



FORBIDDEN LITERATURE

Case
studies on
censorship

Erik Erlanson

Jon Helgason

Peter-Henning

Linnéa Lindsköld (eds)

NORDIC ACADEMIC PRESS

FORBIDDEN LITERATURE

Forbidden Literature

Case studies on censorship

Edited by

Erik Erlanson, Jon Helgason,
Peter Henning & Linnéa Lindsköld



NORDIC ACADEMIC PRESS

CHECKPOINT

Nordic Academic Press
P.O. Box 148
SE-221 00 Lund
Sweden
www.nordicacademicpress.se



For enquiries concerning printing/copying this work
for commercial or extended use please contact the publisher.

© Nordic Academic Press and the Authors 2020



This volume is an edition from Nordic Academic Press Checkpoint – a series dedicated to peer-reviewed books. It is also published within the framework of Kriterium, a quality hallmark for Swedish academic books. All Kriterium publications undergo peer review according to set guidelines, and are available as open access publications at www.kriterium.se

Typesetting: Frederic Täckström, Sweden
Cover design: Lönegård & Co
Print: ScandBook, Falun, Sweden 2020
ISBN 978-91-88661-87-6 (print)
ISBN 978-91-88909-08-4 (epdf)
ISSN 2002-2131 Kriterium (Online)
DOI 10.21525/Kriterium.22

Contents

Acknowledgements	7
Introduction	9
<i>Erik Erlanson, Jon Helgason, Peter Henning & Linnéa Lindsköld</i>	

I

LITERATURE IN COURT

1. Only a bullet through the heart can stop a lesbian vampire 27
Emmy Carell's novel *Kan Mænd undværes?* (1921)
Dag Heede
2. The case against *Lady Chatterley's Lover* 45
The 1959 Obscene Publications Act as a New Critical subtext
Claus Schatz-Jakobsen
3. The sadist housewife 65
Asta Lindgren and the Swedish business of pornographic literature in the late 1960s
Klara Arnberg
4. So bad it should be banned 89
Judging the aesthetic of comics
Linnéa Lindsköld

II

CONTINGENCIES OF CENSORSHIP

5. Risen from the ashes 113
Black magic and secret manuscripts in the parish of Burseryd-Sandvik
Åsa Ljungström

6. Some aesthetic side effects of copyright	129
<i>Kenneth Lindegren</i>	
7. 'A Romanian Solzhenitsyn'	147
Censorship and Paul Goma's <i>Ostinato</i> (1971)	
<i>Liviu Malita</i>	

III

CENSORSHIP AND POLITICS

8. Poison, literary vermin, and misguided youths	169
Descriptions of immoral reading in early twentieth-century Sweden	
<i>Kristin Johansson</i>	
9. Cultural policy as biopolitics	187
The case of Arthur Engberg	
<i>Erik Erlanson & Peter Henning</i>	
10. Protecting books from readers	209
Children in Finnish public libraries, 1930–1959	
<i>Ilona Savolainen</i>	
11. Truth, knowledge, and power	227
Censorship and censoring policies in the Swedish public library system	
<i>Jon Helgason</i>	
References	245
About the authors	262

Acknowledgements

This anthology would not have been possible without the aid of a number of people, institutions, and organizations. First of all, we would like to thank the contributors, who persisted throughout the process, conscientiously met deadlines, and not only put a great deal of effort into their own work, but also demonstrated their keen interest in the anthology as a whole.

The idea of an anthology on this topic was mooted in 2018 by the editors as part of their preliminary studies for the research project ‘The Welfare Regime of Literature: The Function of Literature in Sweden, 1937–1976’. This now ongoing project (2019–2021), financed by the Swedish Research Council, has also made the editors’ efforts in this volume possible.

Our creative and intellectually stimulating workshop in Växjö in the autumn of 2018, where much of the groundwork for the anthology was laid, was financed by Sven och Dagmar Saléns Stiftelse and the Department of Swedish, Linnaeus University. We wish to extend our gratitude to all workshop participants for their generous advice.

We would also like to thank Annika Olsson at Nordic Academic Press for her belief in the project, and Charlotte Merton for her keen and thorough copy-editing.

We wish to thank Åke Wibergs Stiftelse, Sven och Dagmar Saléns Stiftelse, Stiftelsen Längmanska kulturfonden, and Anders Karitz Stiftelse for their kind support in the publication of *Forbiddnen Literature*.

Erik Erlanson, Jon Helgason,
Peter Henning & Linnéa Lindsköld

Introduction

*Erik Erlanson, Jon Helgason,
Peter Henning & Linnéa Lindsköld*

In liberal democracies around the world, freedom of speech has been a constitutional right for more than two centuries. Nonetheless, this cornerstone of liberal democracy is currently under reconsideration, partly as an effect of the changing media market, the gradual dismantling of traditional newspapers and broadcasting companies, the increased partisanship of news sources, and the widespread dissemination of misleading or biased information by the traditional and social media. At least in theory, globalization, the Internet revolution, and other innovations in communication and distribution have enabled cultural freedom and freedom of speech to transcend the confines of the nation-state. As a consequence, however, power over content and access has in several crucial regards shifted to the private sector. Currently, a limited number of private enterprises (providers, companies, and media platforms) exercise global influence over a very large number of users.¹ Additionally, with the rise of social media, moral, political, and social outrage can easily be voiced on a large scale.

While both liberals and conservatives vehemently propagate the ideal of cultural freedom alongside other constitutional rights, increased cultural control is nevertheless being discussed and implemented. Several governments in and outside Europe are moving towards a more authoritative regulation of culture, media, and the universities. Due to the content or orientation of their work, authors and other cultural workers also experience increasing public pressure.² In other words, various forms of censorship and other mechanisms of control still impact the circulation of texts.

In light of this contemporary political landscape, it is not surprising that literature is suppressed and censored, nor that its freedom remains a topical issue. But writing has always been the subject of controversy and conflicting use. Moreover, while every kind of literature has been subject to suppression at one time or another, literature itself has, to an equal degree, also functioned as a means of regulation. This tension is reflected in the very origins of written language. Mesopotamian cuneiform, one of the world's oldest writing systems, was originally invented for the sake of bookkeeping.³ The literary medium can thus be said to occupy a dual position: on the one hand deemed necessary to control, and on the other utilized as an instrument of control.

In order to approach the question of literary censorship today, we argue that a historical perspective of this kind is essential. Secondly, we suggest that the phenomenon of literary censorship necessarily involves a number of extra-textual factors of a legal, social, and political nature. The title *Forbidden Literature* thus refers to more than individual literary works. Dealing mainly with empirical material from the Nordic countries—both fiction and non-fiction from a range of periods—the different contributions ultimately address the principles at stake in the regulatory and prohibitory practices of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The questions of literature's societal function and worth—its moral and political potential, its conditions of freedom—have often been raised in public debate.⁴ Rather than answer these questions, however, the case studies presented here chart the discursive framework in which they arise. The studies deal with censorship's past and present, in liberal democracies as well as totalitarian regimes—tracing a historical continuum wherein literature is conceived as a phenomenon in need of regulation. Asking how and why literature becomes the object of repressive measures, and how literary practices are shaped in relation to various mechanisms of regulation, the contributions provide a prismatic perspective on the complex relationship between literature and censorship.

Freedom of speech, an operationally effective fiction

Before the invention of the printing press in the 1430s, writing was in practice reserved exclusively to the social and religious elites.⁵ Since, in most of Europe, the institutional apparatus of the Church largely coincided with the production and distribution of knowledge, the control of what was written and circulated could be upheld with relative ease.⁶ The Gutenberg revolution, however, entailed a decisive and irrevocable transformation of the material and historical conditions for writing, which also profoundly impacted the history of censorship.

Perhaps most importantly, the new media landscape coincided with a religious reform process and helped to shape its course. With the Reformation, religion became even further intertwined with politics, making nonconformity and heresy ‘virtually indistinguishable from sedition and treason.’⁷ Simultaneously, this development prompted large parts of Europe to impose laws, mechanisms, and institutions of censorship.⁸ The 1559 *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, a list of publications deemed heretical according to Roman Catholic doctrine, was one notorious response to the invention of the printing press.⁹ In time, regulatory mechanisms would similarly be implemented in response to the invention of the telegraph, telephone, photograph, film, radio, television, fax, and of course the Internet. All these innovations have facilitated the production of and access to knowledge, but each technological advance has also made new practices of censorship and control possible, thus highlighting what Nicola Moore terms the ‘interdependence of modernity and cultural regulation.’¹⁰

Seen against this background, it is not a coincidence that questions regarding individual freedoms (such as the freedom of speech) became increasingly pressing with the advent of print capitalism, the rise of middle-class literacy, the formalization of linguistic norms, and the transformation of writing into a proper mass medium—all culminating in the concerns of the Enlightenment project.¹¹ Outlining a number of central issues concerning censorship and

the Enlightenment, Mogens Lærke concludes that the concept of free speech was far from uncontroversial among the movement's thinkers.¹² In fact, the modern understanding of free speech and cultural freedom rests upon a notion of 'tolerance' that was embraced only by the so-called 'radical Enlightenment'.¹³ Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670) is a poignant example, providing an influential interpretation of free speech and tolerance opposing any kind of censorship. 'Moderate Enlightenment', on the other hand, conceived of 'toleration' as a state of peaceful interreligious co-existence that employed censorship as a natural means of securing the status quo. This explains why John Locke advocated tolerance, but at the same time excluded Catholics and atheists, since he considered both groups to be potential threats to the state's stability.¹⁴ Similar limitations on the notion of toleration can also be found in moderate Enlightenment thinkers such as Leibnitz and Voltaire.¹⁵ In time, however, a more radical notion of tolerance would emerge victorious—at least in theory. According to its statutes, any attempt to limit the freedom of expression must be condemned, thus conceiving of censorship as an 'inherently suspicious institution in any state apparatus'.¹⁶

If the radical strand of Enlightenment has set the tone of contemporary debates, the moderate notion of tolerance is the one translated into practice. While seeking to abolish the censorship apparatus of the Old Regime, already the French revolutionaries of the 1790s simultaneously promoted and experimented with new means to govern thought and language. Such a double standard, Sophia Rosenfeld concludes, would eventually prove integral to the 'modern struggle to free ideas and their expression'.¹⁷

The discrepancy between the general conception of censorship in liberal democracies and the actual regulations of the liberal state may thus, in Jürgen Habermas's words, be said to exemplify 'eine operativ wirksame Fiktion'.¹⁸ For while freedom of speech has been implemented constitutionally in liberal democracies around the world, it has never been unrestricted.¹⁹ As an operationally effective fiction, the concept of liberal cultural freedom has been

invoked as an argument both for and against repressive measures, producing active and more silent forms of censorship while shaping the form and content of literary texts—a fact clearly illustrated in the history of modern literature.²⁰

Modern literature and censorship

Many of Western literature's most celebrated works have been put on trial or in other ways been subjected to censorship and suppression. Indeed, scholars have argued that the prosecutions against Charles Baudelaire and Gustave Flaubert in the 1850s marked the beginning of literary modernity as such, or, as Pierre Bourdieu suggests, that this historical moment saw the inauguration of literature as an autonomous field.²¹ Since then, famous trials such as the ones against Baudelaire and Flaubert, or, later in the twentieth century, against Agnar Mykle's *Sangen om den røde rubin* (1956), Allen Ginsberg's 'Howl' (1956), or Bernard Noël's *Le Chateau de Cène* (1973), have continued to define literary modernity.²²

It is not incidental that the majority of these titles were written by male authors; women were often censored at the editing stage. Violette Leduc, famous for bringing erotic literature into the French mainstream, is a case in point: her descriptions of lesbian sexuality in *Ravages* (1955) were heavily censored by the French publishing house Gallimard before publication.²³ Likewise, the Swedish publisher Bonniers demanded substantial alterations to *Porten vid Johannes* (1933)—the fourth part of Swedish author Agnes von Krusenstjerna's suite about the Palen sisters—on account of its explicit lesbian content. The publishers eventually refused Krusenstjerna's manuscript.

It is apparent in retrospect that scandal and provocation—*l'outrage des bonnes mœurs*—is inseparable from the notion of modern literature. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers and poets have more often than not positioned themselves in opposition to the prevalent moral and aesthetic values of society. Foucault's idea that the possibility of transgression, inherent to any act of writing,

increasingly attained 'the form of an imperative' at the end of the eighteenth century, underscores this fact.²⁴ For a writer to be modern, he or she must in one way or another generate a scandal. Arthur Rimbaud's famous dictum 'One must be absolutely modern' has essentially come to signify 'One must absolutely transgress.'

This relationship between modern literature and the law has often been narrated as the struggles of a heroic vanguard, seeking to free society from bourgeois bigotry and double standards, advocating the right to speak one's mind and be whatever one wants. However, recent studies on the subject have proposed a more complex account.²⁵ The 'constituent' approach to censorship outlined by Sue Curry Jansen has also made it possible to rethink the strict opposition between modern literature and the repressive forces regulating it on a more comprehensive level. Jansen focuses on the forms of censorship that liberal political theory typically ignores or denies, arguing that 'in all societies the powerful invoke censorship to create, secure, and maintain their control over the power to name'. Furthermore, she views this 'constituent or existential censorship' as a feature of all enduring human communities.²⁶ Although liberal democracies adhere to the rhetoric of free speech, they also exercise a form of power that governs all actions and expressions, thus making traditional forms of textual censorship superfluous.²⁷

The distinction between constituent censorship and methods of literary regulation such as prepublication censorship entails a shift from one analytical level to another, of course. As Judith Butler argues, censorship has often been conceived as an action performed by one subject upon another in order to silence his or her voice. In such cases, power is understood as a force possessed by certain institutions or individuals, imposed on other subjects.²⁸ Adopting a Foucauldian understanding of power, the 'constituent' approach instead proposes that censorship should be understood as a 'structural necessity': 'an economy of choice governed by principles of selection and regulation; internalised through language, and consequently present in every utterance.'²⁹ According to this line of reasoning, the dichotomy between censorship and freedom

is misconceived from the start. ‘To be for or against censorship as such’ is, as Michael Holquist famously states, ‘to assume a freedom that no one has. Censorship *is*. One can only discriminate among its more and less repressive effects.’³⁰ The question, then, is not so much whether literature is suppressed or not, but what discursive and material conditions govern and regulate it.

There is, however, a flipside to the understanding of censorship as an unavoidable dynamic of power in society. Throughout history, censorship has simultaneously served to underscore and to create an interest in the very thing it seeks to repress.³¹ Tacitus understood this when considering the censorial measures put in place by Emperor Nero.³² In his plea for the abolition of censorship, Diderot observed the same mechanisms. To his mind, even texts opposing true religion, good customs, and the government should be allowed to circulate, since any censorial restraint would only serve to popularize them.³³ Examples from British modernism provide further illustrations of this point. As recent studies have argued, the relationship between modernist literature and censorship cannot be conceived of simply as acts of suppression carried out on various autonomous practices. Instead, Celia Marshik suggests that literature’s form and content is always shaped dialectically in relation to its persecutors. Writers such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce developed their distinct styles because of the demands of the social purity movements and the legal restrictions on obscenity at the turn of the last century. In fact, modernism on the whole ‘owes many of its trademark aesthetic qualities—such as self-reflexivity, fragmentation, and indirection’ to a ‘climate of censorship.’³⁴ Marshik’s argument may thus be said to exemplify a general point, namely that social forces seeking to control literature often end up producing the literature they seek to repress.³⁵

Towards an operative understanding of censorship

As a transdisciplinary field of scholarly inquiry, the study of acts and mechanisms of censorship serves to highlight the intersections and power relations between (state) authority, legal system, citizen, author, and reader. However, it would be a mistake to univocally correlate censorship with totalitarianism.³⁶ Views on censorship do not correspond to a set of fixed political positions.³⁷ Understood as a control mechanism in the term's broader sense, the practice of censorship might rather be seen as an unavoidable—and in a specific sense, productive—aspect of any hierarchy, be it democratic or totalitarian.³⁸

In response to this broad conception of censorship, Beate Müller has pointed out the risks 'of equating very different forms of control by confusing censorship with social norms affecting and controlling communication.'³⁹ In particular, she advocates a strict division between 'censorship' and 'exclusion', reserving the former term for cases of 'authoritarian intervention by a third party into an act of communication between the sender of a message (the author) and its receiver (the reader)'.⁴⁰ Analytically, Müller argues, it is more productive to separate various instances of discourse regulation—'censorship, self-regulation, canon formation, and social control—than it is to level them.'⁴¹ In a similar vein, Robert Darnton underscores the importance of distinguishing between different kinds of regulation, concluding that if 'the concept of censorship is extended to everything, it means nothing.'⁴² Negotiating a way forward between these positions, Helen Freshwater defines censorship on the basis of an ethical pluralism. 'To suggest', she declares, that a certain experience of repression does not qualify as censorship because it 'does not correspond to a predefined category would represent an untenable reinscription of the original act of exclusion.'⁴³ Hence, recognizing censorship's diversity would not necessarily lead to a conflation of 'extreme violations of human rights with the refusal of grant money, or the criticism of a reviewer'.⁴⁴ Rather, Freshwater insists on the necessary contextualization of censorship. 'Censorious

events', she proposes, 'should be analysed with critical emphasis upon their socio-historical specificity', foregrounding 'the differences between different types of censorship and the decisions taken by numerous censorious agencies, as well as their interaction'.⁴⁵

While not adhering to a single definition of censorship, the present anthology—adopting a number of theoretical and methodological approaches—does insist on the 'time and site-specific' nature of literary regulation.⁴⁶ In this regard, Freshwater, Darnton, and Müller clearly share common ground.⁴⁷ Taking stock of literature's historical role and societal legitimacy, the contributions thus probe the continuum between more restrictive and more inclusive notions of literary censorship. The case studies illustrate a continual dialectic between literature and censorship, focusing on the production of meaning inherent to this process. If the effects of censorship continue to impact on our understanding of literature, determined scholarly effort is needed in order to disentangle and confront the discursive logic of literary regulation, past and present.

The thematic sections of the anthology

The present book is divided into three overlapping thematic sections. The first, 'Literature in Court', deals with distinctions between art and pornography, moral and immoral, truth and fantasy. The principal question is not how these categories should be defined, but what happens to texts and their function when they migrate from one discursive field to another. The contributions by Heede, Schatz-Jakobsen, Arnberg, and Lindsköld all take as their starting point the most iconic scene of censorship: the law court. All four also pay special attention to the interpretive disputes arising in this context, and in particular the attempts to define the boundaries of literary or artistic work. As the studies demonstrate, a court trial should be seen as a historically important locus for aesthetic interpretation and definition.

Heede investigates the history of queer Danish literature and

its first erotic lesbian novel, Emmy Carell's *Kan Mænd undværes?* (1921). This bestseller, deemed immoral by the Danish courts, is juxtaposed against the author's later, supposedly harmless, production. Comparing Carell's debut with her subsequent work, Heede's study sheds light on the often arbitrarily drawn line between moral and immoral literature.

Schatz-Jakobsen's focus is the trial of D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), a significant case in the history of English literature. The study provides an exemplification of Holquist's dictum, namely, that censorship necessarily draws attention to 'that which it denies,' willingly or not, and associates itself 'with the archaeological praxis of reading between the lines.'⁴⁸ Consequently, the courtroom in Schatz-Jakobsen's case is revealed as a privileged space for attentive reading that may be seen as an application of the principles of New Criticism.

Arnberg analyses the prosecution of two pornographic novels in 1967, authored by a young Swedish housewife. The trial centred on the judicial limits of obscenity, but as the study shows, it also interpreted gender and desire in relation to the sadistic content of the books. Moreover, the courtroom in Arnberg's case formed a scene where pornographic stereotypes were themselves enacted—in turn impacting on the public understanding of the porn trade.⁴⁹

Lindsköld studies the trial of the Swedish comic magazine *Pox* and its publisher Horst Schröder in 1989. Charged with the unlawful depiction of sexual violence, the quality of the comics on trial became a matter of judicial importance, resulting in an extensive aesthetic and narrative analysis. The Swedish infrastructure of art is generally regulated indirectly, without explicit judgements upon taste being passed by politicians or civil servants. In the trial against Schröder, however, the courtroom made an authoritative definition of aesthetic quality possible in regard to a new art form: the adult comic.

