

LIZA KAARING

Et vekselspil

Venskabet mellem Edvard Munch og Emanuel Goldstein

Dette er historien om et venskab mellem to kunstnere, norske Edvard Munch (1863-1944) og danske Emanuel Goldstein (1862-1921), der mødte hinanden i Paris i slutningen af 1889 og oplevede en umiddelbar identifikation med hinanden både kunstnerisk og personligt. Det er historien om et intenst møde, der binder Munch og Goldstein sammen for livet og sætter aftryk på kunsthistorien. Goldstein var en af flere vigtige samtalepartnere i Munchs overgang fra naturalismen til symbolismen; et særdeles vigtigt skridt for, at Munch blev den kunstner, vi kender i dag. Det var et møde, der affødte mange planer om samarbejde, hvoraf langt de fleste dog blev på tegnebrættet. Det er også historien om mødet mellem to kunstnere, hvor den ene ender med at blive anerkendt som en af verdenskunstens fremtrædende symbolister og tidlige ekspressionister, en kunstner med et udpræget "moderne øje", mens den anden mere eller mindre glemmes af eftertiden.¹ I den korte periode, hvor de var ligeværdige, er det også en fortælling om det livsbekræftende og til tider skelsættende i at møde et andet menneske, som man kan spejle sig i, og som inspirerer en. Eller som Goldstein skriver til Munch i december 1891:

Nu skal jeg for resten sige Dig noget Hr Munch: Du er i Grunden det eneste Menneske jeg har Respekt for ... Du er den mest frigjorte Aand jeg nogensinde har truffen paa. Jeg antager ikke at Ros fordærver Dig. Aa, naar jeg tenker paa alle de andre 'Kunstnere', der sætter Kunsten over deres egen Menneskelighed, saa bliver jeg syg til døden. Det er noget saa betryggende i en Gang at træffe et rigtig Menneske.²

Munch og Goldstein var i 1889 begge unge, lovende kunstnere med stor appetit på at diskutere tidens aktuelle kunstneriske strømninger, og for hvem alle muligheder i livet som i kunsten stadig stod åbne (ill. 1 og 2). En

LIZA KAARING

An interplay

The friendship between Edvard Munch and Emanuel Goldstein

This is the story of a friendship between two artists, Norwegian-born Edvard Munch (1863-1944) and Danish-born Emanuel Goldstein (1862-1921), who met in Paris at the end of 1889 and felt an immediate affinity with each other, both artistically and personally. It is the story of an intense encounter that formed a lifelong bond between Munch and Goldstein and left an imprint on art history. Goldstein was one of several important conversation partners in Munch's transition from Naturalism to Symbolism; a crucial step in making Munch the artist we know today. Their meeting prompted many plans for co-operation, most of which, however, never came to fruition. It is also the story of two artists where one ends up recognised as a pre-eminent Symbolist and early Expressionist of world art, an artist with a distinctly 'modern eye', while the other is more or less forgotten by posterity.¹ During the brief period in which the two were equals, it is also a story of the life-affirming and at times pivotal experience of meeting another human being in which you see yourself reflected – and who inspires you. As Goldstein says in a letter to Munch in December 1891:

Now, let me tell you something, Mr Munch: you are just about the only human being I respect ... You are the most emancipated spirit I have ever come across. I assume that you remain uncorrupted by praise. Oh, when I think of all the other 'artists' who rank art over their own humanity, I feel sick unto death. There is something thoroughly reassuring in meeting a real human being for once.²

In 1889, Munch and Goldstein were both young, promising artists with a keen appetite for discussing the artistic movements of the time, men for whom all opportunities in life, as in art, still lay wide open before them (ill. 1 and 2). They also shared an appetite for women, albeit this particular pleasure had been somewhat soured for them by unhappy love that had left them both deeply scarred. Both struggled to let go of the memory of the woman

