exited the story, the reader is left in the town where these characters once lived, looking out at their fading impressions. Such an ending values character because the reader is brought to remember the main character, even if the minor characters do not. It is precisely by using disorienting endings to potentially reorient the reader to the character's enigma that situates Bang's ethically concerned aesthetics.

Finally, in chapter four, I examined a more extreme example of disorientation, which Bang effectively achieves by deploying disconcerting endings and violent rhetorical language. Here I argue that Bang's novella, "Les quatre Diables," exploits literary language's capacity to record violence, using it to defamiliarize or impede the reader's perception. In this way, language becomes difficult—even foreign (with foreign phrases and the interjection of both a signed advertisement and full song interpolations into the middle of the text)—and accordingly, literary language interferes with the arrival of meaning, such that Aimée's and Fritz's otherwise unimpressive subjectivities are memorialized in fiction. The value here is that literary language's ability to record violence—both in the discourse and in the storyworld—conspicuously forces the reader to witness death and catastrophe without providing a rationale or meaningful closure. In other words, the reader is left to gather or decipher meaning in the absence of any explicit statement. As in *Ved Vejen*, a song's (a love waltz's) interpolations into the end of the novella demand that the reader think critically and piece together his or her own picture of what has happened. In this way, Bang's "Les quatre Diables" foregrounds how disorientation functions as a means of reorienting the perception of his readers toward marginalized or otherwise unimpressive fictional "others."

Through the selection of critical and fictional pieces that I have analyzed in the four chapters of this dissertation, I have revisited what Bang wanted to accomplish with literary impressionism. What I hope to have demonstrated is that literary impressionism was invested in using literature as a medium to *view* or *see* anew; that this process of seeing anew demanded more of the reader's interpretative energy; that this type of viewing or seeing thus placed more responsibility on the reader; and that this responsibility conspicuously invites the reader to try to apprehend a fictional "other," thus revealing an ethical objective underlying impressionist aesthetics. What I hope to have demonstrated with the case of Bang is that he was an impressionist whose ethical inflections align with how recent scholarship has understood literary impressionism (Parkes 2011, Hannah 2013, Matz 2001); that this affinity with recent scholarship on impressionism helps reevaluate how impressionism factors into Bang's authorship; and that, while a more comprehensive study than I have provided on Bang's ethical inflections is still needed, my discussion and methodological approach to the ethical undercurrent in Bang's impressionism—seen in his employment of disorientation—may help begin such a conversation. Moreover, I hope that beginning such a conversation can help initiate a discussion regarding the ways in which other Scandinavian literary impressionists, namely J. P. Jacobsen and Jonas Lie, both subscribed to and resisted the mediatory role of the impression in their respective works.

To examine the ethical inflections of Bang's aesthetic logic, I have tried to resituate Bang's authorship vis-à-vis recent scholarly contributions on literary impressionism that have attended to and recuperated an underlying ethical concern within impressionist aesthetic practice. Such scholarship allows for a reading of Bang and impressionism that accounts for his appreciation of the impression as an evolving critical category in his literary project—thereby engendering a discussion of his literature that does not just see impressionistic tendencies in his writing but rather spotlights the ethical undertones of his aesthetics of fiction. Insofar as Bang is concerned, revisiting his authorship and literary impressionism opens novel ways of discussing

his aesthetic practice as an ethically inflected enterprise. I have traced in Bang's works these ethical inflections, paying specific attention to how they variously play out in his impressionist technique of disorientation. In doing so, I present Bang as a pertinent case study for reevaluating literary impressionism as a literary approach, one that predicated the need to think critically about the role of literature at the turn of the century.

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