The second section of the anthology, 'Contingencies of Censorship,' explores the unforeseen consequences of regulation and suppression in regard to the practice, production, and circulation

of literature. The three case studies utilize widely different material, but all of them provide perspectives on the productive side effects of censorship and other regulative mechanisms. As they show, the suppression of literature can give birth to new literary devices and modes of circulation.

Ljungström charts the effects of an act of self-censorship in 1774. A book describing local superstitions was condemned by the Church, whereupon the clergyman Johannes Gasslander burnt all available copies of the book, which he had written with his father. As Ljungström shows, however, this dramatic event only fuelled rumours about the Gasslander family and their dealings with sorcery—eventually leading to the discovery of a number of magic manuscripts hidden in their library. While these texts in turn warranted further acts of censorship, they also gave rise to the narrative and scholarly interest detailed in the study.

Lindegren's investigation highlights the productive side effects of recent developments in intellectual property rights—furthermore actualizing the phenomenon of authorized and unauthorized literary sequels. As Lindegren argues, more restrictive copyright laws have in fact had a substantial, and aesthetically fruitful, impact on the relation between authorship and ownership.

Malita's case study details the fate of Romanian author Paul Goma in relation to the official censor under the communist regime in the 1960s and 1970s. Persecuted, and for a period imprisoned, Goma's literary career nonetheless does not fit into a simple scheme of repressive cause and effect. Malita instead shows how literary suppression in Goma's case was turned into cultural capital in the European literary market. Spurred by the prospect of foreign publication, Goma abruptly ended his cooperation with the regime, only to push the limits of political decorum in an increasingly agitated back and forth with the Romanian censors.

The third and final section, 'Censorship and Politics,' concerns the power of literature, and the way it has been governed. While the making of quality literature, fiction and non-fiction, and the practice of reading it, is often said to make people's lives better, the

same logic suggests that inferior forms of literature may instead be harmful. What does the threat of bad literature, or an erroneous account of historical events, entail? And what does it do to the idea of literature and cultural freedom?

The studies by Johansson, Erlanson and Henning, Savolainen, and Helgason centre not on the act of forbidding, but on regulation as a tool for societal reform or control in twentieth- and twenty-first-century Sweden and Finland. Rather than single out specific examples, the four investigations discuss tendencies in the discourse of reading, writing, and mediating literature in the emerging welfare state—and its afterlife.

Johansson analyses the printed output of the Swedish Association for Moral Culture, an organization formed in 1909 to combat the alleged decay of Swedish cultural life. Through a study of their militarist, pathologizing rhetoric, Johansson demonstrates how the question of censorship was rendered as a mission of civilizing import for the association, and that the radical measures conceived of by the association corresponded to an equally strong belief in the affective power of literature and art.

Erlanson and Henning in turn outline the influential political thinking of Arthur Engberg, the Swedish Minister of Church, Education, and Cultural Affairs in the 1930s. Engberg's ambition to regulate literature, they argue, was not directed at the artistic product so much as the human material that produced it. Engberg's 'art of governing' is thus shown to have operated at the nexus of material and spiritual, natural and cultural, biological and political—suggesting, in turn, that Engberg's notion of 'cultural politics' might indeed be understood as a form of biopolitics.

Savolainen's study focuses on the clash between the radical and emancipatory ideals of the children's library and its rules of conduct in the early Finnish welfare state. More specifically, Savolainen's contribution deals with childhood recollections of libraries between 1930 and 1959, outlining a phenomenology of power in the eyes, ears, and hands of a marginalized audience forced to balance freedom and discipline.

Helgason's contribution, finally, examines the indirect suppression of literature by public libraries, studying a number of rulings by the Swedish Office of Parliamentary Ombudsman. This particular office has the mandate to act independent of the executive, ensuring that public authorities and their staff comply with the relevant laws and statutes. Helgason focuses on a number of contemporary cases where city libraries, on what proved to be insufficient grounds, refused to acquire certain provocative works of non-fiction. This study thus highlights the increasingly frequent conflicts between public cultural policies and constitutional principles such as the freedom of opinion and expression.

Notes

- 1 Van Dijck et al. 2018; Zuboff 2019.
- 2 Recent reports reveal that several authors in Sweden, for example, the country ranked number four in the *World Press Freedom Index* (2020), have experienced threats or abuse from individuals (particularly authors who are outspokenly critical of society or have a non-Swedish background). See Reporters without Borders 2020 (<https://rsf.org/en/ranking>); Myndigheten för kulturanalys 2016a, 2016b.
- 3 Bottéro 1992, 70.
- 4 See, for example, Johansson's contribution in this volume on the supposed dangers posed by immoral literature in twentieth-century Sweden.
- 5 See Burke 1978, *passim*; Houston 1983, 269; Ong 2002, 91–2.
- 6 However, note the systematic violence against followers of conflicting systems of knowledge; see Moore 2007.
- 7 Levy 1985, 5.
- 8 Lærke 2009, 3.
- 9 Caravale 2011, 71–2.
- 10 Moore 2016.
- 11 Helgason 2010, 515–27; see also Anderson 2006.
- 12 Lærke's argument continues the poststructuralist questioning of the idea that the Enlightenment was a starting point for a progressive, humanist conception of modernity; see also Rosenfeld 2001, 117–145.
- 13 Lærke 2009, 7, n. 14 *et passim* offers an excellent overview of publications on censorship in the Enlightenment.
- 14 Lærke 2009, 5, 155–78 at 159; Israel 2009, 63. Locke's views can also be juxtaposed with his contemporary Thomas Hobbes, who believed unfettered freedom of speech was likely to produce civil discord (Parkin 2015, 293–317).

- 15 Israel 2009.
- 16 Lærke 2009, 6.
- 17 Rosenfeld, 145; see also Erlanson & Henning elsewhere in this volume for an analysis of a similar problematic in the burgeoning Swedish welfare state.
- 18 Habermas 1973, 258. Habermas's term, 'operationally effective fiction,' has been used in a variety of contexts; originally, however, it refers to a form of ideal, which, despite being fictitious, nonetheless determines or establishes a pattern of thought about certain phenomena.
- 19 See Helgason's contribution in this volume for an analysis of recent examples from public libraries in Sweden. Savolainen's contribution deals with a related issue, highlighting the question of age-based regulations in a library context.
- 20 See Lindegren's contribution in this volume for an example of how copyright—a legally sanctioned restriction on freedom of speech—enables new literary devices and engenders new literary genres and phenomena.
- 21 Bourdieu 1996.
- 22 See also Heede, Schatz-Jakobsen, Arnberg, and Lindsköld in this volume for literature tried in court.
- 23 Locey 2002, 65; see also Brioude 2007, 103.
- 24 Foucault 1998, 212.
- 25 See, for example, De Grazia 1993; Fellion & Inglis 2017.
- 26 Jansen 1991, 7–8 who also makes a distinction between 'regulative censorship' (book bans, enforced controls on publishers, persecution of authors and publishers, legal repression) and 'constituent censorship'.
- 27 *Ibid.* 7–8.
- 28 Butler 1998, 247.
- 29 Freshwater 2004, 231.
- 30 Holquist 1994, 16.
- 31 Ljungström in this volume maps how one such repressed artefact continues to entice interest and circulate; Malita in this volume considers the relationship between state censorship and literary fame.
- 32 Moore 2016, 6.
- 33 Duflo 2009, 125.
- 34 Marshik 2006, 6; see also Sapiro 2011 for a similar perspective on the history of French literature.
- 35 See Heede and Malita in this volume, who both consider authors navigating different climates of censorship.
- 36 See Moore 2016.
- 37 See Burt 1994, xii–xiii.
- 38 See Stavans & Albin 2008, 128.
- 39 Müller 2004, 9.
- 40 *Ibid.* 11.
- 41 *Ibid.* 12.

INTRODUCTION

- 42 Darnton 2014, 235.
- 43 Freshwater 2004, 241.
- 44 Ibid. 242.
- 45 Ibid. 242.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 See, for example, Darnton 2014, 235 insisting on the specificity of the 'nature of literature' in different 'cultural systems'; see also Müller 2004, 14 on 'reflecting specific historical circumstances'.
- 48 Holquist 1994, 15.
- 49 See Sigel 2011, 67–71.

PART I

LITERATURE IN COURT

Only a bullet through the heart can stop a lesbian vampire

Emmy Carell's novel *Kan Mænd undværes?* (1921)

Dag Heede

This study investigates a forgotten confessional novel *Kan Mænd undværes?* ('Can One do without Men?') from 1921, which contains some of the first depictions of lesbian sexuality, and is thus one of the earliest cases to exemplify the conflict between morality, law, and lesbianism in twentieth-century Denmark. A chapter in the yet unwritten history of Danish homosexual and lesbian literature, it also documents the discourses of female same-sex desire in the interwar period.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the complex concept of same-sex relations in Western Europe moved from the Church to the law and to science. Doctors, scientists, and lawyers gradually replaced priests as the authorities on (homo)sexuality, but from the beginning the modern homosexual has inhabited an ambiguous, precarious, and fluid position between moral and religious condemnation and legal semi-protection.¹

The modern figure of the homosexual that gradually developed during the latter half of the nineteenth century, with Berlin as its birthplace, inherited some of the ecclesiastic condemnations of sodomy, but already in the early twentieth century it was considered an enlightened, civilized stance in many Western European countries not to interfere legally in what discreet, consenting adults did

in the privacy of their own homes.² The focus was almost entirely on men; there was serious debate whether women had desire and sexuality at all. In the UK female homosexuality was considered non-existent, a belief that was initiated by Queen Victoria, who refused any talk about criminalizing sex between women, as it was seen as an impossibility.

In the Nordic countries, only Finland and Sweden had laws against female homosexuality, and in Denmark and Norway sexuality between adult, consenting males had in reality been decriminalized before the First World War, although the laws were not explicitly rewritten until the 1930s.³ After the first large-scale public scandals in Denmark and Sweden in the first decade of the twentieth century, police and lawmakers decided not to interfere in private, adult, non-commercial same-sex exchanges. Instead, the focus was on the young, prostitution (especially underage sex workers and soldiers), and sex in public.

In the political and public debates on homosexuality, it was not only journalists, politicians, moralists, doctors, and lawyers who intervened, but also writers and playwrights.⁴ The first decade of the last century in particular saw the publication of a number of novels and plays depicting homosexuality in Denmark and Sweden (and to a lesser degree Finland and, somewhat later, Norway).⁵ Again, the focus was almost entirely on men. Thus, a literary history of homosexuality cannot be constructed without paying due attention to such contextual factors as the law, sexual politics, and censorship. To depict homosexuality without explicitly, unambiguously condemning it was to play with fire. Yet many writers and playwrights were drawn to the subject. Transgressing or at least questioning boundaries was, of course, an inherent characteristic of modernist literature in general, and both heterosexual and homosexual writers treated this titillating topic.⁶

From the very beginning, Danish homosexual literature had been in conflict with the law. The critic and writer Clemens Petersen (1834–1918) had to flee to the US after a homosexual affair in 1869, and in 1889 the young writer Joakim Reinhard (1858–1925)

followed in his footsteps. The author of conservative patriotic plays and poems Martin Kok (1850–1942) was involved in a homosexual scandal in 1888 and had to stop writing in his own name, but the first widely known homosexual person in the Nordic countries was without a doubt the Danish writer and journalist Herman Bang (1857–1912).

From the start Bang met with censorship when he published his first novel *Haabløse Slægter* (1880, *Hopeless Generations*), which was declared pornography that same year.⁷ Although it contains no explicit accounts of homosexuality, it has cross-generational sex scenes between a young effeminate man and a middle-aged, demonized woman and scenes in a brothel, while the weak, degenerate, gender-nonconforming protagonist William Høg does not die at the end of the novel, and thus challenges the norms of both heteronormativity and heteronarrativity.⁸ It is telling that in the revised version of the novel that passed the Danish censors in 1884 the end was altered, this time implying that the protagonist takes his own life—his last letter now has the character of a suicide letter. Bang had learnt that in a moral depiction of a sexual deviant in literature the protagonist dies at the end.

A novel about a lesbian had been published only the year before, in 1883: Otto Martin Møller's (1860–1898) first novel *Nina: Et psykologisk Studie* ('Nina: A psychological study'), a surprisingly early example of this modern sexological category entering Danish literature.⁹ The young writer tells the story from the point of view of a young male writer, who becomes engaged to a woman who reveals she is a lesbian. Her confessions at the end of the novel anticipate her death of pneumonia, which might explain why the novel was not censored. Furthermore, the view is that of an outsider and there are no explicit sex scenes. This was also the case in the next appearance of lesbianism in Danish literature, Vilhelmine Zahl's story from 1890—'Ogsaa en Kærlighedshistorie' ('Also a love story')—although the protagonist Martha Grüner does not die at the end, but embarks on a loveless marriage. Death or marriage seems the only respectable ways to close a story about female homosexuality in literature.

The lesbian scandal novel

The first and only lesbian novel in Danish literature to be banned was a very different kind of book: an unpleasant kiss-and-tell *roman-à-clef* by an unknown writer, Emmy Carell (1887–1969). Most likely based on Carell's affair with a famous Swedish actress, her first novel had the titillating title *Kan Mænd undværes?* and rolled off the presses in 1921 in a minor publishing house, Galsters Forlag, in the remote town of Thisted in Western Jutland.¹⁰ It became an instant success, and was reprinted four times in its first year before it was confiscated by the police in January 1922 and charged with immorality. No fewer than 3,400 copies were seized. In July, Vestre Landsret (Western High Court) found it immoral and fined the publisher Johan Galster (1874–1922) 200 kroner. A fortnight later he died.¹¹

For the first time in history, Danish readers could read explicit depictions of the joys of lesbian sex. There is no doubt that the success of the novel was partly because of erotic descriptions that were shocking for the time, such as the following: 'Once your lips have sucked the sensitive parts of a female body, this woman will yearn for you, and even if she is away from you, nothing can kill the devouring yearning for your sucking lips and wonderful hands, those hands that caress until one *screams* for joy'.¹²

Its commercial success, the press coverage, and its many reprints were all factors in the authorities' intervention. The explicitness with which the protagonist expresses her carnal pleasure and physical longing for her elusive female lover, a publicly known figure, undoubtedly came as a shock for readers in 1921, who most likely consumed the book as 'Galant Litteratur' ('chivalrous literature'), a euphemism for pornography. And they could dwell on the exotic, butch figures of Nisse and Max, two sad monsters in the Swedish diva's freakish entourage. Nisse is a friend who functions as housekeeper, Max is a young groupie. Both are of course, like most other characters in the novel, unhappily in love with the actress.

A warning tale?

Carell's second book *Hugo fra Paris* ('Hugo from Paris') containing three short stories was also published in 1921 and ran to two editions in its first year.¹³ In the title story the narrator Ursula comments on her first book, which is difficult not to read as a reflection on *Kan Mænd undværes?* 'Most people buy the book out of slimy curiosity for its titillating topic. Love between women. I was a pioneer in that field in my country. No one had dared to write directly about it.'¹⁴ Both in interviews and in her second book Carell claimed that the purpose of *Kan Mænd undværes?* was completely misunderstood: it was first and foremost a warning tale. 'Few people will understand that the purpose of my book was not financial gain based on a sleazy topic. The purpose was to warn. A warning, so profound and serious, to all the many young girls and women who are secretly exposed to the same temptations.'¹⁵

Ursula shares many biographical details with Carell. She too has a three-year-old daughter called Yvonne, is a single mother devoted to her daughter, and has published a controversial, misunderstood novel about lesbian love.¹⁶ One big difference between Carell and her suffering female protagonists, however, is that, whereas the latter either commit suicide or appear to be on the verge of emotional and/or physical death, Carell lived to be 82. Unlike her fictional heroines, love, whether gay or straight, did not kill her.¹⁷

A pioneer

Kan Mænd undværes? is certainly groundbreaking in its explicit portrayal of the physical aspects of lesbian sexuality. The attraction between the two protagonists, Mrs Maja and Mrs Esther, is clearly the foundation for a relationship that displays little focus on spirituality, sympathy, shared interests, or love. Shockingly for the time, it is—almost—all about sex.¹⁸ Compared to Møller's and Zahle's earlier works, Carell is far more judgemental about lesbianism both

in her books and, particularly, in later interviews, when she called female homosexuality a ‘cancer’.¹⁹

In *Kan Mænd undværes?*, however, the attractiveness of the female body and same-sex female sexuality is never disputed. Lesbianism is depicted as a temptation and a pleasure open to any woman, and that is what makes it so dangerous. It is certainly condemned, demonized even, but this only adds to the sexualization of the concept.²⁰ At the end of the novel, Mrs Esther is still under Mrs Maja’s diabolic spell. Mrs Maja never loses her attractiveness, even after her deceitful, promiscuous, and destructive nature is exposed. The only way to put an end to her evil magic is Esther’s suggestion that Maja shoot herself—‘Oh, Maja, I think that if you had any remaining concept of honour, you would put a bullet through your heart.’²¹ As Maja seems to express no desire to end her life, the book itself appears to be Esther’s way of if not literally killing her, then at least killing her in print. *Kan Mænd undværes?* can thus be read as an attempt to drive a stake into the lesbian vampire’s heart.²²

The references to vampirism are continuous throughout the novel, both as a complement to Maja’s sexual abilities (‘You little enchanting vampire’) and as a reproach: ‘I thought, Maja had to be a vampire in order to be able to play in this way with Max, this child, who earlier on had tried to take her own life out of love for Maja.’²³ Esther several times calls Maja ‘The most wonderful vampire on earth.’²⁴

Mrs Esther, the protagonist of *Kan Mænd undværes?*, shares many traits with Carell, just like Ursula in *Hugo fra Paris*, which in many ways seems a direct chronological continuation of *Kan Mænd undværes?* Ursula and Esther appear to be the same person—Ursula being Esther three years on—and they even utter almost the same lines (*KMU* 70; *HFP* 14). The stories are never dated explicitly, but the end of the First World War is mentioned with the proclamation of the peace treaty (in June 1919). Furthermore, Esther’s daughter, Yvonne, is 10 months old—pointing to Carell’s daughter, Yvonne, who was born on 10 September 1918—while on her death 1 September Ursula leaves a 3-year-old daughter, the same age as

Yvonne Carell in September 1921.²⁵ The love affair between Esther and Maja takes place over a couple of summer months, which can credibly be dated to 1919. Esther last writes to Maja in November, so the love affair blooms in the summer months and withers away in the autumn. Like Mrs Esther, Carell had a French husband whose health deteriorated as a prisoner-of-war in Germany. None of the women live with their husbands. Mrs Esther gets a divorce during her affair with Mrs Maja, while it is unclear if Emmy and Georges Carell divorced.²⁶

After the publication of *Kan Mænd undværes?* the Danish newspaper *Ekstrabladet* speculated that the novel was a sensationalized but authentic depiction of Carell's affair with a Swedish actress who had been filming in Copenhagen in the summer of 1919. Many aspects of the text seem to support such speculations. All of Esther's letters are in Danish, all of Maja's in authentic Swedish. There is little doubt that the model for Mrs Maja was the Swedish actress Maja (Maria) Cassel (1891–1953), a beauty whose lesbianism was a well-known 'secret' at the time.²⁷ Mrs Maja, the narrator tells us, has been married for a short time, and gets a divorce when she gives birth to a son (*KMU*, 8).²⁸ Maja Cassel was married from 1914 to 1918 and again 1928 to 1940. In 1919 she would have been a 27-year-old divorcée. Esther encourages Maja to train her voice, and Cassel did have a career as an operetta singer. Cassel spent the summer of 1919 at the studios of the Swedish film company Palladiumfilm in Hellerup, north of Copenhagen filming *Skomakarprinsen* ('The shoemaker prince'), an adaption of the Ludvig Holberg's 1722 play *Jeppe paa Bierget* ('Jeppe on the Hill'). The film premiered in Copenhagen on 29 January 1920 and a month later in Sweden. The beautiful Swede's stay in the Danish capital naturally attracted media attention, and the Danish public would know who Carell was referring to in the introduction to the novel: 'The darling of the Stockholmers, the beautiful blonde Mrs Maja had arrived in Copenhagen to spend the summer filming for a large Swedish film company.'²⁹

Carell versus Cassel

The status of the letters in Carell's novel raises questions of both a philological and an ethical nature. Did Carell include actual letters from her affair with Cassel? Are all of the letters authentic, or only some, if any? Was Maja Cassel, voluntarily or involuntarily, co-author of the novel if her actual letters were part of the text? In the novel there is a scene where Esther demands her letters back and Maja holds them in her hand (36), but their fate remains unknown. It can probably never be proven if this is a work of pure fiction, an authentic documentation of a fleeting affair gone bad, or—more probable—a mixture of the two.