II

INDHOLDSFORTEGNELSE

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anden appetit, som de var fælles om, var på kvinder, en appetit, der dog for begges vedkommende var blevet svækket af oplevelser med en kærligheds-sorg, der havde sat sig dybe spor. Begge havde svært ved at gøre sig fri af mindet om den kvinde, der havde knust deres hjerte. Goldstein havde i 1886 sat ord på sin bittersøde kærlighedshistorie i digtsamlingen *Vekselspillet*, og hans fremstillinger af følelser og erfaringer vakte genklang hos Munch, der beundrede samlingen. Det fremgår af breve, at han anbefalede bogen og fortalte i rosende vendinger om den danske forfatter til venner og bekendte i kunstnerkredse, i mange år efter at han stiftede bekendtskab med digtsamlingen.

En yderligere faktor for deres oplevelse af identifikation med hinanden synes at være, at de begge var 'nervøse' personligheder med et skrøbeligt helbred. Goldstein havde tilsyneladende allerede et 'nervøst sammenbrud' bag sig i 1889, og Munch, hvis far netop var død, mens Munch opholdt sig i Paris, valgte omkring årsskiftet af forskellige årsager at flytte til den roligere forstad Saint-Cloud.³ Det var her i Saint-Cloud i begyndelsen af 1890, at venskabet mellem de to kunstnere blev grundlagt.

Venskabet, der holdt livet ud, og ikke mindst Munchs vedholdende beundring for *Vekselspillet*, giver os en god grund til at se nærmere på forfatteren Goldstein, der siden stort set er blevet glemt. Hvem var denne digter, der fascinerede Munch med sine digte, og som desuden indgik som en vigtig samtalepartner i Munchs skifte fra naturalisme til symbolisme?

Goldstein, en digter fra Nakskov

Emanuel Jacob Goldstein blev født 6. august i Nakskov som søn af Jacob Ephraim Goldstein (født i Danzig, Preussen i 1830, død 1911) og Rose Goldstein (født Lublin i Saksøbing 1823, død 1901) (ill. 3).⁴ Begge forældre var jødiske, og faren, der var buntmager og hattemager, drev først forretning i Nakskov og fra 1880 i København, hvor han startede den meget succesfulde engrosvirksomhed J. Goldstein & Søn, der fik filialer i både Malmø og Berlin. Sønnen, der nævnes i firmaets navn, er Emanuels bror Isidor (1856-1914). Farens succesrige forretning betød, at Emanuel blev støttet økonomisk og ikke havde brug for at arbejde (ill. 4).

I Goldsteins digteriske produktion er *Vekselspillet* (udgivet under pseudonymet "Hugo Falck"), der i eget navn blev udgivet i både en anden- og en tredjeudgave under titlen *Alruner*, hovedværket. I samlingen beskriver han kærligheden mellem mand og kvinde. I Goldsteins optik er kvinden som

who had broken their heart. In 1886, Goldstein put his bitter-sweet love story into words in a collection of poetry, *Vekselspillet* (The Interplay), and his vivid portrayals of emotions and experiences resonated with Munch, who greatly admired the book. We know from various letters that he continued to recommend the volume and praise the Danish writer to friends and acquaintances in artistic circles for many years after first becoming acquainted with Goldstein's poetry.

An additional factor in their mutual rapport seems to be associated with the fact that they were both 'nervous' personalities of delicate health. Goldstein had apparently already had a 'nervous breakdown' back in 1889, and Munch, whose father had just died while he himself was in Paris, chose, for various reasons, to move to the quieter suburb of Saint-Cloud around the turn of the year.³ It was here – in Saint-Cloud in early 1890 – that the friendship between the two artists was founded.

That friendship, which lasted all their lives, and Munch's enduring admiration of *Vekselspillet* give us ample reason to take a closer look at Goldstein, an author largely forgotten by posterity. Who was this poet who fascinated Munch with his poems, and who also constituted an important conversation partner during Munch's transition from Naturalism to Symbolism?