The text is composed of an introduction to Mrs Maja and Mrs Esther, their backgrounds and first meeting (*KMV*, 5–18), followed by eight long letters from Esther to Maja and two short letters from Maja to Esther (*KMV*, 18–33).³⁰ The dramatic turn of events when Esther discovers Maja's promiscuous nature is narrated in 'Loose diary pages in Mrs Esther's desk' ('Løse Dagblade i Fru Esthers Skrivebord'), an almost Kierkegaardian fictionalization (*KMV*, 33–52), while the rest of the text comprises only letters, the majority from Esther to Maja, but some from Maja to Esther (*KMV*, 66, 73–4, 78–80, 81–2, 83–5, 86–7). All in all, Maja is only represented by eight letters, while the majority of the text is made up of Esther's letters and excerpts from her diary. Thus, Esther's view of the affair is dominant, to say the least, with Maja defamed and chastised. The publication of the text, it seems, also has revenge as a hidden motive. Esther certainly gets the last word—but that word is 'Maja!!!' (*KMV*, 93).

Revenge or warning

Just as it is difficult to distinguish fact from fiction and biography from literature in the case of *Kan Mænd undværes?*, it is also difficult to argue that there are impenetrable borders between Carell's two books. Not only does *Hugo fra Paris* reflect on the writing and

reception of *Kan Mænd undværes?*, it reads like a chronological and thematic continuation; basically a later chapter in Emmy Carell's life. Carell's first novel ends with a fragment of Danish poet Jens Peter Jacobsen's 1875 poem, 'one pays the price for many years— Oh, Maja!!'³¹ This poem introduces the late Ursula's diary in *Hugo fra Paris*, now quoted as the first verse (out of four) (*HFP*, 8), thus bridging the two books while hinting at their common theme: unrequited love resulting in loneliness, tragedy, and untimely death.

The preface is by a friend of Ursula's, who has adopted Yvonne and promised to publish the dead woman's diary. Again, the text denies (rather unconvincingly, given its floridly romantic clichés) that it is revenge on the elusive and deceitful lover. Like *Kan Mænd undværes?* it claims to be a warning tale.

Whereas *Kan Mænd undværes?* addresses lesbian desire, *Hugo fra Paris* warns against desire in general. All three of its proto-feminist tales depict the tragic or disastrous effects of female desire under the patriarchy. Just as Maja was the villain of the first book, men are the villains of all three tragic love stories in the second. Desire seems to be the root of all evil, whether lesbian or heterosexual. And yet love is also depicted as the only real thing worth living (and dying) for. The eponymous villain of *Hugo fra Paris* actually comes from Finland, but is Swedish-speaking like Maja (the novel features short letters from him in authentic Swedish). Hugo is an attractive, cosmopolitan man, but like Maja a selfish and ruthless lover who cares little about the lives he destroys. Swedish seems the language of both love and deceit in Carell's universe.³²

A female Dorian Gray

Carell's style shares all the weaknesses and clichés of a Harlequin romance: evil characters are ugly and often fat, and good people have kindness, if not beauty, written all over their faces. Consequently, what makes Mrs Maja so threatening is exactly the fact that she is the exception to this rule, for in spite of her beauty and her attractiveness she turns out to be a dangerous, selfish, and deceitful

lover—a demon or a vampire. Appearance and reality collide. Maja's lesbian desire is invisible, unlike her two fellow sufferers Nisse and Max, whose butch appearances and attire make their perversion extremely visible and thus less of a threat. In Esther's narrative, young and old butch alike are both wholly unattractive and tragic, if not slightly comical, whereas the apparent 'femme' turns out to be a beautiful, seductive butch (*KMU*, 29).

Maja's 'dangerous' femininity, which attracts both men and women, is also her disguise. There is nothing to reveal her perversion. The parents of the 17-year-old Max, whose life is ruined because of her love for Maja, suspect nothing when their daughter brings home the Swedish actress: 'Mrs Maja's blonde feminine appearance and ladylike demeanour let us not for a moment grasp the relationship she had to our child.'³³ Esther, meanwhile, evokes one of the most famous homosexual references of the time, the evil queer protagonist of Oscar Wilde's gothic first novel from 1890: 'You are a female "Dorian Gray".'³⁴ The Wildean contrast between a beautiful facade and depraved character is, of course, enhanced by Maja's profession as an actress. Pretending to be someone else is both her profession and her nature.

Lesbian menaces

Esther states time and again that she is a normal woman, not a lesbian. She was only seduced by Maja. Although she explicitly enjoys the sex, craves it even (*KMU*, 32, 61, 63, 68, 83, 90), she expresses deep remorse as well as exhilaration. Her feelings about Maja range from worship to hatred, from homage to denigration. Nisse is not dangerous both because her lesbianism is so obvious and because it is her fate to be permanently unhappy in love. There is little risk that she will ever have physical relationships. When Nisse falls in love with Mrs Esther, the Danish woman feels no attraction whatsoever. Max, the young naïve 'child' is no threat either, as she is committed for life to a mental institution as a direct consequence of her affair with Mrs Maja. Max, though, bears some blame, since it was she

who to Maja's surprise awakened her homoerotic passion (*KMU*, 9). Homosexuality is seen as a contagious curse, passed from Max to Maja to Esther, where it stops definitively.

What saves Esther from being ruined like Max is her age, maturity, intelligence, willpower, and, most of all, her little daughter (*KMU*, 32, 51–2): 'I have probably been as much in love with you as she, but I *refused* to let myself be destroyed, because I understood, this meant destruction, and I had my little daughter to live for.'³⁵ Mothers and daughters play a large symbolic role in *Kan Mænd undværes*?³⁶ Part of Maja's attractiveness is her resemblance to Esther's mother (*KMU*, 32, 91), and both Maja and Esther are themselves young mothers, which is a constant source of worry for Esther. She sees Maja's treatment of Max as that of a destructive, perverse mother.

The real danger is Mrs Maja, who is vilified beyond humanity and recognition. And not even her monstrous lesbianism is a stable fact. She has a suspicious friendship with a Jewish millionaire who is in love with her, and towards the end of the novel she is beginning to flirt with another man. Perhaps her lesbian desire is only a phase: 'I have been to a big party, and I discovered that it amused me and that the male gender is not as disgusting as I imagined lately. Maja happy!!!!!!'³⁷

The cure

Esther in the end renounces her lesbian desire, explaining it (away) as a substitute for her husband, a way to forget her hurt pride when Georges left her (*KMU* 92). This contradicts earlier statements that the reason for her divorce was her relationship with Maja. Lesbianism hereby changes status from cause to substitute.

Maja's passion is also dangerous because of its unpredictability. Despite her ultrafeminine appearance (*KMU*, 5 *et passim*), Maja is depicted as 'the man' in bed and Esther as the 'passive', 'feminine'. So Maja's dangerousness comprises both the volatile and the versatile nature of desire: she can be both 'man' and 'woman' in bed, she is attracted to both sexes, and everyone is attracted to her (*KMU*,

8). Her appetites apparently have no limit. Nisse seems doomed to a life of solitude, servitude, and unrequited love; Max is institutionalized for life; Esther will never again love a woman: but Maja leaves the text as unrestrained and uninhibited as she entered it. She is totally unfit as a mother, a lover, and a wife. Suicide is the only moral option for this danger to society.

The nature of lesbian desire seems mysterious, to say the least. Nisse and Max are sad embodiments of perversity, but in Maja's and Esther's case it seems more like a volatile addiction or a contagious disease that they might recover from. Where the former are depicted as static, both Maja's and Esther's desires are dynamic.³⁸ Esther clearly portrays herself not as a pervert or a sexual outcast: her desire derives only from Maja and is only for Maja. Ursula elaborates on this: 'Even though the woman, who I wrote about, was "the only woman in my life", I knew people would think that I was a perverse individual; few would understand that a person like me only has such a feeling once in her life.'³⁹

Lesbian vaccination

Both Esther at the end of the novel and Ursula present themselves as being as far from lesbianism as imaginable, exactly because they have encountered it (once). This precludes them from ever doing it again. Both texts contain an element of lesbian exorcism, at its most unsuccessful and unconvincing in *Kan Mænd undværes?*, where there is no erotic alternative to Maja. The chaste love of the baby daughter is the only salvation, just as the dead mother and Jesus Christ are called on to guide Esther in her crisis (*KMU*, 77). *Hugo fra Paris* can in this respect be read as a way to repair the damage done by the first novel.

Paradoxically, both Esther and Ursula's falling in love with a woman function as a kind of vaccination against homosexuality. They are now more heterosexual than women with no experience of homosexuality. Thus, *Kan Mænd undværes?* can be read as a warning tale that can bring other heterosexual women to the same

level of knowledge as Esther and Ursula, but without the traumatic (and also exhilarating) experience that an affair with a ‘vampire’ entails. Once bitten, twice shy.

The story about Ursula’s past that potentially questions her femininity and heterosexuality is followed by a ‘diagnosis’ by the male expert, Hugo: ‘You not only characterized me, but you also found that in me everything was exactly how it should be, that I, when I was one-on-one with a man, was the most womanly woman you had ever met.’⁴⁰ Hugo functions not only as the doctor who can exorcise the effects of gender trouble caused by the lesbian vampire, he is also the Crown witness who attests to her normality and femininity. The scene, of course, ends with Hugo and Ursula’s first, fateful and passionate lovemaking. But it is a love that is just as fatal as Maja’s. The difference is that at this point the woman is financially bankrupt and Hugo refuses to help. Whereas Esther determined to live because of her young daughter, Ursula decides to commit suicide because of her child, knowing that her insurance will secure Yvonne’s future.

A legal riddle

Both *Kan Mænd undværes?* and *Hugo fra Paris* are lamentations and literary (if not literal) discussions of the price of love. Despite their heteronormative frames and explicitly homophobic overtones, they contain powerful feminist messages, in the one case a passionate and criminally explicit description of the joys of lesbian sex (and a demonization of the heterosexual institution of marriage), in the other a devastating critique of men’s hypocrisy and the perilous situation of women who invest in sexuality and love.

Therefore, like Carell, we may well wonder why her second book was not banned as well: ‘That my book *Hugo fra Paris*, which was published shortly after, was not forbidden too is a riddle to me, but humans and their moral guardians sometimes play a rather fascinating game with one another.’⁴¹ One answer could be that the fallen women either die or end unhappily. And perhaps it is

easier to accept the survival of selfish male womanizers than that of a lesbian vampire.

One could speculate that the true provocation of *Kan Mænd undværes?* is the fact that not only is the lesbian demon—and with her same-sex female desire—not sufficiently exorcised from the text—the protagonist keeps yearning for her till the very end—but she also survives and thrives, displaying no intention of ending her own life nor any kind of remorse for the victims of her desire. If Emmy Carell could not put a stop to Mrs Maja and her lesbian menace, at least the Danish authorities could try to stop the spread of her story.

Notes

- 1 There are significant variations across Northern Europe. The UK had harsh laws forbidding any sex between men; in Germany homosexuality was outlawed under the (in)famous §175, which was upheld until the 1960s (and not abolished until 1994); most Nordic countries officially decriminalized homosexuality in the 1930s, and though, as von Rosen 1993 points out, homosexual acts between consenting adults were de facto decriminalized around 1900, the law still remained (see Rydström 2007).
- 2 Foucault 1976, 59.
- 3 von Rosen 1993, 679–780; see also Rydström 2007.
- 4 Nyegaard 2018; von Rosen 1993, 679–780; Eman 1999.
- 5 For Denmark, Heede 2017; for Sweden, Borgström 2016.
- 6 See also the introduction to this volume for scandal and provocation as defining features of modern literature.
- 7 It is important to stress that pornography is not just an object, a text, or an image but a cultural war zone, a discussion, an argument, and an area of regulation. See Thing 1999.
- 8 See Heede 2017.
- 9 Radclyffe Hall's famous novel *The Well of Loneliness* from 1928 is often characterized as the world's first lesbian novel. Møller's book preceded it by 45 years. Hall's novel was confiscated in the UK and tried for obscenity. A number of prominent writers, among them Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West, protested at the verdict. Hall's novel was translated into Danish in 1929.
- 10 Carell 1921a; Carell 1924 said that the title was the publisher's suggestion, and that she found it sensationalist and tasteless and would have preferred 'Typer' ('Types'). Galster's publishing house lasted only one year but published eleven

books, including a volume of poetry by Galster himself, *Ral* (*Beach pebbles*). Other publications included poetry by neighbours and friends such as the writer Knuth Becker (1891–1974) and a memoir by Ira Uchtomsky, a Russian refugee who had ended up in Thisted with her husband. Vladimir Uchtomsky tried to commit suicide when rumours of their supposed criminal background reached the Danish police from Berlin and they were called in for questioning, which Galster, who was also a lawyer, filed a formal complaint about. The incident, known as the ‘Uchtomsky Affair’, received massive publicity. Ira Uchtomsky’s memoir, *Sandheden om Fyrstinde Uchtomsky* (‘The Truth about Countess Uchtomsky’), written in Danish, a language Ira quickly mastered, claimed that she was the daughter of a Russian nobleman. In Carell 1924, she stated that Galster’s encounter with the Danish police because of the Uchtomsky Affair was instrumental in the case against her book, and she regretted choosing the Jutland publisher.

- 11 Carell’s dramatic claim that he had poisoned himself cannot be substantiated; see Sørensen 2008.
- 12 *Kan Mænd undværes?* (hereafter *KMU*), 90: ‘Naar Dine Læber først har suget et Kvindelegemes følsomme Steder, længes den Kvinde imod Dig, og er hun end borte fra Dig, intet kan døde den fortærende Længsel efter Dine sugende Læber og vidunderlige Hænder, de Hænder, der kærtegner, indtil man *skriger* af Fryd.’ All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
- 13 Sørensen 2008, 161 mistakenly claims that *Hugo fra Paris* was Carell’s first book, and this error is reproduced in other sources (for example, *Dansk Bibliografisk Leksikon*, s.v. ‘Carell, Emmy’). Both books appeared in 1921, but *Hugo fra Paris* (hereafter *HFP*), 13–14 explicitly refers to the reception of *Kan Mænd undværes?*
- 14 *HFP*, 13: ‘De fleste køber Bogen af slimet Nysgerrighed for dens pikante Emne. Elskov mellem Kvinder. Jeg var jo Banebryder paa det Felt i mit Land. Ingen havde vovet at skrive lige ud om det.’ Neither Møller’s novel nor Zahle’s story had a wide reception so Carell is unlikely to have known these texts.
- 15 *HFP*, 14: ‘De færreste vil forstaa, at Hensigten med min Bog var ikke en pekuniær Succes paa et slibrigt Emne. Hensigten var en Advarsel. En Advarsel, saa dyb og alvorlig, til alle de mange unge Piger og Kvinder, der i al Hemmelighed udsættes for de samme Fristelser.’ See also Carell 1924.
- 16 See *HFP*, 8 and Carell 1924. Official information on Carell is found in the police statement appended to the copy of *Kan Mænd undværes?* in the Danish Royal Library, dated 27 February 1953. In 1938 Carell changed her name to Darlet and lived the rest of her life in Copenhagen.
- 17 See also the contributions of Schatz-Jakobsen, Arnberg, and Lindsköld in this volume, on disputing the impact of literary texts.
- 18 In the same shocking vein Maja dismisses the young Max because sexually she turned out to be ‘a big disappointment’, see *KMU*, 44.

- 19 Carell 1924.
- 20 Foucault's remarks on the infinite spirals of prohibition and desire spring to mind, see Foucault 1976, 67.
- 21 *KMU*, 91: 'Aa, Maja, jeg synes, at dersom Du ejede et Æresbegreb tilbage, skød Du Dig en Kugle gennem Hjertet.'
- 22 The vampire theme is underlined in Esther's reference (*KMU*, 72) to the recent Swedish novel *Vampyrer* (1918) by Algot Sandberg, which was plainly a literary model for *Kan Mænd undværes?* Although lacking Sandberg's masterful and captivating style, the story of Esther and Maja reads as a fourth contribution to Sandberg's three chapters, which each contain the story of an innocent, healthy woman who because of unfortunate circumstances is seduced and corrupted by a treacherous, dangerous lesbian. The first victim is a defenceless, inexperienced orphaned girl who comes to the big city and ends taking her own life; the second, an abandoned embittered wife and mother who is separated from her spendthrift husband; the third, a retired, disillusioned actress. Sandberg's novel is a warning tale about the hidden dangers of lesbianism in modern society, a powerful tool of antihomosexual propaganda.
- 23 *KMU*, 29: 'Du lille bedaarende Vampyr'; *KMU*, 91: 'Jeg syntes, Maja maatte være en Vampyr for at kunde lege saaledes med Max, dette Barn, der tidligere havde forsøgt at berøve sig Livet af Kærlighed til Maja.'
- 24 *KMU*, 83 and 89: 'Jordens dejligste Vampyr'. The trope of the lesbian vampire was common in nineteenth-century gothic literature since its introduction in 1872 in Joseph Sheridan la Fanu's novella *Carmilla*, and it survives in a great deal of twentieth- and twenty-first-century popular culture.
- 25 *KMU*, Police report.
- 26 The police report in the Royal Library's copy of *Kan Mænd undværes?* mentions that Lieutenant Carell was thought to have died in Aarhus in 1922.
- 27 Lena Einhorn's novel about Greta Garbo (*Blekingegatan* 32, 2014) quotes a letter from Garbo to her actress friend Mimi Pollak referring to her infatuation with 'Mrs Maja', a woman who drove men crazy because they knew she was unobtainable. I wish to thank Professor Eva Borgström of the University of Gothenburg for helping me identify Mrs Maja.
- 28 Both Carell and Cassel were new mothers in 1919 having had a baby girl and baby boy respectively in 1918, just like Esther and Maja. Maja's son is with her mother in Stockholm.
- 29 *KMU*, 5: 'Stockholmernes Kælebarn, den smukke blonde Fru Maja, var kommet til København for at filme Sommeren igennem hos et større svensk Filmsselskab.'
- 30 Actually there are three letters from Maja, because before their affair Maja writes Esther a love letter that Esther subsequently tears up (*KMU*, 17). The letter is only quoted in parts and in Danish, perhaps because the Swedish original is no longer in existence.
- 31 *KMU*, 93: 'Det bødes der for i lange Aar'—aa Maja!!!'

- 32 See Arnberg's and Helgason's contributions in this volume on the significance of the distinction between fiction and non-fiction.
- 33 *KMU*, 88: 'Fru Majas blonde kvindelige Ydre og dameagtige Optræden lod os ikke et Øjeblik ane, I hvilket Forhold hun stod til vort Barn.'
- 34 *KMU*, 89: 'Du er en kvindelig 'Dorian Gray.' Oscar Wilde served two years in prison for homosexual acts in 1895 in a cause célèbre that also involved *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). *Hugo fra Paris* has references to Herman Bang.
- 35 *KMU*, 90: 'Jeg har sikkert været ligesaa forelsket i Dig som hun, men jeg *vilde ikke* ødelægges, thi jeg forstod, det betød Ødelæggelse, og jeg havde min lille Datter at leve for.'
- 36 The mother is a central figure in lesbian fiction in general (Björklund 2014).
- 37 *KMU*, 85: 'Har varit på en stor festlighet och upptäckte, att det roade mig, samt att det manliga släktet ej var så vedervärdigt, jag på senare tider inbillat mig. Maja glad!!!!!!'
- 38 Nisse and Max both embody the strange, 'frozen' character of the classic pervert in Foucault's description (1976, 61).
- 39 *HFP*, 14: 'Endskønt den Kvinde, jeg skrev om, var "den eneste Kvinde i mit Liv", saa vidste jeg, Mængden vilde tro, jeg var et perverst Individ; kun de færreste vilde forstaa, at en saadan Følelse har et Menneske som jeg kun een Gang i sit Liv.'
- 40 *HFP*, 12: 'Ikke alene skildrede Du mig, men Du fandt, at alt hos mig just var som det burde være, at jeg, naar jeg var paa Tomands-Haand med en Mand, var den mest kvindelige Kvinde, Du nogensinde havde mødt.'
- 41 Carell 1924: 'At min kort derpaa udgivne Bog "Hugo fra Paris" derimod ikke blev forbudt, er mig en Gaade, men Menneskene og deres sædelige Vogtere leger af og til et ret fængslende lille Puslespil med hinanden.' In the interview Carell mentioned a forthcoming English translation of an extended version of *Kan Mænd undværes?* It was not forthcoming, and it is difficult to imagine it would have passed the much stricter censorship laws in the UK. Had it happened, Carell's autobiographical novel might have predated, if not replaced, Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* as the first lesbian autobiographical novel in English.