Goldstein, a poet from Nakskov

Emanuel Jacob Goldstein was born on 6 August 1862 in Nakskov as the son of Jacob Ephraim Goldstein (born in Danzig, Prussian in 1830, died 1911) and Rose Goldstein (née Lublin, born in Saksøbing 1823, died in 1901) (ill. 3).⁴ Both parents were Jewish, and his father, who was a furrier and a hatter, initially ran a business in Nakskov and, from 1880 onwards, in Copenhagen, where he founded the highly successful wholesale enterprise J. Goldstein & Son, later setting up offices in Malmø and Berlin too. The son referenced in the company name is Emanuel's brother, Isidor (1856–1914). His father's successful business meant that Emanuel was provided for financially and did not need to work (ill. 4).

Within Goldstein's writings as a poet, his most important work remains *Vekselspillet*, which was first published under the pen name 'Hugo Falck', later reissued in a second and third edition under the title *Alruner* (Mandrakes). In this collection of poems, he describes the love between man and woman: seen through Goldstein's eyes, the woman is like poison, and love is a battlefield. As described by the critic writing as 'Chr. R.' in a review of the third edition from 1916, the format of the poems is stringent, abrupt and harsh, as exemplified by the poem



ILL. 1

Portræt af Edvard Munch fra adgangskort til Chr. Theater, 1889-90.
Munchmuseets fotoarkiv, Oslo, emunch.no
Portrait of Edvard Munch from an admission pass to Chr. Theater, 1889-90.
The Munch Museum photo archives, Oslo, emunch.no



ILL. 2

Foto af Emanuel Goldstein fra Georg Nygaard, "En digter er død",
Verden og Vi, 4. februar 1921
Photo of Emanuel Goldstein from "A Poet is Dead", *Verden og Vi*, 4 February 1921

gift og elskoven et slagsmål. Formen er, som ”Chr. R.” skriver i en omtale af tredjeudgaven fra 1916, både knap og kras, som f.eks. i digtet ”Elskov”⁵. Som han skriver, tolker de bedste af digtene ”Elskovens fornuftstridige Væsen i antitetiske Paradokser” og svinger typisk mellem dyb ømhed og bundløs foragt. Alle tilløb til kærlige følelser udlignes straks af en altgennemtrængende bitterhed, som i *Vekselspillet*s ”Hinc illæ lacrymæ”, der i *Alruner* hedder ”Forraadt” (s. 184). Der er, som vennen og litteraturkritikeren C.E. Jensen formulerer det, tale om en digtsamling, der udtrykker ”en personligt-følt, raffineret-brutal Elskovsopfattelse”.⁶

Nøglen til digtsamlingen synes at være samlingens mest åbenlyst biografiske digte, der er samlet under titlen ”Elskovens Evangelium”, der i *Alruner* har fået titlen ”Overture”, der fortæller om, hvordan den store forelskelse får fortælleren til at bryde med både forældre og venner for til sidst at lade ham tilbage, alene i et rum, krydret af hendes duft. Bruddet efterlader ham med alle minderne:

Overalt laa Minder, der i flimrende Tusmørkestunder
Brød op som i skorpede Saar vidtspilede Vunder;
Som udløste Rummet i lys-svøbte,
Henaandte Ord hendes Kærtegn, hendes Haan, hendes taare-døbte,
Elskovsbaarne Hulken ...⁷

Digtene er både højtråbende og dybtfølte, og som Goldsteins ven gennem 35 år, den danske skuespiller og maler Albrecht Schmidt (1870-1945) (ill. 5) henviser til i et brev til Munch efter Goldsteins død, så byggede digtene på Goldsteins egne, smertefulde erfaringer, der aldrig forlod ham:

Den aandelige Reise (Alruner) som han gennemlevde som Nitten-aarig, gjorde ham for altid til en mærket Mand. Den lagde sikkert Grunden til den Hovedpine som mer og mindre plagede ham Livet igennem og som tvang ham til Isolation, der gjorde ham til ikke saa lidt af en – Særling.⁸