The case against *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

The 1959 Obscene Publications Act
as a New Critical subtext

Claus Schatz-Jakobsen

Through an analysis of the trial and acquittal of D. H. Lawrence's novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928; hereafter *LCL*) on charges of obscenity, the present case study adds a further chapter to the comprehensive historical annals recording the struggle against literary censorship. What follows is not a traditional literary analysis of the novel, but a 'reading' of the court proceedings in the Old Bailey in October and November 1960, and the new legislation, the 1959 Obscene Publications Act, under which the novel was tried. For the purposes of the present study, the story of the novel (its composition, printing, publication, trial, and acquittal) counts for more than the story *in* the novel.¹ I recapitulate the circumstances of its publication in 1928, but skip the intervening quarter-century and go straight to a detailed study of the 1959 Act and the trial.

I am committed to a hermeneutic reading and explication of text, but I shall have occasion to glance at the sociological and material aspects of book publishing. As for the historical investigation and contextualization of the trial, I use two sources: John Sutherland's *Offensive Literature* (1983), whose ambition as cultural history is to investigate 'how Britain's "permissive" society has come to terms with "prohibited" books, or "offensive literature"'; and David

Bradshaw and Rachel Potter's volume *Prudes on the Prowl: Fiction and Obscenity in England, 1850 to the Present Day* (2013), which with similar ambitions covers a variety of aspects of literary censorship in the period in question.² As for the trial itself, my study is based on *The Trial of Lady Chatterley: Regina v. Penguin Books Limited*, edited by C. H. Rolph, which first came out in 1961 but was reissued in 1990 with a new foreword.³ As secretary to the Herbert Committee, under whose auspices obscenity law had been reformed, Rolph guides the reader through the trial with shrewd editorial comments, based on the official Old Bailey transcripts of *Regina v. Penguin Books Limited*—so-called because Penguin Books was on trial, not Lawrence's novel. In Rolph's words,

The D.P.P., having seen ... advertisements about the Penguin programme, told the police to buy a copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in the usual way ... However, Rubinstein, Nash & Company, solicitors to Penguin Books Ltd, forestalled this with a reminder to the police that 'publication' (in law) can be a mere giving of the book by one person to another and need entail no bookshop purchasing. Therefore, no innocent bookseller need be brought into it. The police could have what copies they needed, free, if they called round at the Penguin offices in Holborn.⁴

Inspector Monahan called on 16 August 1960 to collect twelve copies. A decision to take legal action and prosecute on suspicion of obscenity was made within days, and a summons was issued on 25 August. Thirty-two years after the novel's first publication, it was time for the British judiciary to make or break the status of Lawrence's last novel in his home country.

I would argue that the modernization of the criminal law on obscenity in Britain, which replaced the 1857 Obscene Publications Act with a synonymous Act in 1959, was not an isolated piece of legislation, nor was the trial just another week at the Old Bailey. Both the Act and the trial have been widely publicized, and should be seen in the context of changes in the conception of literature and its role

vis-à-vis the emerging welfare state in Britain and the Western world, including the spread of a new mode of literary analysis which flourished at British and American universities in the 1940s and 1950s: the New Criticism. In the latter parts of the study, I analyse the *LCL* trial with reference to the New Criticism and its guiding critical tenets.

My research question concerns the extent to which the 1959 Act's New Critical-sounding emphasis on 'the dominant effect of the work', especially as it was applied and interpreted during the trial, could be used to draw failsafe distinctions between pornography and serious literature, which will include weighing its potentialities against its limitations and shortcomings.⁵

Composition and publication history

The novel known as *LCL* (as distinct from earlier drafts) was first published privately in 1928 in 1,000 copies by a friend of Lawrence's, the Florentine bookseller Giuseppe Orioli. Having already completed two drafts of the novel, Lawrence—tuberculosis-ridden—finished a third rewriting in January 1928. The final, authoritative version came into its own as a sexually explicit book—'absolutely improper', as Lawrence said in a letter.⁶ Fearing its reception by publishers and booksellers in Britain and America, Lawrence decided to have it printed and published privately in Florence with Orioli's help to reduce production costs. In the event that publication with his regular publishers might prove possible, Lawrence expurgated two copies, but to no avail.

Indeed, all manner of difficulties beset the process. Typists balked; the Italian typesetters, who understood no English, made every conceivable typographical error; in the summer of 1928, with printing and binding complete, booksellers in Britain refused to accept the copies they had ordered, while those mailed to American subscribers were confiscated by customs officers. While not legally censored or banned by any ruling in any British court, *LCL* was still unpublishable in Lawrence's home country—'suppressed' is a more correct term for the impediments the novel faced in Britain.⁷

Without the protection of international copyright law due to its manner of publication, *LCL* could be pirated, which deprived Lawrence of a sizeable portion of the income from sales. With the help of an American bookseller in Paris, he brought out 3,000 paperbound copies to frustrate the circulation of the pirated versions. In a foreword to the 1929 Paris edition, 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', Lawrence exposed the pirates' fraud and presented his thoughts on the relationship between the sexes in the modern world, explaining why the novel had to be so explicit. Urged by British booksellers to produce an expurgated version, and tempted by the prospect of large returns, Lawrence stood firm: 'I might as well try to clip my own nose into shape with scissors. The book bleeds. And in spite of all antagonism, I put forth this novel as an honest, healthy book, necessary for us to-day.'⁸ Unexpurgated, Lawrence's healthy novelistic tonic could not be printed and sold in Britain in the 1930s or later without violating current British obscenity law (risking confiscation and destruction). What copies of the novel were available in Britain were therefore purchased abroad and smuggled into the country.

However, moral standards were loosening up in the early decades of the British welfare state, and the times were growing ripe for a revision of existing obscenity laws that dated from mid-Victorian times. While we shall now account for the revision of obscenity law in Britain in the 1950s, resulting in the 1959 Obscene Publications Act, we shall later have occasion to analyse the historical coincidence and thematic overlap of this monumental piece of legislation with a New Critical approach to literature that was emerging at universities in Britain and America in the 1940s and 1950s.

The Obscene Publications Acts

With the introduction of the first Obscene Publications Act in 1857, the publication of an 'obscene libel', which had until then been treated as a common law misdemeanour, was now included in statutory law and thus criminalized.⁹ While the new Act had failed to define

'obscenity', a definition was provided in 1868 by *Regina v. Hicklin*, in which Justice Cockburn formulated the so-called Hicklin test: 'The test of obscenity is this, whether the tendency of the matter ... is to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences, and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall.'¹⁰ Publications of any description might fall prey to this test; obviously pornographic materials as well as works of high literary value. Cockburn's ruling was 'a legal turning-point. Not only did it provide a definition of obscenity, it dismissed the intentions of the distributor as immaterial', thus marking 'the beginning of a legal crusade against the literary "obscene"'.¹¹ The Hicklin test remained the standard approach to literary obscenity cases in British and American courts well into the twentieth century—in fact, 'it was regarded as an inflexible rule of law' until around 1950.¹²

The first signs of a slackening of the inflexible Hicklin ruling came from America, where parts of James Joyce's *Ulysses* were published serially in *The Little Review* between 1918 and 1920, while Joyce was still working on the novel. Legal action was taken against the novel, which in 1921 was declared obscene and thus banned in America. However, in 1933, in a case deliberately set up to test the US ban (*United States v. One Book Called Ulysses*), Judge Woolsey gave his famous ruling that the novel could not be considered obscene when read in its entirety, thus making it available for general publication in America. In 1936, the Attorney General in London, no doubt influenced by Woolsey's ruling, decided that no action should be taken against the British publisher of *Ulysses* on the grounds of the glaring inadequacy of the definition of obscenity in the Hicklin ruling.

Though the de-censoring of *Ulysses* in America and Britain was a turning point because it allowed for the consideration of authorial intention and the dominant effect of the work in obscenity cases, no general loosening of legal strictures followed immediately. In fact, the decade following the end of the Second World War saw a massive last-ditch effort in Britain to suppress novels on grounds of obscenity. The 'Great Purge' of 1954 saw among others the prosecution of Secker & Warburg for the publication of the American

writer Stanley Kaufmann's novel, *The Philanderer*. In his opening instructions, Justice Stable urged the jury to read the novel as a whole rather than just pick out highlights, and in his summation of the case, he gave what has been hailed as 'a classic exposition of the law as it then stood', pointing out that 'although the law was the same as in 1868 the jury had not to consider the effect of publishing the book at that time but its effect on society as it is today'.¹³ The inadequacy and anachronistic nature of existing obscenity law could hardly have been made any clearer.

The largely unsuccessful purge of mainstream writers and publishers in 1954 was a blessing in disguise, since it outraged the cultural elite and led more or less directly to the formation of the Herbert Committee, formed on the initiative of the Society of Authors to reform existing obscenity law. Named for the association's chairman, Alan Herbert, the Herbert Committee consisted of publishers, printers, booksellers and authors, and was representative of many more who dealt professionally with literature and felt that in the increasingly permissive atmosphere of the early 1950s a reform was sorely needed. Long thwarted in their efforts but not discouraged, the Herbert Committee (and the parliamentary select committee which took over in 1958) continued what was to be a five-year struggle for reform, crowning their efforts with success when the resultant bill was given Royal Assent and came into force on 29 August as the 1959 Obscene Publications Act.¹⁴ The success of the compromise between 'reformers' and 'censors' has been ascribed to the Labour MP Roy Jenkins, who in October 1959 gave his version of the legislative process in the article, 'Obscenity, Censorship, and the Law.' Jenkins downplays the importance of the Act:

The extent of the advance should not be exaggerated. Most of those who promoted the bill were highly sceptical of the value of any form of censorship and ... are far from getting everything they wanted. A long process of compromise has taken place, and the result is ... improvements in the position of serious authors and reputable publishers.¹⁵

The new Act was designed to draw a legal distinction between pornography and serious literature, and provide protection for the latter under the law against charges of obscenity—neatly summed up in the full title of the Act as aiming ‘to amend the law relating to the publication of obscene matter; to provide for the protection of literature; and to strengthen the law concerning pornography.’¹⁶

Let us look at the wording of the Act and assess the extent to which it remedied defects in existing law. The new Obscene Publications Act was a brief four-page document, consisting of a mere five sections:

1. Test of obscenity;
2. Prohibition of publication of obscene matter;
3. Powers of search and seizure;
4. Defence of the public good;
5. Citation, commencement and extent.

Of these, only section 1(1) and section 4 need concern us here. Section 1(1) specifies that ‘an article shall be deemed to be obscene if its effect ... is, if taken as a whole, such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons.’¹⁷ The subordinate, ‘if taken as a whole’, is of the utmost significance here. Hall Williams treats this under his heading, ‘The dominant effect of the work.’¹⁸ As Roy Jenkins explains, ‘there can be no question in future of a jury being encouraged to decide upon the basis of certain isolated titillating passages.’¹⁹ This, as we shall see, was an effective tool in the hands of Penguin Books’ defence.

Of at least equal importance is section 4. Of its two subsections, section 4(1) specifies that a person shall not be convicted of an offence against section 2 ‘if it is proved that publication of the article in question is justified as being for the public good on the ground that it is in the interests of science, literature, art or learning, or other objects of general concern’, while section 4(2) specifies that ‘the opinion of experts as to the literary, artistic, scientific or other merits of an article may be admitted ... to establish or to negative the said ground.’²⁰ These two subsections set the scene for the *LCL*

trial by allowing experts into the witness stand (for which there had been no provision in the 1857 Act) to testify to the literary merits of the publication. Section 4 was thus a decisive factor in both proceedings in court and the not guilty verdict, and indeed for all later legislation concerning obscenity and literary censorship in Britain. Its significance is hard to overestimate.²¹

Possibly without its authors realizing it, the new Act was also a shining example of elementary New Critical pedagogical principles for the technique of 'close reading' of literary texts. Its principles were being propagated by British and American university lecturers in literature: professionalization (lending an air of scientifically objective 'method'); and making the reading and interpretation of difficult, serious works of literature manageable by anyone prepared to devote time to study, now that books were offered by publishers such as Penguin Books in paperback at 3s. 6d. (the price of a packet of cigarettes) and needed no longer be treated as costly, unapproachable icons of high culture.²²

Court No. 1, Old Bailey

If it were not for the provisions of the new Act, Penguin's managers would never have considered publishing an unexpurgated edition of *LCL*. As it was, in anticipation of protection under the law, they planned the edition and warned the authorities ahead.²³ Not wanting to incriminate third parties, they offered twelve copies to the police and 'themselves ... as subjects of a test case', assuring the police that general publication would be put on hold.²⁴ Legal action was taken ('a great surprise to many in the world of publishing—and of the law') and the scene was set for what was to become one of the most publicized court cases in modern British legal history, and of paramount importance for later trials concerning literary censorship.²⁵

The trial lasted from 20 October to 2 November 1960. There was a one-week elapse between the first and second days to allow the jurors to actually read the novel. Mervyn Griffith-Jones and Alastair Morton

prosecuted, Gerald Gardiner was counsel for the defence with Jeremy Hutchinson and Richard Du Cann, and Mr Justice Byrne presided. Once the swearing in of the jury (nine men and three women) was completed on the morning of 20 October, Griffith-Jones gave his opening address, calling for a verdict of guilty on the grounds of the novel's obscenity. He earned himself widespread derision with the most frequently quoted line from the proceedings, which showed just how out of touch he was: 'Is it a book that you would have lying around in your house? Is it a book that you would even wish your wife or your servants to read?'²⁶ Gardiner's opening address followed, pleading that *LCL* was not obscene, with reference to the novel's high seriousness and literary merit and the author's moral integrity. He asked the jury by way of conclusion, 'would you read the whole book? Because, of course, every part of it is relevant to the defence.'²⁷ Following the opening addresses, the judge decided how much time should be allowed for the jurors to read the novel and where they should do so. The court reconvened a week later on 27 October for the first day of evidence.

Rather than summarize the entire trial, a few highlights from the proceedings are enough, chosen for their significance as evidence and hence for their bearing on the verdict: (i) the novel as a whole, (ii) the novel's literary merit and status, considering authorial intention, and (iii) other considerations, viz. the manner of publication and social class. I bring the principles of New Critical analysis into play here, because they intersect with the provisions of the 1959 Act. To avoid the account of New Critical principles becoming a flatly affirmative restatement, I invoke Terry Eagleton's politicized account of the New Criticism in *Literary Theory* (1983) for a necessary critical perspective.

The novel as a whole

While the prosecution called no witnesses, the defence called thirty-five experts to testify to the literary and other merits of *LCL*, including high-profile literary scholars (Vivian de Sola Pinto,

Graham Hough, Helen Gardner, Richard Hoggart, and Raymond Williams), notable men and women of letters (E. M. Forster, C. Day-Lewis, Rebecca West), publishers (Sir Allen Lane, founder of Penguin Books, and Sir Stanley Unwin of Allen & Unwin), clerics, politicians, and many others.²⁸ With few exceptions, the witnesses gave evidence of the novel's supreme literary merit and high moral seriousness *when read as a whole*. In answer to Hutchinson's question whether to see the two main characters as mere bodies indulging in sexual intercourse would be a fair summary of the book, Richard Hoggart, a lecturer at Leicester University, whose exemplary evidence is often singled out in accounts of the trial, answered: 'I should think it was a grossly unfair summary of the book. I should think it was based on a misreading of the book ... I thought, taken as a whole, it was a moral book.'²⁹ During Hoggart's ensuing cross-examination by Griffith-Jones, he was asked whether he regarded the importance of the book as stemming from the part which did not consist of the descriptions of sexual intercourse, to which he answered: 'I regard the importance of the book as not separable from the whole book, including the parts about sexual intercourse.'³⁰ Earlier that day, Hoggart had emphasized that if one read the novel as so many descriptions of acts of sexual intercourse, 'one is doing violence to Lawrence's whole intention, and *not reading what is in the text*.'³¹ Hoggart's testimony may stand as a summary of all the evidence given that when *actually* read, that is, scrutinized in close detail, the overriding effect of *LCL* was that of a virtuous, puritanical (Hoggart's words), and morally serious work.

The author of *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), a work dealing with the contemporary shift in conceptions of culture in Britain, Hoggart was anything but a New Critic. Yet, in insisting on a detailed textual analysis of the book and the integrity of the four-letter words to the novel as a whole, his testimony was clearly aligned with the New Critical technique of close reading as the royal road to recognition that a literary work integrates diverse, even discordant textual elements into a whole, which pervaded literary academies in Britain and America in the early 1950s. The resemblance is plain from an

essay by Cleanth Brooks, a high-ranking American New Critic, 'The Formalist Critics' (1951), which offers some New Critical articles of faith: 'the primary concern of criticism is with the problem of unity—the kind of whole which the literary work forms or fails to form, and the relation of the various parts to each other in building up this'; that 'in a successful work, form and content cannot be separated'; and that 'the purpose of literature is not to point a moral'.³² Hoggart and other literary experts insisted in effect on Brooks' inseparability of form and content and the 'kind of whole' which the work forms (or fails to form), teased out by a close study of the relations of the various parts to each other. The prosecution, on the other hand, tried to separate form from content, and argue that the latter was unworthy of serious consideration—or to argue, which amounted to the same thing, that *LCL* failed to form a whole. Had not the new Act stipulated that to be deemed obscene in its effect, an article must be viewed *in toto*, the prosecution would have had an easier task of proving *LCL*'s obscenity on the strength of isolated 'purple' passages, and the general impression, laboriously painted by Griffith-Jones in his opening address, that 'sex is dragged in at every conceivable opportunity' while 'The story of this book, apart from those episodes ... is little more than padding'.³³ However, under the provisions of the new Act, and with the weight of testimony to the novel's seriousness and literary merit when viewed as a whole—among which we should include Sir Allen Lane's argument against publishing expurgated versions of the novel—the defence had an easy time of it.³⁴

Of course, it is possible to overstate the alignment between the 'novel as a whole' argument and the New Critical principle of close reading. There is the objection that a 'close reading', in Eagleton's words, 'seemed to imply that every previous school of criticism had read only an average of three words per line'.³⁵ No right-minded literary critic would ever prefer a cursory or paraphrasing reading of a literary work to a full reading. On the other hand, Cleanth Brooks coined the 'Heresy of Paraphrase' (another fundamental New Critical principle) for a reason—the temptation among contemporary

critics to reduce literary texts to manageable ideas or statements, and to take remarks *about* texts ('statements about what it says or about what truth it gives or about what formulations it illustrates') as their essence.³⁶ Led by Griffith-Jones, the prosecution could be said to have committed the 'heresy of a paraphrase', reducing *LCL* to so many adulterous sex scenes with the rest as 'mere padding'.

A second and more serious objection is that the New Criticism was geared specifically to the analysis of poetry, its ideal of self-sufficient, autonomous aesthetic objects being short lyric poems—'verbal icons' which, like paintings in a gallery, could be taken in at a single glance.³⁷ As textual objects, novels and plays were considerably more unwieldy and complicated to handle, and far less amenable to that final fusion of contradictory textual elements into a harmonious whole that was the New Criticism's ideal outcome of a close reading. But how would New Criticism cope with an early twentieth-century prose writer who deliberately renounced the comforts of a monological, Olympian perspective in favour of the heteroglossia of narratively experimental probings of individual consciousnesses? How to fuse the cacaphony of diverse voices in a novel like *LCL* into harmony? How to identify the voice carrying the intended 'message' or 'meaning'? Could it be done? Hardly. In any case, to subject a novel as challenging as *LCL* to a New Critical analysis—an analysis predicated on the close reading of lyric poetry—would in the end amount to sealing it off from its historical and cultural contexts, sterilizing and emptying it of identifiable, socially impactful meaning.