Goldstein døde 23. januar 1921, angiveligt af den spanske syge.⁹

Venskabet set med danske briller

Indtil nu har litteraturen fortalt historien om Munch og Goldsteins venskab med udgangspunkt i Munch.¹⁰ Goldstein fremstilles i disse udlæg-

’Elskov’ (Love).⁵ As the critic puts it, the best of the poems interpret ‘the unreasonable essence of love in antithetical paradoxes’, often oscillating between deep tenderness and infinite contempt. Any overtures to affectionate sentiments are immediately offset by an all-pervasive bitterness, poignantly evident in *Vekselspillet*’s ‘Hinc Illæ Lacrymæ’, renamed ‘Forraadt’ (Betrayed) in *Alruner* (p. 184). As described by a friend of Goldstein, the literary critic C.E. Jensen, this is a volume of poetry that expresses ‘a personally felt, refined-brutal view of love’.⁶

The key to the collection would appear to be the collection’s most obviously biographical poems, collected under the common title ‘Elskovens Evangelium’ (The Gospel of Love) (renamed ‘Overture’ in *Alruner*). They relate how the narrator falls passionately in love, prompting him to break with parents and friends alike, ultimately leaving him bereft and alone in a room still fragrant with her scent. The breakup leaves him behind with all his memories:

Everywhere lay mementos, which in flickering twilit moments
Broke out like scabbed wounds in distended sores;
As though in light-swaddled, murmured words
The room released her caresses, her scorn, her tear-christened,
Love-born sobbing ...⁷

Loudly insistent and earnestly felt, the poems were – as indicated in a letter written to Munch after Goldstein’s death by the latter’s friend through thirty-five years, Danish actor and painter Albrecht Schmidt (1870–1945) (ill. 5) – based on Goldstein’s own, painful experiences which never left him:

The spiritual journey (Alruner) that he underwent at the age of nineteen left him marked for life. It presumably laid down the foundations of the headaches that would, to varying degrees, continue to torment him all his days, forcing him into a state of isolation that turned him quite – eccentric.⁸

Goldstein died on 23 January 1921, reportedly from Spanish flu.⁹

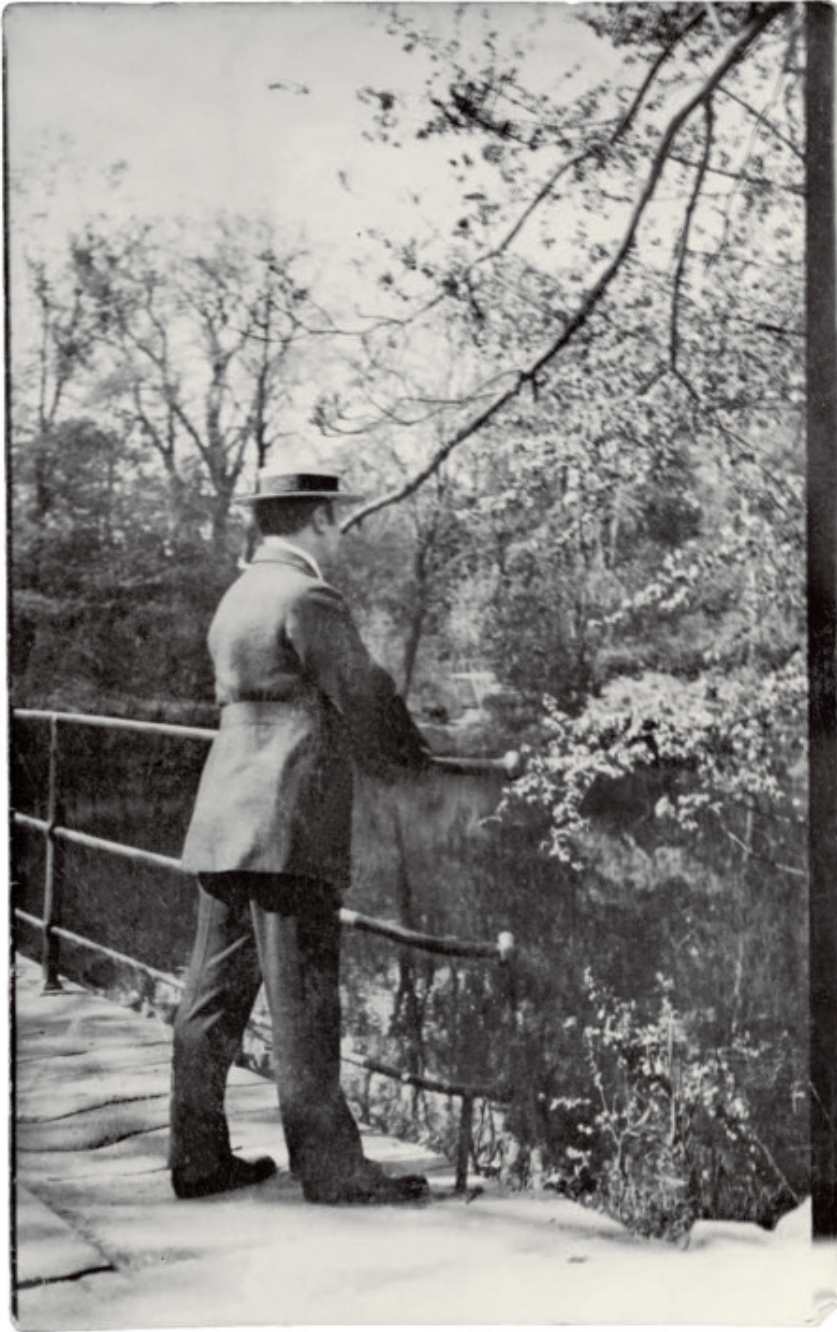
The friendship seen from a Danish perspective

As yet, the existing literature has described the friendship between Munch and Goldstein while taking Munch as its point of departure.¹⁰ In such accounts, Goldstein is presented as Munch’s Danish writer friend, without taking a closer look at his life and writings. Goldstein has, not to put too fine a point on it, been treated as a kind of walk-on extra in Munch’s life. If, however, one considers the story based on the assumption that their friendship began as a relationship between two equal



ILL. 3

Edvard Munch, *Jacob E. Goldstein*, 1905, litografi, bladmål 568 × 398 mm, Woll 266. Munchmuseet, Oslo
Edvard Munch, *Jacob E. Goldstein*, 1905, lithograph, sheet 568 × 398 mm, Woll 266. The Munch Museum, Oslo



ILL. 4

Emanuel Goldstein (?) i en park, foto. Munchmuseet, Oslo

Emanuel Goldstein (?) in a park, photo. The Munch Museum, Oslo



ILL. 5

Postkort med foto af Albrecht Schmidt i *De ægtemænd!*. Munchmuseets fotoarkiv, Oslo, emunch.no

Postcard with a photo of Albrecht Schmidt starring in *De ægtemænd!* (Those Husbands!). The Munch Museum photo archives, Oslo, emunch.no

ninger som Munchs danske forfatterven, men uden at man har set på hans liv og forfatterskab. Goldstein er groft sagt blevet behandlet som en slags statist i Munchs liv. Anskuer man imidlertid historien ud fra den antagelse, at deres venskab i udgangspunktet var en relation mellem to ligeværdige unge mennesker og kunstnere, der fandt en sjælden forståelse hos hinanden, får fortællingen nye facetter.

I denne artikel undersøger jeg Goldsteins og Munchs udveksling af både personlig og kunstnerisk art med udgangspunkt i deres brevkorrespondance, ligesom enkelte af deres kunstteoretiske tekster samt udvalgte værker af Munch inddrages. Historien udfoldes så vidt muligt kronologisk, og selv om begge kunstnere ubetvivleligt påvirkes af talrige relationer til andre forfattere, kunstnere og øvrige intellektuelle, så er fokus i denne artikel holdt på relationen og venskabet mellem Munch og Goldstein.