The theory of literary meaning was the New Critics' Achilles' heel. If 'being preceded meaning', if close readings were only so many appreciations of harmonious aesthetic form or structure that induces in the reader an attitude of 'contemplative acceptance', did literary works finally mean *anything*, except for 'submission to the political status quo'?³⁸ We must not be blind to the ideological underside of the New Criticism, it being—as many historians of criticism besides Eagleton have hinted at—a politically reactionary movement which sought harmonious form in literature as a pseudo-religious substitute for the disintegration and disbelief

characterizing modern civilization; in Eagleton's words, 'the ideology of an uprooted, defensive intelligentsia who reinvented in literature what they could not locate in reality'.³⁹ In spite of the New Criticism's 'large, democratic objective of improving the close-reading capacity, the critical-reading capacity, of an entire culture', could the analytical techniques proffered by a politically reactionary school of critics be harnessed by Penguin Books' defence lawyers to a culturally progressive, even emancipatory cause?⁴⁰ In the Old Bailey, the techniques certainly seemed to reach the limits of their hermeneutic powers in grappling with a novel as aesthetically and morally complicated as *LCL*. If paraphrasable meaning or extractable content were anathema from a New Critical perspective, and if a novel such as *LCL* could not be trusted to speak its 'meaning' in its own words (as was apparent from the differences of opinion on whether it was obscene or not), what other strategy was available for the defence but to have recourse to supplementary evidence of authorial intention and to recontextualize the novel?

Literary merit and status, considering authorial intention

Those who testified to the novel's literary merits also cited the author's high rank among British authors. This was true of Hough and De Sola Pinto in particular. No doubt from a wish to both establish Lawrence's general reputation as a major British novelist and to argue against *LCL* being an obscene book, Gardiner had insisted in his opening address on the significance of authorial intention for a correct understanding of the novel, in answer to Griffith-Jones's earlier dismissal of it as insignificant. The argument for or against authorial intent reached a head on the third day during the examination of James Hemming, which was interrupted by the judge. A legal argument ensued over 'the admissibility of evidence as to an author's *intention*, and particularly the production of *other books* to show, by way of comparison, both what the intention was and how well it had been carried out'.⁴¹ Gardiner had asked for a ruling on both the calling of witnesses to prove that there was no intent

to deprave or corrupt, and the admissibility of reference to other books (for example, pornographic books for comparative effect), to deflate the suspicion of criminal intent on Lawrence's part. Justice Byrne ruled against the admissibility of authorial intention.

In insisting on the importance of authorial intention, Gardiner had no doubt been driven by an urge to protect Lawrence's reputation as a major British novelist against attempts to belittle his status or argue the indecency of the novel as 'dirt for dirt's sake', written for purely pecuniary reasons. The judge's ruling saved the defence from itself, for it curbed the potentially self-defeating tendency to lavish praise on D. H. Lawrence as a major novelist in the tradition of Fielding, Eliot, and Hardy, which presupposed an intimate knowledge of literary and intellectual history as a 'Great Men, Great Works' canon, which the twelve jurors could not have been supposed to possess. Incidentally, the judge's ruling also spelt out the prosecution's glaring inability to take advantage of its consequences and prove the novel's obscenity when read as a whole and in terms of its dominant effect—without, that is, recourse to materials, assessments, or sentiments extraneous to the work itself.⁴²

Manner of publication and social class

Other considerations and arguments deserve to be analysed more closely, some of them having less to do with traditional literary analysis and appreciation than with the sociological and material aspects of book culture. In brief, the fact is that books are material objects as well as immaterial content, and what was weighed up in the trial was also the publishing industry and the accessibility of literature to readers of all social classes in affordable versions, courtesy of the paperback revolution. Sutherland quotes C. H. Rolph writing in the *New Statesman* on 12 November 1960, saying that

'The Penguin *Lady Chatterley* was prosecuted, one supposes, because the Law Officers, learning that it was to come out at 3s. 6d. instead of about 25s., read it again and decided that it must be

kept from the hoi polloi.' It was a suspicion which was to recur frequently over the subsequent years and trials; the authorities could tolerate obscenity, erotica and even pornography—so long as it was not in paperback.⁴³

Gardiner's closing speech for the defence, which Rolph rightly describes as 'unique in legal and literary history', held a thinly veiled, class-conscious reference to a question put by Griffith-Jones in his opening address:⁴⁴

I do not want to upset the Prosecution by suggesting that there are a certain number of people nowadays who as a matter of fact don't *have* servants. But of course that whole attitude is one which Penguin Books was formed to fight against ... —the attitude that it is all right to publish a special edition at five or ten guineas so that people who are less well off cannot read what other people read. Isn't everybody, whether earning £10 a week or £20 a week, equally interested in the society in which we live, in the problems of human relationships including sexual relationships? ... You see, there are students of literature in all walks of life, and the sale of 250 million books shows, does it not, that Mr Allen ... was right in thinking that there are. If it is right that this book should be read, it should be available to the man who is working in the factory or to the teacher who is working in the school.⁴⁵

Gardiner's words spoke volumes about the myriad issues besides the purely literary—cultural, social, educational, economic—which converged in the momentous verdict of 'not guilty' on 2 November 1960.⁴⁶

Law, literature, and general education

Of all the legal changes and trials charted in Sutherland's book, he concludes that the most enduring reflection is that 'Parliament—and still more courts—are bad places in which to analyse and evaluate

literature.⁴⁷ I beg to differ. At no other time in legal history have law and literature so converged for their mutual benefit, and probably at no other time has a court room sounded more like a lecture hall in a literary academy, ringing with informed discussion and the rigorous application of the most fundamental principles for the analysis of literature, than during the *LCL* trial.⁴⁸

What was ultimately the significance of the Lady Chatterley trial, over and above the verdict? In the balance hung nothing less than the democratization and full accessibility of literature, for whose promotion the more progressive aspects of the New Criticism played a significant part, specifically as concerned the eminent learnability of the techniques of literary analysis.⁴⁹ The stakes were enormous. The verdict was a test of whether the twelve jurors, representative of an entire nation of readers, could read and understand literature in the manner of New Criticism, even if unaware of the nature of the method by which they proceeded. Their unanimous verdict demonstrated that they could. In giving a verdict of not guilty on 2 November 1960, they allowed *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and other novels of an equally challenging moral nature to be made known and available to all, read in private homes and academic institutions across the nation, so that its reading skills and cultural capital would in time be collectively expanded.

The continued education of readers at all levels of the school system seems both individually and socially beneficial, but apparently to little avail on a larger, evolutionary scale, since morally hypersensitive readers continue to bypass 'what is in the text' and jump to interpretive conclusions. It happened in 1930, when, during a hearing in the US Senate, a senator lashed out at *LCL* as a most damnable book, plainly admitting that he had not read beyond its opening pages—and it happened again in 1989, when religious fanatics set the world alight over the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. As the British journalist Nick Cohen comments in a recent book on censorship and freedom of speech, *You Can't Read This Book* (2012), 'The vast majority of religious fanatics ... did not want to read the book in the round, or to read it at all. Most

would not have understood it if they had tried.⁵⁰ However, that is the opening chapter of a different story, and the subject for future research on censorship and forbidden books.

Notes

- 1 At the heart of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (*LCL*) is the often graphically described adulterous relationship between Constance Chatterley, a young middle-class woman married to the aristocratic Clifford Chatterley, and the working-class gamekeeper on his estate, Oliver Mellors.
- 2 Sutherland 1983, n.p. preface & acknowledgements.
- 3 Other accounts of the trial are available: *The Trial of Lady Chatterley's Lover* (2016) by Sybille Bedford, and *The Lady Chatterley's Lover Trial. Regina v. Penguin Books Limited* (1990, edited by H. Montgomery Hyde), and I make occasional references to the former. Like Rolph 1990, they belong to the non-academic genre of trial writing to varying degrees.
- 4 Rolph 1990, 1–2.
- 5 See also Lindsköld's contribution in this volume.
- 6 Quoted in Michael Squires's introduction to *LCL* (Lawrence 2000, xiv).
- 7 The situation was different in America, where *LCL* was declared obscene in 1929. For the novel's censorship history, see Sova 2006a, 138–42.
- 8 D. H. Lawrence, 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', in Lawrence 2000, 307.
- 9 The term 'libel' should be understood here in its original etymological sense (from Latin *libellus*, 'small book, pamphlet') as relating to the *form* and *function* of a publication rather than to any supposedly libelous—in the sense of defamatory or slanderous—content. For the definition of an 'obscene libel', see Hall Williams 1955, 631–2.
- 10 Quoted in *ibid.* 632.
- 11 Mullin 2013, 18.
- 12 Hall Williams 1955, 635.
- 13 Bradshaw 2013, 149, quoting Alec Craig, *Banned Books of England and Other Countries* (1962).
- 14 For the parliamentary technicalities of the Act and the devious ways it came into being, see Jenkins 1959, 62–6; Hall Williams 1960, 286–8; Bradshaw 2013, 153–6. See also Hall Williams 1955, 644–7, published when the Obscene Publications Bill was still under consideration.
- 15 Jenkins 1959, 62.
- 16 Hall Williams 1960, 285.
- 17 Obscene Publications Act 1959, 1.
- 18 Hall Williams 1960, 288.

- 19 Jenkins 1959, 62.
- 20 Obscene Publications Act 1959, 5.
- 21 See Geoffrey Robertson's foreword to Rolph 1990, xviii–xix, on the legal consequences of the Act and the trial.
- 22 See also Rolph 1990, 24–6, 141–3.
- 23 Bedford 2016, 6: '1960 was the year of the seventy-fifth anniversary of D. H. Lawrence's birth and the thirtieth anniversary of his death; it was also the year of Penguin Books' twenty-fifth jubilee. They decided to round off their edition of Lawrence's works by publishing the unexpurgated version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*'; see also Sutherland 1983, 17–19.
- 24 Bedford 2016, 6.
- 25 Rolph 1990, 2.
- 26 Ibid. 17. As Rolph comments: 'This last question had a visible—and risible—effect on the jury, and may well have been the first nail in the prosecution's coffin.'
- 27 Rolph 1990, 37.
- 28 Sutherland 1983, 20 describes 'a hard-core of ... Eng. Lit. academics.'
- 29 Rolph 1990, 92.
- 30 Ibid. 99.
- 31 Ibid. 95, my italics.
- 32 Brooks 1951, 72.
- 33 Rolph 1990, 19.
- 34 Ibid. 142–3; see also ibid. 108 for Gardiner's questioning of Dr C. V. Wedgwood on the relative merits of the expurgated and unexpurgated versions of *LCL*.
- 35 Eagleton 1996, 38.
- 36 Brooks 1975, 199.
- 37 Cf. Wimsatt 1967.
- 38 Eagleton 1996, 41, 43.
- 39 Ibid. 40.
- 40 Krieger 1994, 7.
- 41 Rolph 1990, 120.
- 42 See also Heede, Arnberg, and Lindsköld respectively in this volume on how the effect of works of art have been discussed in other trials.
- 43 Sutherland 1983, 19.
- 44 Rolph 1990, 175.
- 45 Ibid. 195.
- 46 See the introduction to this volume for the discursive and material conditions governing and regulating modernist literature.
- 47 Sutherland 1983, 9.
- 48 Cf. Mengham 2013, 159–60, on the trial as being 'not only decisive in changing the relationship between literature and the law, it was equally decisive in changing the relationship between the law and literary criticism.'
- 49 I refer to New Criticism as democratic and progressive in a political–ideological

sense. Terry Eagleton's critique of the New Criticism as conservative and reactionary addresses its American, Southern Agrarian manifestation. The British context is different, and the actual practice of reading according to the principles outlined by these conservatives can serve other purposes than those imagined by Brooks and other American new critics.

50 Cohen 2012, 13.

The sadist housewife

Asta Lindgren and the Swedish business of
pornographic literature in the late 1960s

Klara Arnberg

There was a commercial boom of pornographic magazines and films in Scandinavia in the late 1960s.¹ Parallel to this, however, there was a growing market for pornographic literature that is often forgotten in historical accounts. Unlike most Swedish books in this genre, the two volumes of *Sadistiskt övergrepp* ('Sadist assault') became the object of a prosecution for obscene content in the summer of 1967. Since the author was anonymous (writing under the pseudonym Asta Lindgren), the publisher was first held accountable for the books.² When he was about to be sentenced, however, the author—a 22-year-old woman—came forward, and she instead was convicted. This case study follows the criminal case of *Sadistiskt övergrepp* and the associated media debate, in which Asta Lindgren was described as an ordinary housewife who secretly wrote sadist pornography in her spare time. The case is a prism through which the publication and the sale of forbidden literature, and of the censorial practices involved, is studied.³

Since pornographic publishing was partly underground in the period before deregulation in 1971, historical sources describing the publishing contexts of pornographic literature are scarce. The case of *Sadistiskt övergrepp* is different since the source material from the police investigations and trials provides an insight into how publishers and authors dealt with the legal restrictions, how

they defended their occupation, and how both authorities and market players negotiated the boundary between the accepted and the pornographic.⁴ The way that the press and the legal authorities made sense of the fact that a woman had written a novel filled with sadism, also gives insights into how notions of pornography and sexual fantasy and needs were gendered. This spilt over into how the business of pornography—at the time often seen as the ugliest face of capitalism—was interpreted.

Pornographic literature in Scandinavia

Sadistiskt övergrepp connected to a longer discussion about sexual content in Scandinavian literature. When the Norwegian book *Sangen om den røde rubin* by Agnar Mykle (1957) was prosecuted and found illegal by the Norwegian courts, it spurred a discussion of the obscenity laws in Sweden too. The trial had broken the silent agreement that artistic works would be spared trial, and the way the Swedish legislation was designed—with regional freedom of the press juries that were intended to represent the common notion of decency—made it vulnerable to criticism. It was a lottery if the accused was considered ‘a whoremaster [*horkarl*] or a cultural personality’, according to one of the largest newspapers.⁵

Lena Lennerhed has argued that although criticism of the obscenity legislation was not new when it intensified as part of the sexual debate in the 1960s, the *methods* of critique were.⁶ They included well-known people, or ‘cultural personalities’, challenging the obscenity legislation in their artistic production. When prominent film directors such as Ingmar Bergman and Vilgot Sjöman tested the boundaries with the likes of *Tystnaden* (1963) and *491* (1964), they also paved the way for increasingly explicit images in film in general.⁷ For printed pornography, the parallel was the erotic book series *Kärlek* (‘Love’), a pioneer in the market for explicit textual publications (both literature and magazines).⁸ The series—which ultimately numbered fourteen anthologies of short stories authored by cultural figures and edited by the radical

author Bengt Anderberg—was widely spread and debated, but was not subject to prosecution.⁹ Although Anderberg's objective was to advocate 'good' pornography as an alternative to what he considered rubbishy commercial publications, porn publishers took the inaction of the authorities as a green light for sexual explicitness in text.¹⁰

Starting in 1967, the Minister of Justice Herman Kling instigated a clampdown on porn. In addition to numerous foreign and Swedish magazine publishers, Asta Lindgren was among those charged. This 'porn raid' was seen as paradoxical given the failure of the authorities to act over the *Kärlek* series, and because a governmental committee had been appointed specifically to investigate the possibilities of abolishing the obscenity clause. Kling was asked about this in a TV interview. When the reporter asked if he had changed his mind about not prosecuting 'simple sexuality', Kling replied that the magazines had become more brutal (*förråande*) and 'the two seized books, they are pure sadism'. This was taken to justify proceeding with legal action in anticipation of any legal amendments.¹¹ With the subsequent legalization of pornography in 1971, Sweden became the second country in the world to do so (after Denmark 1967 for text and 1969 for pictures).¹²

Sadistiskt övergrepp was clearly part of an upsurge in Swedish porn literature, but the nature and the scale of the market has yet to be studied. A handful of accounts, however, give a hint. The government freedom of the press committee wrote in their report in 1969 that this type of literature was a huge success in 1965 when *Kärlek* was published (the first two volumes had print runs of 160,000 each), but that the genre had diminished since.¹³ Berl Kutchinsky, who studied the Danish market for the US Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, detected a wave of pornographic literature between 1963 and 1968, with a peak of 1.4 million copies produced in 1967 (the year of deregulation), and found the same pattern for picture magazines, with an upturn in sales that started five years before the repeal of the criminal law and dwindled the year after. He thus concluded that the repeal of

the two bans were consequences of the waves rather than their cause.¹⁴ This suggests that the legislative bodies reacted to the market rather than vice versa.

Pornography as a forbidden genre

The definition of pornography cannot be detached from its illegality, as Walter Kendrick has argued. Pornography is therefore per definition a condemned and inhibited sexual manifestation—in Kendrick's words, 'pornography names an argument, not a thing'.¹⁵ In the case studied here, different societal institutions such as the legal system and the press, along with the actual business actors, negotiated the limits of decency, and thus the possibilities of pornography as a business. In order to understand this negotiation, Gayle Rubin's seminal text 'Thinking sex' is used as an analytical tool. Rubin argues that modern Western societies inherit a hierarchical system of sexual values. In what she terms the 'charmed circle', the sexuality that is privileged by society can be found. This sexuality is seen as good, normal, natural, and blessed and consists of sexual expressions that are heterosexual, married, monogamous, procreative, free, coupled, in a relationship, same generation, bodies only, vanilla, at home, and with no pornography. Outside of the charmed circle, Rubin draws 'the outer limits' where condemned sexual expressions or acts can be found. These are seen as bad, abnormal, and damned and consist of homosexual, in sin, promiscuous, non-procreative, for money, alone or in groups, causal, cross-generational, with manufactured objects, sadomasochistic, in the park, and with pornography. Rubin argues that there is an enduring struggle to draw the line between good and bad sex in order to maintain sexual order. One of these struggles is the prohibition of sexual commerce in various forms. The criminality of sex-oriented business, Rubin argues, has made it marginal and underdeveloped, and forced it to operate using legal loopholes.¹⁶

In 1967, pornography was about to be decriminalized in Sweden. Pornographic publishing was still illegal and relied on legal

loopholes, but it was seen as anything but marginal and underdeveloped. However, compared to the international porn industry latterly, it was limited to small, partly underground enterprises.¹⁷ Before considering law and business in relation to sexual values, however, I will turn to the content of the novels.

Reading *Sadistiskt övergrepp*

The *Sadistiskt övergrepp* books are paperback editions, each 92 pages long.¹⁸ From a reading of the books, it is apparent that the division of the text into two volumes has nothing to do with the narrative; rather, the ending of the first book comes abruptly, and the second book starts without any preamble or introduction of the main characters. The reasons for this may have been practical, for example being able to send them in the post without attracting the attention of customs staff or the like, but could also have been commercial, as two volumes could command a higher price. From contemporary adverts for other books in the same genre, it is plain that the division of pornographic novels into two parts was customary.

The front covers of *Sadistiskt övergrepp* are quite simple, with stripes and the titles in block letters. The back blurb (identical for both volumes) promises a ‘horrible document of some people’s ability to transform their most hideous thoughts into reality’. It is said to be based on reality, but written in such a way that individuals would not be recognizable. The story, which spans both books, is said to be based on how young girls—‘not yet even 15’—are forced to accept sexual and sadistic assaults ‘no normal human could ever imagine possible.’¹⁹ The back cover and the use of a first-person narrative by a female pseudonym invoke a feeling of authenticity and confession—thus revealing the ‘truth’ of female sexual vulnerability—that has a long tradition in pornography.²⁰

Sadistiskt övergrepp is a first-person narrative about a teenage girl called Britt who lives in a Stockholm suburb with her mother. It starts with a violent rape scene where the protagonist and six of her friends (12–13 years old) are the victims of violent physical experiments

by a gang of boys. The scene involves objects like tweezers, sticks, bottles, and electric tools, and tissues are used to silence the girls. The section is narrated in an explicit mode from the frightened Britt's perspective. After the rape, the reader follows Britt down a slippery slope in the Rubinian sense. She is raped by her stepfather, she has sex with one of her girl friends, with whom she ends up at a home orgy and is lured into an underground brothel run by a middle-aged couple. There, the girls are terrified and tortured in sadistic experiments. Eventually, the brothel owners are arrested and the girls are transferred to a hospital. With a kiss from her doctor, Britt claims to have been cured from her fear of men that she developed from her experiences. Britt returns to her mother and the stepfather (now forgiven for the rape). In the final pages, the doctor picks Britt up by car (so that she would not have to take the metro and bus into town). After the concluding sex scene—including kissing, mutual orgasms, and penetration—the doctor announces, 'From now on you are an ordinary girl, Britt; you no longer have to be afraid of men.'²¹

With the gang rape, Britt is forced to the outer limits of Gayle Rubin's circle, into sadomasochism, homosexuality, sex for money, and with objects. When she is saved and cured by the doctor, she enters the charmed circle of good, normal, natural sexuality. Although the sex is neither sanctioned by marriage, nor procreative, or same generation, the narrative makes her prospects of having those sexual relations later in life seem plausible. Thus, the bad, sinful outer limits of the circle are described in detail in the novels, but are carefully dismissed as pathological in the happy ending. However, the lesbian sex scenes do not follow the script of being only a 'warm-up' for heterosexual intercourse.²² Apart from the final scene, these are the only instances when Britt experiences pleasure without fear. After the tender sex scene with her girlfriend, Britt exclaims: 'Imagine if all men could be this wonderful, but I guess that's too much to ask.'²³ However, in the full story everything leads up to the salvation of heterosexual intercourse. By using prostitution as a theme, *Sadistiskt övergrepp* is also pornographic in the literal sense of the word—it is a text about prostitution.²⁴

In the narrative, the hierarchies of sex are coupled with hierarchies of social class. Britt and her friend are emblematic of the perceived contemporary problems of young suburbanites, having divorced parents, consuming alcohol at a young age, and being the victims of sexual violence. The middle-class people they meet use Britt and her friend's lack of power relative to their class, gender, and age. Just as in sexploitation films and romance literature of the same period, the good middle-class knight personified by the doctor saves Britt from her desperate situation. He finally guides her into the 'right' heterosexual desire.

Circumventing censorship: The importance of timing

The pornography laws in 1967 were divided into two: one came under general film censorship, the other was an Article in the Freedom of the Press Act with a related section in the Criminal Code. Unlike film censorship, the Swedish freedom of the press legislation stipulated that one copy of everything published had to be sent to a regional freedom of the press representative at the time of publication (not in advance). This representative would then report any obscene material to the Minister of Justice. The minister, in turn, would pass it to the Chancellor of Justice to take legal action. In such cases, a seizure order was issued until the final verdict (thus halting the sale). There were three court cases concerning *Sadistiskt övergrepp*: one about the Swedish edition, one about the practicalities of printing and inspection copies, and one about the German edition of the book.²⁵

According to the police reports, the publisher Alf V paid 2,000 kronor (equaling a little more than five weeks' salary for female workers as a comparison) for Asta Lindgren's manuscripts in the winter of 1966–7 on condition of not revealing her true identity.²⁶ The books were published on 25 April 1967. That day, the publishing house, Vänerförlaget, sent 2,500 of its 8,420 copies to a wholesaler in Stockholm for further distribution; the rest—apart from the later confiscated 3,855 copies—were sent to wholesalers, tobacconists,

and bookshops across the country, and some were sold by mail order. This meant that over half the copies had been sold before the seizure order on 13 July.²⁷ Intentional or not, the timing of the submission of the inspection copy was important for sales.²⁸

When Alf V was informed of the official decision that he would be responsible in the absence of the author, he met Asta Lindgren and asked her to come forward. They both stressed that he had not forced her to do so, but she was paid 500 kronor and an additional 100 kronor as a fee from Alf V. She considered it unjust to make someone else suffer for something she had written, she explained to the court. If she were acquitted, Alf V had promised her 1 krona extra per book sold, and he covered her travel costs.²⁹

The freedom of the press jury found Asta Lindgren guilty on all charges, since the content of the books was found to be 'exceptionally sadistic and brutal'. She was sentenced to a month in prison.³⁰ In the parallel case, the printer and the publisher were fined for failing to submit an inspection copy on time and for printing misleading information about the year of printing, as the first volume had 1966 instead of 1967, and the second gave no date.³¹ (Both these omissions were commonly used strategies to ensure publications survived long enough to sell.³²) Asta Lindgren and her lawyer said they were shocked by the verdict. All comparable cases had ended in fines. They immediately said they would appeal, even if only to change the sentence. Asta Lindgren had prepared to be fined, and had obtained financial compensation from the publisher to cover it. In the press, it was also explicitly suggested that one reason why Lindgren had come forward was a financial calculation of who would get the lowest fines (in a system based on incomes, *dagsböter*): 'the housewife or the successful porn publisher.'³³

The prosecutor defended Lindgren's imprisonment: 'The books are filled with acts of torture against young girls. Women are treated like dimwits and most of the content is written in an abnormal way.'³⁴ In the Court of Appeal, Svea hovrätt, however, Asta Lindgren's penalty was reduced to fines only.³⁵ Neither Lindgren nor the Chancellor of Justice appealed to the Supreme Court.

Only the following year, in 1968, there was a new freedom of the press case, this time concerning the German edition of the first book, *Sadistische Übergriffe Teil 1*. The dramatic turns were similar to the previous case, with a prosecution decision to pursue the publisher in the absence of the author, and then a letter in which Asta Lindgren agreed to take responsibility for the work. Despite this, however, the police investigation concluded that the German edition had been published without the author's permission, and hence she could not be held accountable for its content. The prosecution case was rejected in the autumn of 1970.³⁶

Even if pornography publishing mainly consisted of small enterprises, the production and sale of the German edition showed that international distribution networks were operating as early as the 1960s. In the spring of 1967, Alf V signed an agreement with the Danish firm Rodox Trading for a German translation, and once printed in late June 1967 all 6,000 copies were dispatched to Copenhagen. The order to seize the books did not come until 14 October 1968, by when the police could find only a single copy.

Advertising pornography

Pornography in the 1960s was not only censored and circumscribed in a legal sense. It was also precluded from general business agreements. Most notably, items that were considered pornographic were denied access to ordinary distribution channels, and, for porn magazines, found it difficult to attract advertisers outside sexual commerce.³⁷ Later, when the anti-pornography movement grew stronger in the 1970s and 1980s, ordinary daily and evening papers started to refuse adverts from the porn trade; in the late 1960s, however, especially the sports pages of evening newspapers were filled with adverts for sex clubs, porn retailers, and various pornographic publications.³⁸ In this way, some of the ordinary market actors were in fact sanctioning the porn trade.

A newspaper search reveals that *Sadistiskt övergrepp* was first

• **FÖRST med det BÄSTA i SEX** •

Ny specialbutik

SÖDERMALMSTORG 8

hörnert Hensgatan

Ⓣ **SLUSSEN**



Foto — Film — Dia
— Sextidningar —

TOPPLISTAN med TOPPNYHETER

- Ullas dagbok, en "strippas" sexualskild. 12:50
- Parr pervers, Ny köp innan beslag! 11:—
- Sadistiskt övergrepp tonårsflickor, 2 del. 10:—
- Ond luste. Rundt ord. orig. 2 nya del. 10:—
- MINI-SEX-NOVELLER 1-5 o. 6-10 Nya 9:—
- Unggingsten den mest omladade sexboken 15:—
- Sänggourmeten Ny svensk toppsex 11:—
- Semester utan trosor Ny med saml.-bilder 18:—
- PORRKUNGEN Ny saml.-ill. skolex 15:—
- ANGELA o. sex/spelar under täcket Ny 13:50
- Utan en tråd bari. i Norge Nu på svenska 14:—
- Serien AGA 1-11 sadism 19:50
- Serien AGA 1-11 sadism 19:50
- FROKEN PORR unga erotiska tillfräddor 12:50
- FLOSSIE-SERIEN 3 bnd. delar erotisk 12:50
- Klassisk erotisk 6:80
- Modern erotisk Nu 6 delar 8:85
- Serien KÄRIK 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 o. 15:—
- Kvinnors atraher - 4-bröstsamma skiver 15:—
- Millersor: SEXUS 1, 2, Stenbocken 8:50
- Josephine Maltzenbacher, 2 del. 15:—
- Smygglitteren, Euro villig, Erot. heta 12:50
- Hsons uppsl.-bok i SEX, A-O, 3 del. 14:50
- Serio A o. B, samlagsscener i svartvitt 12:50
- Bardellen, samlagssill. sextoman 18:—
- Foto—Film—Dia kataloger + pettingfotos 5:—
- SEX 001-15,16 erotiska noveller .. 2:70

HOMOSEX mittlerat

- ÅSKA ANNORLUNDA homosex- teknik, adresser, ill. ställningar 15:—
- MÅN SOM MOTAS homosexrom 15:—
- Grabb till glädje NY homosex 14:30
- Genet. Tjuvns dagbok homo .. 7:50
- Man i bur homosex 12:50
- Manliga Modelltidningar**
- HOMO nr 1 svensk NY 7:—
- EOS nr 1-4 dansk 7:—
- Worderböy 1-7 6:50
- AMIGO 47-54 6:7:—
- Male Models 51-57 6:7:—
- The Male Nude 1-3 6:7:—

Pettingtidningar

- Smygglitteren, ny hård parpetting 8:—
- Agent Sex, saml.-ill. Ny 8:—
- HÄPP Ny saml.-ill. serietidning 8:—
- SEXAN Ny saml.-ill. dito 1, 2 8:—
- FANTASY Ny parpetting 10:—
- Lek i säng, Ny parp. 3 nr 8:—
- Pardon Pett. i sv/v o. färg 9:—
- Alb. Erotik Ny sv. petting 9:—
- Sex över Sex nu m. parbild. 8:—
- PARLEK Ny svensk petting 9:—
- Petting Girls 1-5 9:—
- TÄFSING, ny flickpetting 8:—
- REALITES Flickpetting 10:—
- GIRLS Flickpetting 4 nr 9:—
- PRIVATE Ny helt i färg 1,2 14:—
- La Belle 1-4 5:40
- INDISKRET Intim 1, 2 5:40
- Tidskriftspaket 6 olika bildtid. 30:—
- FOTOSEXAN 2 olika nummer 5:40
- PARIS NEWS Intim 5:40

SEXTEKNIK detaljerat

- SEXUELLA STÄLLNINGAR 32 kap. + samlagsbilder 12:50
- KONSTEN ATT ÅSKA rikt ill. 6:75
- RAFFINERAT KÄRIKSTIV bilder 5:75
- Jag rider min kvinna saml.-ill. 7:50
- SEX i bild o. text 140 ställa, ill 16:50
- Kysson teknik och väglust, ill. 9:50
- Variation o. förnyelse i sexlivet
- Sexuellt gensvar Ny saml.-ill. sex 15:—
- Könsmängdets teknik rikt ill. 5:—
- Sexuella känslor samlagsill. 10:—
- Sex på nytt Impolens m.m. 18:75

FOTO flickor+män+par

- 42 striptoloserier 1-12, flickor 20:—
- Pettingfotos 10 parkort per ser. 50:—
- ★ En STRIPTIDNING vid köp av 2 böcker
- ★ 2 olika STRIPTIDNINGAR vid 25:—
- ★ FRAKTRITT + STRIPSEX + GRAMMOFONSKIVA, single, vid köp för 50:—



Prislistor och presentkupong med varje order. Omgående exp. i försäglad försändelse mot postförskott eller likvid (sven frim.) med order - direkt hem i brev-lådan. Oms. tillk. Paritrabatt till återförsäljare.

SKRIV REDAN I DAG eller ring best. tel. 08/42 50 99
Specialbutik: Södermalmstorg 8 vid Slussen
Sv. LITTERATURCENTRALEN, Stockholm 15

Namn:
Adress: AB 23/4



Figure 3.1 Sadistiskt övergrepp, advertised in Afton-bladet, 23 April 1967, 25.

advertised on 23 April—two days before it was published (Fig. 3.1). It was third in a 'top list with top news' from a Stockholm sex shop. The advert was printed as a product list that could also be used to order from the wholesaler Svenska Litteraturcentralen (Swedish Literature Central) for home delivery. Annonzbokhandeln

SEX-BOK-NYTT

<input type="checkbox"/>	SEX-myglaren	En frän, modern sexroman om frigjorda män och många flickor. 2 delar á 10:—
<input type="checkbox"/>	OND LUSTA	Runda ord och sexorgier. Kärlek mellan två unga människor kunde inte hämma deras ohämmade lusta på "andra håll". 2 delar á 10:—
<input type="checkbox"/>	SADISTISKT ÖVERGREPP	Tonårsflickor utnyttjas med utpressning för att tillfredsställa sadistiska böjelser hos en grupp hänsynslösa män och kvinnor. 2 delar á 10:—

I övrigt för vi allt i genren i vår väl sorterade butik:
BÖCKER • BILDTIDNINGAR • FOTOS • FILM • SLIDES

LITTERATURCENTRALEN AB

Butik: SÖDERMALMSTORG 8 (hörnet Hornsgatan) ①-Slussen
 Postorder: Stockholm 15 ORDERTEL 08/42 50 99 el. 40 55 90

Figure 3.2 Advertisement for *Sadistiskt övergrepp*, *Aftonbladet*, 13 May 1967, 24.

(Advertisement Bookshop) in Vänersborg also advertised the books, and while it was only probably connected to Alf V's business, Svenska Litteraturcentralen definitely was: Vänerförlaget and Svenska Litteraturcentralen had a joint stock company together under the name Litteraturförlagen AB (Literature Publishers Ltd) until late 1967.³⁹

Adverts for the books were published every week until 2 July and included a mail-order firm in Norrköping, Europa Press Agentur (European Press Agency) in Gothenburg (with nearby shops) and the Frigga bookshop in Gothenburg. With time, adverts tended to appear on Sundays. It is important to note, however, that most of the adverts promoted several books and magazines, not *Sadistiskt övergrepp* alone. In an advert published several times in the second half of May, *Sadistiskt övergrepp* was advertised alongside only two other books (Fig. 3.2). In this advert, the content of the books was described in a little more detail than otherwise: 'Teenage girls are exploited with extortion to satisfy the sadistic addiction of a group of unscrupulous men and women.' The other two books advertised

SEX-BESLAG

har böckerna **SADISTISKT ÖVERGREPP**
del 1 & 2 räkat ut för.

Passa på att snarast beställa
böckerna i samma serie:

OND LUSTA del 1 & 2 à 10:—

SEX-MYGLAREN
del 1 & 2 à 10:—

Ni köper dem i närmaste bok-
handel el. välsort. tobakist.

Dir. beställning från:
ANNONSBOKHANDELN
FACK VÄNERSBORG 1
Ordertel. 0521/154 45 el. 126 34

Figure 3.3 Advertisement, *Expressen*, 18 July 1967, 22.

were also divided into two parts, costing 10 kronor each. Litteraturcentralen also offered a free striptease magazine when ordering two books.⁴⁰ Several books were advertised in direct relation to the legislation: 'New, buy before seizure' or 'Seized in Norway, now in Swedish'.⁴¹ In this way, the (possible or actual) seizures were used as sign of pornographic value in the Kendrickian sense, and thus a useful selling point. The advertising of *Sadistiskt övergrepp* ended with their seizure in July, but likewise became an argument when selling other books with similar content. One advert from Annonsbokhandeln read 'Sex-seizure' and the reader was told to grab the opportunity to order books in the same series: *OND lusta* parts 1 and 2 and *Sex-myglaren* parts 1 and 2 (Fig. 3.3). When Lindgren was first convicted, the Frigga bookshop placed a similar advert, announcing that 'IMPRISONMENT is the sentence given to the 23-year-old authoress of *Sadistiskt övergrepp*. Today, we can offer a short story written by the same girl. *Sex 0019-20*, now only 6 kronor'.⁴² Here, the court case was explicitly used to sell the publications. A prison sentence became the hallmark of pornographic authorship.

Social realism or literary fantasy?

The negotiations of the limits of decency were vivid in both the court and in the press. These negotiations clearly related to the perceived erosion of these limits. When Kling passed the case to the prosecution service, Alf V was quoted in the press accusing the authorities of basing their decisions on a nineteenth-century world view. New liberal opinions of pornographic literature had guided his decision to publish, and the news that he now risked up to six months' imprisonment was 'a bolt from the blue', as he put it, especially since Kling had previously indicated that the publication of pornographic books would not be regulated by 'outmoded articles' in the law.⁴³

Another way of defending the books was to compare them to other publications on the market. Alf V did not consider the content obscene compared to previous legal decisions, especially in relation to cheap crime novels sold in ordinary kiosks (*Pressbyrån*) 'with murder, knife fights, rape and other fictional crudity on every other page'. Against this, Alf V stressed the social realism and authenticity (based on the true experiences of the author) of *Sadistiskt övergrepp*: 'Are we no longer allowed to publish depictions of life itself?' Alf V protested.⁴⁴ According to him, the books highlighted the suffering of young people—children even—without the knowledge of their parents or the authorities. Therefore, he thought the contents should be interpreted as a warning. In this way, Alf V continued to market the books in a way that corresponded to both the back blurbs and the adverts, which offered the supposed truth about the sexuality of socially depraved young girls. Asta Lindgren did not take the same authenticity track as Alf V, though. Both in court and the press, she underlined that the stories were pure fantasy and nothing she had experienced herself. However, she claimed to have read a good deal of similar literature.

The defence used comparisons to other publications on the market in order to prove that the seizure of *Sadistiskt övergrepp* was inequitable. In a letter to the Department of Justice, Alf V's lawyer asked

whether the 1966 Swedish translation of Guillaume Apollinaire's pornographic novel *Les onze mille verges* (1907) had been approved by the authorities. The deputy director of the department responded that they could not read everything in detail, and that a book on the market that had not been subject to prosecution should not be thought 'approved'. Also, they had to consider the risk of bringing further publicity to the publication by their actions.⁴⁵ This indicates that the legal border between acceptable and pornographic was blurred, and that the authorities were tactical rather than consistent in their approach to the growing market for pornographic publications. They were well aware that a prosecution would lead to media attention, and in that way also to increased demand. Alf V did not hesitate to mock the authorities in the media for the failure of their tactics—'It is clear that this is the way to make a book known. But I guess that was not what the Minister of Justice intended'—and claimed not to understand why legal action took so long; almost the whole edition had sold out by the time it was seized.⁴⁶

In court, Asta Lindgren's lawyer invoked what he termed comparable literature, and read passages not only from Apollinaire, but also Nine Christine Jönsson (who had written pieces in the *Kärlek* series), Johnny Bode-Delgada (author of several erotic novels and often described as an *enfant terrible* of Swedish culture), and Lars Görling (whose novel *491* was the basis for a film of the same name that was banned for its sexual and brutal content, and later released, cut, in 1964).⁴⁷ The defence placed Lindgren's texts in a literary canon on the verges of respectability, but perhaps more importantly among known and more accepted authors.

Poor housewife, successful porn publisher

Asta Lindgren was 22 and working as a secretary when *Sadistiskt övergrepp* was published. She lived in the small city of Helsingborg, but just like her protagonist Britt she had been brought up by her single mother in a Stockholm suburb. Given this, Lindgren's characterization in the mass media was paradoxical. Instead of

retailing the authenticity narrative put forward by Alf V, Lindgren was instead repeatedly described as a housewife and a woman of a certain age (*tant*). One newspaper even had her age as 42. Asta was a popular girl's name in the 1910s and 1920s, and thus associated with middle-aged women in the 1960s.⁴⁸ Her pseudonym's intended or unintended resemblance to the beloved writer of children's books, *Astrid Lindgren* (born in 1907), might also have spawned associations to a more middle-aged, warm, maternal femininity. Asta Lindgren was portrayed as having a dual nature, telling fairytales to children and writing tender love stories by day and authoring sadistic pornography by night. She was living with her husband in a 'neat two-room flat', and their normality and respectability in terms of sexual hierarchies were further emphasized by Lindgren's statement that 'My husband and I have a normal sexual life. Neither of us is a sadist or a masochist. I am not a lesbian and my husband is not a homosexual.'⁴⁹

Lindgren claimed it all started when she began reading the literature her husband was interested in, at first with aversion, but then with increasing fascination. She found porn literature to be dull and featureless, but also expensive. In order to save money, she therefore started to write porn novels for her husband. In several instances, she stressed not to get any sexual satisfaction from writing the stories—vulgar sexual expressions disgusted her, and writing them down left her indifferent. Her only source of inspiration was her own lively imagination, guided by her husband's wishes. She claimed she only decided to sell the manuscript because of their financial situation.⁵⁰ With the help of sensation-seeking journalism, Lindgren thus framed herself as an innocent in a wider moral sense. She wrote the books from inside matrimony, in order to fulfil her husband's—not her own—sexual needs. The decision both to write and to publish the books also stemmed from financial need rather than greed, adding to the image of innocence.