Forskere fra Munchmuseet har ad to omgange arbejdet på at udgive korrespondancen imellem Munch og Goldstein. Første gang var i 1966 i umiddelbar forlængelse af, at Munchmuseet havde købt en samling breve fra Munch til Goldstein i et antikvariat i København.¹¹ I et brev til Oslo Kommunes Kulturudvalg argumenterer daværende førsteinspektør på Munchmuseet Reidar Revold for, at brevene ”rommer en række konkrete oplysninger og en række udtalelser som er meget nyttige for Munch-forskningen”. Efter købet forberedte inspektøren en udgivelse og redigerede brevene, så alt var klar til tryk. Processen blev dog afbrudt og skrinlagt, da Revold i 1968 blev fængslet for tyveri og hæleri af Munchgrafik fra museets samling.¹² Ti år senere, i 1977, tog den daværende direktør for museet, Alf Bøe, planerne om udgivelsen op igen. Denne gang blev den sammen med andre planlagte udgivelser opgivet, ifølge Lasse Jacobsen sandsynligvis på grund af manglende økonomi. I dag er alle de breve, som ejes af Munchmuseet, tilgængelige online.¹³ De er dog hverken ordnet i svar og gensvar, kommenteret eller på anden måde indsat i den oprindelige kontekst. Nærværende artikel fortæller om den kontekst, som disse breve blev skrevet i.

I citater er oprindelig retstavning og tegnsætning bibeholdt, mens overstregninger og lignende ændringer er fjernet for at lette læsbarheden. Munch benytter ofte tankestreger i stedet for punktum og andre tegn. Disse er bibeholdt, da de, som Åshild Haugslund har påpeget, giver brevene et spontant og næsten impressionistisk præg.¹⁴

young people and artists who sensed a rare affinity with each other, the tale takes on new facets.

In this article, I will examine the various exchanges – both personal and artistic – between Goldstein and Munch on the basis of the letters they wrote. I will also incorporate some of their texts on art theory and selected works by Munch. The story will be unfolded in chronological order insofar as this is possible, and while both artists are indubitably affected by numerous interactions with other writers, artists and intellectuals, the focus of this article remains firmly fixed on the relationship and friendship between Munch and Goldstein.

On two separate occasions, scholars from the Munch Museum have worked towards publishing the correspondence between Munch and Goldstein. The first time was in 1966, following immediately in the wake of the Munch Museum’s purchase of a collection of letters from Munch to Goldstein found in a second-hand bookshop in Copenhagen.¹¹ In a letter to the Oslo City Council for Cultural Affairs, the then senior curator at the Munch Museum, Reidar Revold, argues that the letters ‘contain a range of specific information and a number of statements that are very useful to Munch scholarship’. Following the purchase, the curator prepared a publication, editing the letters and lining everything up for printing. However, the process was brought to an abrupt halt in 1968 when Revold was imprisoned for stealing and selling Munch prints from the museum collections.¹² Ten years later, in 1977, the director of the Munch Museum, Alf Bøe, resurrected the plans to publish the letters. On this occasion, the envisioned volume was abandoned alongside a range of other publications in the pipeline; according to Lasse Jacobsen, the reason for this is likely to have been insufficient funding. Today, all letters owned by the Munch Museum can be accessed online.¹³ However, they have not been arranged into sequences of replies, commented on or been considered within their original context in other ways. The present article will relate the context in which these letters were written.

In the various quotes, the punctuation has been kept as close to the original Norwegian/Danish texts as possible, although strikethroughs and similar amendments have been omitted in order to facilitate easier reading. Munch often uses dashes instead of full stops or other punctuation. These dashes are maintained in the translations too, as they – as has been pointed out by Åshild Haugslund – imbue the letters with a spontaneous, almost impressionistic feel.¹⁴