Alf V was presented as Lindgren's opposite both in court and in the press. If she was framed as unknowing and harmless, he was the calculating businessman in a shady trade. Alf V was 40 years

old in the spring of 1967, and married with two small children. He had worked with book publishing since the 1950s and had run Vänerförlaget since 1963. Even if Alf V is not one of the best-known Swedish pornographers, he was certainly one of the main underground porn dealers at the time. By studying the court cases from the ‘porn raid’, it becomes clear that Alf V acted as a wholesaler and distributor of pornographic publications.⁵¹ He was also open about his business in public, although from the various court cases it seems he often chose to have others act on his behalf. In several cases, the police investigation suggested that the defendants were in fact frontmen, and many had been in financial difficulties when they agreed to publish or distribute pornographic books or magazines on Alf V’s behalf.⁵²

Alf V was described as a crafty if astute businessman in the press. It was said he did not have the look of a porn baron, but rather a civil servant or a teacher. One newspaper talked of the risks of his business as a pornography wholesaler, with his stock always liable to seizure, which could lose him up to 100,000 kronor a year. Pornography was expensive, he said, not because of greedy businessmen but because distribution costs were so high: ordinary distribution channels were closed to the porn trade, so they had to build their own to manage the 5 million books and magazines said to be sold every year in the Swedish porn market. There was no shortage of writers—even well-known authors were writing under pseudonyms—and some titles were translations.⁵³

In the preliminary investigations for the trial of the German edition, the relationship between the publisher and the author were dealt with in detail. Lindgren said that Alf V had approached her at the main hearing in the Court of Appeal (for the Swedish edition of the book) and wanted her to sign an agreement where she would come forward as the author of the German edition too. By then the translation was complete and the books sent abroad. She refused to sign, but then Alf V and his wife visited Lindgren and her husband unannounced in February 1969. Alf V tried to convince her that the court would most certainly withdraw the case,

and that both his lawyer and two prosecutors had confirmed that there was a loophole in the law that they could use. He offered her 1,000 kronor for coming forward a second time, and 400 kronor for her court fines for the Swedish version. He said she could get the money immediately if only she signed. Lindgren was unwilling to do so before speaking to her lawyer, but Alf V advised her not to ring him since he would certainly consider the offer a bribe. According to Lindgren, her own husband had then said: 'Well, that's exactly what it is', whereupon Alf V's wife became angry. The Lindgrens were presented as vulnerable by their defence—she had just come home after abdominal surgery and her husband was on sick leave due to mental illness—and in financial strains again, with only two cigarettes left, unpaid bills including the rent, and barely enough food for the day. These circumstances made Lindgren agree to sign. She was immediately given cash and a cheque, Alf V gave them cigarettes, and then he took them out to lunch. In Alf V's version, however, he did not have the impression that the Lindgrens were cash-strapped, and his payment to Lindgren was an advance for another manuscript.

In January 1968 Asta Lindgren was interviewed in a magazine called *Personligt* ('Personal') where for the first time she revealed her real name and photograph. The trial was described as a 'witch-hunt' and the *Personligt* front cover announced its exclusive interview with her. The magazine was published by Thord Åkerlund, another of Vänersborg's pornography associates with close connections to Alf V. The interview carried adverts for Annonsbokhandeln and for one new book in particular—*Sex i Linköping*—with the customary slogan of 'Buy now—Buy soon—Buy before it's seized.' It was Åkerlund who interviewed Lindgren, under the headline 'Beautiful but frightened'. It begins by using her looks to argue for the absurdity of sentencing her to jail. 'Does she look like a devastator of youth and morality? Does she look like a witch?' No, the article continued, but she had nevertheless fallen victim to a witch-hunt, sentenced under the same old laws that were used to burn women at the stake.⁵⁴

The naming and picturing of the *real* Asta Lindgren can be seen

as a new claim to authenticity. She repeated the story of her husband and asserted that neither of them was a pervert. However, unlike on other occasions, she ‘admitted’ to sexual arousal in the writing process: ‘Of course I get—just like other normal people—exceptional feelings of lust when I read pornography.’ She described the trial as a ‘murder of free speech,’ thus enabling the Swedish democracy to prove its strength to its constituencies. In order to keep morally conservative and religious voters on side in the upcoming election, the Social Democrats were forced to publicly move against the porn trade, according to Lindgren. ‘How about the small minority who enjoys reading pornography? Do they not have the right to vote?’ She claimed to have been immolated, and the trial had been a pure miscarriage of justice, a ‘murder of democracy,’ she stated (the latter printed in capital letters). ‘There is not a single photograph or drawing in the books I have written. Only free words, generated from pure spontaneity and genuine fantasy.’⁵⁵

People who bought and read her books knew very well what to expect, she continued, as the titles described the contents. She repeated many of the often-used arguments at the time for more liberal legislation, stating that there was no evidence of a correlation between violent crime and pornography consumption. The welfare state saw no problem in selling alcohol (the state has long had the monopoly) although clear correlations could be proven between violent crime and alcohol. And that she was a front for someone else was pure defamation, she stated in the interview. She claimed to have received no financial compensation for coming forward as the true author.⁵⁶

Concluding discussion

The Asta Lindgren case highlights how censoring practices can be studied in relation to and as market regulation. The emerging mass market of pornographic publishing put the censorship legislation to the test. The same type of content could be judged differently by different regional freedom of the press juries, and almost all other

books reached the market without legal review. More importantly, then, the state and its juridical system were not the only censoring actors in a market system: so were publishers (rejecting or accepting different types of texts for publication), advertisers (channeling resources to some publications but eschewing others), distributors (choosing to deliver some publications but not others) and retailers (in their choice of stock). In this way, the market actors set up (articulate or inarticulate) censorship practices that circumscribed the publishing market. In order to fully understand how sexual hierarchies have informed the publication of pornography and vice versa, the whole chain of production has to be studied.

It is clear that Lindgren's publications fell into the unacceptable section of the market in several ways. Her books were sold mainly by porn retailers; they were distributed by networks of porn traders; they were only advertised alongside other porn publications. Her books thus belonged to a section of the market deprecated by mainstream commercial actors. One part of the pornography production chain, however, had access to ordinary commercial channels: pornography publishers used evening newspapers to advertise their publications. This access, however, would eventually come to an end.

The case also highlights that the hierarchy of sexual value and the negotiations about the limits of decency were informed by notions of gender and social class. Lindgren's situation as a wife was important for how she was depicted both in the press and in court. Even if her writings were seen as extremely brutal, on the outer limits of Rubin's circle, Lindgren as a person was portrayed as a harmless innocent. Apparently, it was hard to imagine anyone less likely to be imprisoned for a sex-related crime. Alf V, on the contrary, was an obvious candidate. He appeared as an unscrupulous porn publisher, exploiting vulnerable people for his own ends, and happy to use bribes to get his way. There was also a class aspect to this. Lindgren was not one of the well-known authors often said to work under pseudonyms to get an extra income, and Alf V was not a high-profile cultural personality who sometimes chose to test

the limits of the legislation. This lack of cultural credibility worked differently for the two, however, for while she ostensibly wrote for pure survival (making her vulnerable), he acted out of self-interest (making him unscrupulous). Neither was framed as having artistic ambitions. Their motives were purely financial. And, tellingly, neither found their defenders in the public debate in the way Vilgot Sjöman did over his film *491*, or indeed the authors of *Kärlek*.

For a few years, both Alf V and Lindgren seem to have stayed in the business. She wrote at least two more books for Vänerförlaget under a new pseudonym (Solveig Källgren). Alf V seems to have moved on to other businesses in the 1970s. According to Swedish tax records, Alf V died in 1980, while Lindgren moved to Denmark in 1976.

My ambition with this text has not been to uncover the ‘truth’ about Asta Lindgren in the sense of her previous sexual experiences or reasons for writing (or even if she was financially exploited by Alf V). Instead, I illustrate how the ‘truth’ of female sexuality was used as a selling argument to retail books, both in paid adverts and in the discussion about the books in the press. A historical perspective on Rubin’s circle also makes it clear that the nature of sanctioned sexual practices has shifted over time and place. While the detailed descriptions of what are still condemned practices—sexual violence and the torture of children—had led the authorities to draw the line in 1967, other sexual expressions that upset the audience then have now entered into the charmed circle.

The very banning of the books, and the setting up of a limit on decency (or in Lindgren’s words, murdering free speech) made the books pornographic in a Kendrickian sense. Official regulations and the actions of the authorities thus stipulated not only the limits of what the pornography publishing industry could become, offering specific loopholes they exploited to the full, but also defined the industry as such. However, the industry did not disappear with deregulation, rather the opposite. Retailers, distributors, and the mass media all continued to use pornography as an argument for censorship practices, and thus for redefinition.

Notes

- 1 See, for example, Stevenson 2010; Larsson 2010, 205–213; Larsson 2007, 93–111; Björklund & Larsson 2016; Björklund 2012; Arnberg 2010.
- 2 Guided by the Swedish National Archives' restrictions and the sensitivity of the material, I use only the pseudonym, even though Lindgren herself eventually came forward and used her real name in the press, and for the same reasons I refer to the publisher as 'Alf V', even though he was a public figure.
- 3 I wish to thank Anna Hultman, Mariah Larsson, and the editors for their valuable comments on previous versions of the text. The research was financed by the Jan Wallander and Tom Hedelius Foundation.
- 4 See also the contributions of Heede, Schatz-Jakobsen, and Lindsköld in this volume.
- 5 Lundevall 1958a, cited in Arnberg 2010, 77; see also Lundevall 1958b; Lennerhed 1994, 191.
- 6 Lennerhed 1994, 189; see also Johansson's contribution in this volume for previous methods of critique.
- 7 See Lennerhed 1994; Larsson 2017; see also the introduction to the present volume for the tradition of transgression in modern art, and Schatz-Jakobsen in this volume for how the ban was lifted from one such 'cultural personality' in England.
- 8 Lennerhed 1994; Arnberg 2010; Anderberg 1965.
- 9 Silbersky & Nordmark 1969.
- 10 Nilson 2009, 210–18; Arnberg 2010, 139; Larsson 2007.
- 11 Swedish television 1967.
- 12 See Arnberg 2010; Arnberg 2012, 350–77.
- 13 SOU 1969:38, 55.
- 14 Kutchinsky & Snare 1999, 83–5.
- 15 Kendrick 1996, 31.
- 16 Rubin 2008, 281–323.
- 17 See Arnberg 2012.
- 18 Copies of *Sadistiskt övergrepp* are not readily available. There are none in the Chancellor of Justice's files, nor are there any in the National Library of Sweden, which otherwise is obliged to keep a copy of everything published in Sweden. Lund University Library, however, holds a copy of each volume.
- 19 Lindgren 1967a, back jacket; Lindgren 1967b.
- 20 See, for example, Frappier-Mazur 1988, 112–28; Marcus 1966, 203–204; Williams 1999.
- 21 Lindgren 1967b, 92.
- 22 See, for example, Williams 1999, 140.
- 23 Lindgren 1967a, 40–1.
- 24 For prostitution in pornographic literature, see Norberg 1993, 225–52.

- 25 Riksarkivet (RA) (National Archives of Sweden), Stockholm, Justitiekanslern (JK) (Office of the Chancellor of Justice), Akter till allmänna diariet (Files for the public register) nr 247, 248 and 336 (1967) & nr 345 (1968).
- 26 Average hourly wage for female manufacturing workers was 8.767 kronor in 1967, and the working week 42.5 hours. See Prado 2010.
- 27 The number of printed copies varied, with sources sometimes mentioning up to 10,000 copies; see, for example, Pettersson 1967, 6.
- 28 *Dagens nyheter* 1967; *Svenska dagbladet* 1967; *Hudiksvallstidningen* 1967.
- 29 RA, JK, Akter till allmänna diariet nr 247 & 248 (1967).
- 30 Verdict in the local court, Vänersborg, 8 December 1967, RA, JK, Akter till allmänna diariet nr 247 & 248 (1967)
- 31 Verdict in the local court, 10 December 1968, RA, JK, Akter till allmänna diariet nr 336 (1967).
- 32 See Arnberg 2010.
- 33 *Expressen* 1967c.
- 34 *Expressen* 1967b.
- 35 Verdict in the Court of Appeal of Western Sweden, 6 November 1968, RA, JK, Akter till allmänna diariet nr 247 & 248 (1967).
- 36 RA, JK, Akter till allmänna diariet nr 345 (1968).
- 37 Arnberg 2010 & 2012.
- 38 Arnberg 2018.
- 39 Preliminary investigation notes, 20 March 1968, RA, JK, Akter till allmänna diariet nr 85 (1968).
- 40 Advert in *Expressen*, 15 May 1967, 15.
- 41 See advert for *Porr pervers* in *Expressen*, 30 April 1976, 33, and for *Utan en tråd* in *Expressen*, 15 May 1967, 96.
- 42 Advert in *Göteborgstidningen*, 10 December 1967, 44.
- 43 Axelsson 1967; Pettersson 1967.
- 44 Axelsson 1967.
- 45 Olof Börjesson to Olle Bernling, 21 December 1967, RA, JK, Akter till allmänna diariet nr 247 & 248 (1967).
- 46 Axelsson 1967.
- 47 Verdict in the local court, Vänersborg, 8 December 1967, RA, JK, Akter till allmänna diariet nr 247 & 248 (1967). See also Lennerhed 2016, 116–25; Nilson 2009.
- 48 Brylla 2004.
- 49 *Expressen* 1967a.
- 50 Ibid.; *Expressen* 1967b.
- 51 See also Michanek 1967.
- 52 See, for example, RA, JK, Akter till allmänna diariet nr 353 (1968). In one case, however, the lower instance, Rådhusrätten, sentenced Alf V to one month in prison for importing and distributing Danish pornographic magazines. Just as

for Asta Lindgren, the sentence was reduced to fines by the Court of Appeal; JK 353, 361-363, 396, 397, 414, 415, 418, 447, 448, 465, 476, 479 (1968), and 28, 49, 68, 96, 242 (1969).

53 Karlsson 1968, 14.

54 Åkerlund 1967, 23-48.

55 Ibid. 47.

56 Ibid. 26.

So bad it should be banned

Judging the aesthetic of comics

Linnéa Lindsköld

In 1989, Horst Schröder (b. 1943), the publisher of the Swedish adult comic magazine *Pox*, was reported under the Freedom of the Press Act for the unlawful depiction of sexual violence.¹ The comic magazine introduced experimental and avant-garde adult comics from Europe and North America to a Swedish audience. During the trial in January 1990, the prosecutor argued that ‘artistic arguments’ were used to legitimate the publication of pictures of sexual violence. During an account of the comics in question, he posed the question: ‘Is this really art?’² Further, he stated that only work of low aesthetic quality should be prosecuted.³ The trial thus came to focus on the question of aesthetic quality—were the comics of sufficient artistic value to justify their publication?

The *Pox* trial makes visible a period in the politics of reading in Sweden when reading printed literature, from an institutional perspective, could still be perceived as bad, or even dangerous. From a contemporary standpoint, it is fair to say that printed matter today no longer constitutes the primary battleground for the discussion about the limits of decency. Stand-up comedy, computer games, and even jokes on Twitter are recent examples of media that have undergone different kinds of protests and/or prosecution.⁴ The trial of *Pox* and the accompanying debate took place against a backdrop of a decade that saw an increasing interest in comics with a postmodern aesthetic that pushed the limits of decency, as well

as an increasingly heated debate about violence—sexual violence in particular—in the new media. An analysis of the *Pox* trial can help historicize current debates about obscene cultural expressions, examining how fiction has been perceived to affect its readers by focusing on the ‘sociohistorical specificity’ of the trial.⁵

Pox’s first issue of 1989 (see fig. 4.1) was reported by a member of the People’s Organization against Pornography.⁶ The Chancellor of Justice (Justitiekanslern, JK), Hans Stark, decided to prosecute *Pox* on six counts of illegal depiction of violence, specifically sexual violence and sexual coercion, due to a new Article in the Freedom of the Press Act.⁷ Article 13 had been introduced that same year to combat violent videos and photographs.⁸ The Article outlawed sexual violence or coercion in pictures with the intention to distribute them, with the exception of justifiable circumstances. Since then, this Article has only been tested in court in relation to drawn pictures in very few cases. The cases that led to convictions in the 1990s were mainly videos and pictures depicting child pornography and sexual sadism. It is the combination of sex and violence that falls under the law, and the aim and circumstances of a publication are identified as the most important aspects of the legal judgement. Two cases concerning pictures where JK chose not to bring a prosecution provide some indication as to how the law was implemented. In 1989 a photograph by the artist Man Ray was indicted, the publication was assessed as serious, and it was conceded that the picture could be deemed to possess artistic value. In a statement, JK specified that artistic considerations can be a reason for publishing a picture that depicts sexual violence; other extenuating circumstances are a serious intent, and a primary aim not to awaken the viewer’s sexual desire. In another case two years later, stills in a pornographic magazine were not considered unlawful, since the depicted violence was not illustrated in a sexualized manner.⁹

In this study I analyse the trial against *Pox* by focusing on conceptualizations of the aesthetic in the politics of reading. The politics of reading as a theoretical framework refers to the power structures that encompass the practice of reading, including the production,

distribution, and mediation of reading materials. Literature policy, for example, is included in the politics of reading, but the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *how*, and *why* of reading are much larger than specific policy areas.¹⁰ The politics of reading—how readers and literature are governed in a society—will always be a result of different discursive structures that regulate what is rational or not in a given time or place.¹¹ Different conceptualizations of the aesthetic—meaning artistic value and what a work of art is or should be—are central to this overarching framework. The comic format is understood as a medium in its own right, depicting a narrative, but also closely connected to literature in general—one in fact *reads* comics.

The methodology used for the analysis is Michel Foucault's notion of problematizations, addressing how it becomes possible to think about phenomena as 'problems' that need solutions, in this case policy solutions. For example, if the reading of certain materials is perceived as dangerous, then certain policy solutions such as censorship or distribution control become possible. In the analysis of written testimonies and the public debate about the case, I have identified the main 'problems' with reading *Pox*. Further to the analysis, these problems are articulated using discourses that build on certain scientific and/or practical knowledges.¹² Subject positions of various kinds are available in the problematizations, such as 'reader of comics'. It is also important to acknowledge other ways to think about the problem, challenging the dominant problematization.¹³

Comics and Swedish literature policy

Only rarely have works of art been explicitly named as harmful from a judicial standpoint in Sweden after the Second World War. Freedom of expression is strong, and politicians ideally aim to be at arm's length distance from publicly funded culture, meaning that they and civil servants should not have any say in what kind of culture or what artists should be supported.¹⁴ Literature policy actions since the middle of the 1970s have been part of welfare

policy, focusing on the promotion and distribution of a qualitative literature production with taxpayers' support, including comics. The goals of Swedish literature policy have been to provide alternatives to commercial book publishing and to facilitate access to qualitative reading materials. In this discourse, there is an assumption that people will prefer qualitative literature if it is made available.¹⁵ Qualitative culture is connected to moral and social elevation, thus making it possible for culture that does not adhere to this standard to be perceived as harmful.¹⁶

Policy actions in Sweden's literary field have mostly sought to support what is deemed as qualitative, instead of forbidding or sanctioning what is considered bad.¹⁷ One example of this approach is the comic magazine debate that preceded *Pox* by over thirty years. In the 1950s, the magazine market of comics imported from the US worried those who viewed the medium as the worst of capitalist cultures, a threat to democracy, and a cause of youth delinquency. Comics in this debate were seen as low culture, as harbingers of harmful stereotypes and sexualized violence, but no legal action was taken.¹⁸ The debate itself of course was also imported from the US, where it had resulted in the infamous Comics Code Authority (CCA), self-regulating the content of comics in detail.¹⁹ The Swedish, liberal line of reasoning was still active in the early 1980s, where the commercial (predominantly US) magazines were identified as a great threat to children and young people. Suggested solutions were to support Swedish comics publishing and improve the national distribution system to ensure greater diversity, stimulating qualitative comic production.²⁰ Thus it was unusual to explicitly regulate reading material, except for pornography, at the time of the *Pox* trial.²¹

Horst Schröder and *Pox*

The publisher Horst Schröder was behind the introduction to Sweden of international comics for adults in the shape of several comic magazines and the publishing company Epix förlag. The company's two best-known periodicals, *Epix* (1984–1992) and

the edgier *Pox* (1984–1993), consisted mostly of international avant-garde and experimental comics, mixed with a number of Swedish contributions.²² Even the Swedish term for adult comics, ‘serier för vuxna’, is attributed to Schröder.²³ It was no coincidence that these periodicals saw the light of day in the 1980s. In this decade the comic medium went through an artistic development in Sweden as elsewhere, and its cultural status increased. Adult comics ranged from conventional superhero comics, science fiction, documentary, and autobiographical works to avant-garde comics with an experimental approach to the medium.²⁴ Public or political opinion against cultural expressions or new media has traditionally originated in a hierarchy between bourgeois culture and popular or mass culture. Protest against comics positions the medium as popular and commercial mass culture. *Pox* can be seen as an example of the conjunction of postmodernism and consumer or popular culture.²⁵ While the comics had none of the commercial appeal of the popular superhero genre, they were still criticized in line with the general disapproval at a general eroding of values and ethics. They also shared typical traits of the postmodern aesthetic such as playfulness, with the use of parody, pastiche, and irony, and the convergence of high and popular or mass culture.²⁶

Schröder had a personal presence in his magazines: he wrote introductions with reflections on the content of the comics, as well as comments on current events in Sweden, the world, and his private life. During the *Pox* trial and its aftermath, he naturally devoted a great deal of editorial space to his own opinions. Usually, he discussed current comic publishing in Europe and the US, and the hardships of being a comic publisher.²⁷

The accused comics and their creators

The *Pox* authors in question were almost all established avant-garde comic writers or artists, several of them known for pushing the limits of decency. Dori Seda and Andrea Paziienza, who both died young in 1988, were important contributors to the alternative

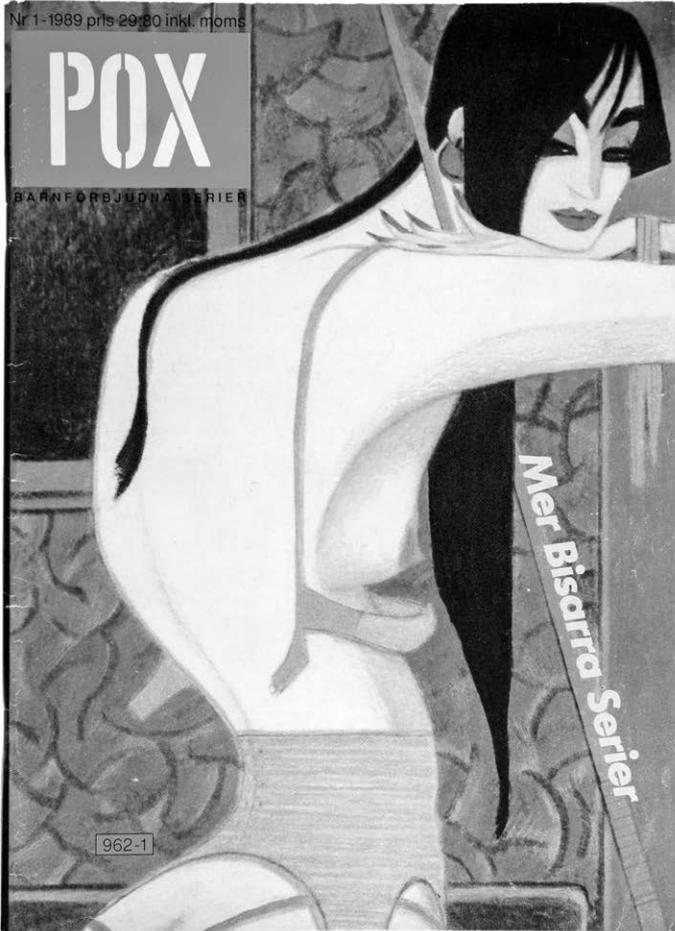


Figure 4.1 The cover of *Pox 1*, 1989, by Lorenzo Mattotti. (With permission of Horst Schröder/Epix förlag.)

comics scene in their respective countries: Seda as an early feminist autobiographical comic writer, her *Lonely Nights Comics* banned from import by UK customs for its sexual content; Paziienza, whose work dealt with drugs and violence, is now regarded as one of the greatest Italian comic artists of all time.²⁸ Damién Carulla was tried in Spain in 1992 for publishing a French graphic novel accused of making fun of the Holocaust.²⁹ Neil Gaiman is however by far

the best known of the five, a renowned author of both comics and novels such as the *Sandman* series and the novel *American Gods*.

Neil Gaiman (b. 1960) (text) & **Steve Gibson** (b. 1961) (illus.), 'Resan till Betlehem' ('Journey to Bethlehem').³⁰ The comic depicts an event in the Book of Judges. A woman is raped and killed by the men of the village of Gibeon; her husband mutilates her corpse to send to every corner of Israel to show how the villagers acted. **Damián Carulla** (b. 1956), 'Fe', a dystopian, futuristic narrative where a woman uses a VR program to live out sadomasochistic pleasure.³¹

Andrea Pazienza (1956–1988), 'Modershjärtat!' ('Cuore di Mamma!'), three young men force the mother of a girl they go to school with to have sex with them so they will not spread rumours about her daughter.³² One of the men is Zanardi, the amoral main character in several of Pazienza's stories.³³

Karen D'Amico (n/a)³⁴ (text), **Michael Terry Gilbert** (b. 1951) (illus.), 'Älskade kolli' ('Vegetable Lover'), a young woman has been treated badly by men all her life. As a nurse, she has sex with a man in a coma. He wakes up afterwards, but she, driven by guilt, goes mad.³⁵

Dori Seda (1951–1988), 'Hor på kontor' ('Office Tops and Bottoms'). A timid secretary by day is revealed to be a dominatrix by night, dominating her boss.³⁶

A special issue, 'Accused: A Special Issue of Pox on Censorship', was published in late 1989, which carried all the accused comics again together with comics and texts on censorship, some of which had originally been published in similar special issues in Canada and the UK.³⁷ With the Swedish special issue, Schröder placed the upcoming *Pox* trial in a context of the trials and bans on comics and literature elsewhere in Europe and in the US.

Comics and the law

The creators of the accused comics were active in a global context where the legal limits of the comic medium were already being tested, for Sweden was not the only country where comics were taken to court in the 1980s and 1990s: it was a period of political and public backlash against the medium. The publishing company Knockabout in the UK, which specialized in underground comics, was subject to police and customs intervention when it imported comics from the US. They were charged with obscenity in 1983, as their comics were deemed to promote drug use, and even though Knockabout was eventually acquitted, it suffered substantial financial damage in the process. In the US, conservative and religious pressure groups succeeded in limiting the distribution and sale of adult comics on the grounds of perceived sexual and violent content.³⁸ One of the most famous prosecutions was in Florida in 1994, when the underground comic artist Mike Diana was convicted for obscenity.³⁹ Some national characteristics can be discerned in how comic books were treated. In both the US and UK, comics have been part of the commercial market, with the underground production of alternative comic books having a smaller circulation. In France, though, *la bande dessinée* has been considered an art form since the 1960s.⁴⁰ The upshot is that comic books have been the subject of greater persecution in the Anglophone world than in France, where there seem to be fewer moral objections to a medium if it is perceived as a form of art, reflecting the privileged position of art in relation to mass-produced culture.

In Sweden, the *Pox* trial took place over two days in January 1990. Witnesses were called to determine whether publication was defensible for reasons of aesthetic value. Carl Gustaf Boëthius (1915–2011), a Christian cultural radical and former head of the organization Riksförbundet för sexuell upplysning (RFSU, the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education), was the only witness against *Pox*.⁴¹ In its defence *Pox* called five witnesses, almost all with connections to high art institutions. One of them, the artist

Peter Dahl who was a professor at the Royal Institute of Art, was very active in the public debate about the trial.⁴² The jury found Schröder not guilty. To have witnesses with high art connections seems to have been crucial for comic trials: at Mike Diana's trial, none of the defence witnesses, including Diana himself and another professional comic artist, were regarded as art experts.⁴³

There are no transcripts of the trial apart from Schröder's and Boëthius's written accounts. All other information about the trial comes from news reporting and opinion pieces. Unfortunately, this excludes the possibility of giving a detailed account of the trial proceedings.⁴⁴ Several newspapers took the opportunity to republish some of the pictures that were on trial so their readers could form their own opinions. 'Journey to Bethlehem' attracted a great deal of attention both before and during the trial, no doubt because of the sensationalist appeal of the connection between a crime of sexual violence and the retelling of a Bible story.⁴⁵

Pox as illegal non-culture

In the material, three different problematizations of *Pox* emerge, resting on different understandings of the aesthetic value of comics and the effects of reading. In the first problematization, the trial against *Pox* was perceived as a way to stop the publication of pornography, and *Pox* was constructed as a publication with harmful intent. This was the tenor of Boëthius's testimony, whose careful analysis of the comics was designed to show that the accused pictures did not qualify as works of art. He took at face value Schröder's statement that the pictures had to be understood in relation to the comics as a whole, and therefore focused on the narrative and how the pictures and text interacted. Boëthius devoted most of his analysis to 'Journey to Bethlehem', arguing that the authors used the Bible 'as a creditable and cultural excuse for inserting an element of sexual entertainment violence in the comic.'⁴⁶ He compared it with the corresponding passages of the Bible and accused the authors of 'systematically embroidering the story.'⁴⁷ He pointed to several



Figure 4.2 Neil Gaiman and Steven Gibson, 'Resan till Betlehem', 17, a panel not included in the sexual violence charge. (With permission of Horst Schröder/Epix förlag.)

anachronistic details in the text, such as the first phrase uttered by the main woman character: 'Hello! Handsome! How about some fun?' (see Fig. 4.2).

Boëthius continued:

What characterizes her response is a cheerful twentieth-century rawness, with a portion of cynicism. The maker of the comic of

course has every right to fantasize in this way, but what it shows us is that he is not interested in making us familiar with the Book of Judges to be able to understand it, but to use the Book of Judges as a vantage point for producing that which amuses him and his readers.⁴⁸

The comics on trial use elements of parody, satire, comedy, absurdism, science fiction, and melodrama in their narratives. In this problematization, the characteristics of avant-garde and postmodern comics were positioned against the serious or artistic intent needed, according to the law, to justify a publication of sexual violence.

Boëthius stated that sexual sadism was the main purpose of the comics. The reader of *Pox* is depicted by Boëthius as a sexual sadist: '[*Pox*] tempts male readers of a certain kind, those who have inherent sadistic tendencies that they enjoy stimulating'.⁴⁹ The problematization is built on the assumption that culture has a direct effect on people's behaviour: in the subjectification process, the reader is gendered as a male. This resembled the highly gendered debates in the 1950s where the reader of comics was constructed as a boy, risking a destiny as either a weakling or a sadist.⁵⁰ The difference in this case was that the subject position of a *Pox* reader was already fixed as depraved. There was a clear dichotomy between high and low culture, mirroring Drotner's conclusions about 'panic discourses', describing a connection between culture and social psychology, with the underlying logic that experience of a cultural expression leads to social action.⁵¹ All of this was evident in one of the prosecutor's statements:

It does not matter that they are drawings. They are skilfully drawn and can have the same effect on onlookers as photographs. The aim of the law is to counter norms that present a wrongful attitude to sexuality and love. These depictions are brutalizing and can shape the wrong patterns in young people, for example.⁵²

These statements can be placed in the contemporary anti-pornography movement in Sweden. As Klara Arnberg has shown, two discourses met in this movement: one a modernized Christian conservatism, purporting equal love between a man and a woman; the other feminist and inspired by the American anti-porn movement. This feminist narrative was used from the 1970s and pornography was here interpreted as the exploitation of women and the female body. Pornography was seen as a threat to the possibilities for men and women to engage in loving, heterosexual relations.⁵³ From the position of the prosecutor, it was not possible to view *Pox* as having any artistic qualities, as it was considered pornography and therefore by definition categorized as non-culture.

The prosecutor referred to research on violent film and video and their effect on the viewer to prove that the comics were not artistic enough. He argued that the public imitated certain behaviours, built up latent aggression, and became numb to violence by viewing or reading certain material.⁵⁴ This was the same sentiment expressed in Swedish contemporaneous debate about video violence.⁵⁵ There was some ambiguity in this problematization concerning the subject position of the (male) reader, for he was seen as having inherent sadistic tendencies, yet at the same time being inspired by his reading to perpetrate violent acts.

Pox as trash culture

In the second problematization of *Pox*, the magazine was constructed as bad art, but due to freedom of expression not illegal art. This can be exemplified from the following statement by Peter Dahl, one of *Pox*'s expert witnesses:

If *Pox* is to be forbidden, then we have to forbid illustrations of the Marquis de Sade and Picasso, Japanese woodcuts, surrealist paintings, and Hieronymus Bosch, for example. ... The brilliant depictions of sexual violence, the masterpieces of Picasso, the masterpieces of Hieronymus Bosch, are more shocking depictions

of violence than the weak drawings in *Pox*, because they have quality. Most of the content in *Pox* is not sensual and is stereotypically drawn, and the violence and sexuality in the accused pictures offend me no more than the violence in a Donald Duck cartoon. It is just indecent and bad, but as stated, it is not illegal to display bad drawings.⁵⁶

Dahl also argued in his witness statement that since comics were bad, they were not dangerous.⁵⁷ In this problematization there was a distinction between high and low art, where *Pox* comics qualified as the latter, and parallels were drawn with art, film, and novels. An editorial in one of the leading Swedish newspapers stated that 'good art can be a more serious threat to the social order than bad art.'⁵⁸ Another art critic argued that even though comic books can be regarded an art form, they were quite often bad art.⁵⁹ The works of the artist Goya were also contrasted with the comics in question, to exemplify how arbitrary the trial was when sexual violence was only considered illegal in low art.⁶⁰ This problematization was built on a discourse with deep historical roots, whereby good art has the power to affect people's lives, both positive and negative, and the corresponding notion that cultural expressions of lesser aesthetic quality lack such power.⁶¹

Schröder received letters of support from several artists' organizations, including the Swedish Writers' Union and the Association of Swedish Illustrators and Graphic Designers. The Swedish Artists' Association exclaimed, 'Let comics be judged by the public! Not by the courts! Defend freedom of expression and the freedom of the press!'⁶² However, some supporters also distanced themselves from the comics. One of the signatures added 'Stand up for the worst crap I've seen.'⁶³ Radical, avant-garde comic magazine publishers said that the comics Schröder published were in bad taste and gave comics a bad name.⁶⁴ One line of defence was that although *Pox* rightly should be criticized for reproducing misogynistic values, it should remain a question for readers, not for the courts.⁶⁵ The standard *Pox* reader was constructed as someone with bad taste.

The fact that the accused pictures were not photographs but were drawn was also advanced as a vindication. To fantasize and give one's imagination free rein was thought uncontroversial as long as no one came to harm in real life.⁶⁶

Pox as postmodern art

The third problematization conceptualized *Pox* as containing works of art, and that art by definition could not be illegal. Schröder described the proceedings as being in effect two trials, one against him as publisher and one (unofficial) against the genre of adult comics.⁶⁷ The comics on trial were 'deeply personal and multi-layered works of art', in contrast to commercial pornography and entertainment.⁶⁸

The various problematizations made different interpretations of the accused pictures possible. One example put forward by an art critic, Leif Nylén, was a picture from Dori Seda's comic where a male boss is sodomized by his dominatrix secretary using pencils. The comic is in black and white, and Boëthius interpreted the black lines as an illustration of spraying blood, but more in accordance with traditional comic aesthetics, the lines could just as well be interpreted as a conventional depiction of pain (see Fig. 4.3).⁶⁹ Again, the specific aesthetic of comics is interpreted differently. Nylén also claimed that the thoroughness of the comic survey during the trial made him re-evaluate and appreciate certain aspects of the accused comics, but he noted the lack of an aesthetic discussion of style and metaphorical language by the defence. Schröder also wrote that witnesses in the trial 'gave many of the comics a depth that I had missed completely.'⁷⁰

Pornography and works of art are separated in this problematization. Schröder stated that it was impossible to be aroused by the accused comics.⁷¹ He devoted his written defence, as well as editorials in *Pox* and several debate articles, to contextualizing the comics and their authors, placing them in an avant-garde comic book canon. In his testimony, he advocated the serious nature of the comics, as well as the subjects discussed therein. Schröder wrote that '*Pox*



Figure 4.3 Dori Seda, 'Office tops and bottoms', 106, a panel included in the sexual violence charge. (With permission of Horst Schröder/Epix förlag.)

is, as has been said, a very experimental comic magazine. It goes without saying that some comics can offend so-called good taste. This is the privilege of art (not only of art—but art in particular).⁷² An interesting ambiguity is apparent in this line of reasoning. By categorizing the comics as art, their possible arousing effect on the reader was rejected. The comics in *Pox* are thus defined by what they are not: pornography.

In Schröder's archive there is a faxed copy of the preparatory work on the amendment to the Freedom of the Press Act, including Article 13, with the handwritten note 'NB only porn.' He also published a letter of support from a BDSM practitioner, who stated that from his perspective the accused comics were neither arousing nor sexually sadistic: 'sexual violence possibly, but not sexy violence.'⁷³ To categorize *Pox* as non-pornographic was a way to legitimize its

publication in the eyes of the law. This can be compared with the more recent 'Manga case' in Sweden in 2010. A Swedish translator of manga was charged with possession of child pornography. He had erotic manga (*hentai*) on his computer, and some of them were judged to depict children. This case bore a resemblance to the *Pox* trial, mainly because it was left to the judicial system to decide whether a picture was made with artistic intent, or primarily to sexually arouse someone, again cementing the (questionable) idea that a work of art cannot do both.⁷⁴ However, one difference was that the pictures in the *Pox* trial were part of a sequential narrative, with both text and pictures, and to read the pictures in their context was described as essential by both the defence and the prosecution.

While opposing the label of pornography, the comics published in *Pox* were interpreted as part of the avant-garde and so-called low culture. Many of the contributors to *Pox*'s special issue on censorship referred to the distinction between what they described as high art and low culture, arguing that the latter is more harshly judged. As Arnberg has said, tolerance of explicit sexual content changes over time. Interestingly, though, the arguments for and against such content seem to stay the same. When magazines with pornographic drawings were prosecuted in the early twentieth century, high art, especially poetry, was used as a point of comparison, just as it was in the *Pox* debate. Editors of these magazines remarked that they were being persecuted for publishing what was deemed to be low culture.⁷⁵ Article 13, directed against the unlawful depiction of sexual violence, was also labelled as a 'class law' in 1990, meaning that comic magazines were understood as a lower class in the cultural hierarchy.⁷⁶ *Pox* was defined as underground and avant-garde art, and not the high art thought worthy of protection by a cultural elite.

Conclusions

From the point of view of a legal defence, the regulation of reading is only rational when the magazine in question is defined as non-art, therefore making the issue of aesthetic quality central

to the trial. Thus, the *Pox* trial exposes a conundrum in Swedish literature policy. When state support for literature is distributed, it is always the writers' peers who make the aesthetic judgements; but the judicial system leaves the act of defining art to judges and lawmakers. The postmodern aesthetic of the comics on trial exposed them to the law, which only takes into account a serious intent that may not be present in a postmodern work, where non-serious elements such as comedy, pastiche, and irony are employed. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, obscene and offensive comic books went on trial in several countries where the medium had a low status. The sociohistorical specificities of the *Pox* trial make visible a medium that was in the process of establishing itself as an art form. The acquittal of *Pox* can be understood as a victory for the comic medium, but it had nevertheless had consequences for its publisher. Schröder later described how he was personally and professionally affected by the trial. Sales went down, and as a consequence he had to lay off staff.⁷⁷ Even after the acquittal, one of his distributors withdrew. It is also difficult to pinpoint how the trial affected *Pox's* distribution: Schröder wrote, before the trial, that the sales had more than halved in three years, which he attributed to the wholesale distributor rather than retailers.⁷⁸ This serves as a reminder that not only high-profile events such as trials, but also more mundane issues such as distribution policies, regulate the politics of reading.

In the debate, reading was described as having both positive and negative effects, depending on the quality of the reading material. But when *Pox* was legitimized as a qualitative art form, the effects of reading it were also reduced, because readers were said not to be aroused by the comics. Thus, to not be affected (in a negative or illegal way) was connected to quality—in contrast to the transformative function of high art, whether positive or adverse.

However, in the present-day politics of reading, analogue reading is assumed to have several positive transformative effects, such as furthering and facilitating a sense of democracy and citizenship as well as empathy and education. The negative effects are instead

associated with digital reading and other media.⁷⁹ Putting the *Pox* trial in a larger perspective, the question remains whether it diminishes an art form not to acknowledge that it may have negative, or at least unwanted, effects on its reader. To be classified as art results in a privileged position where transgressions of morality can be disregarded, but this classification seems to entail an understanding of comics and literature as having a predetermined effect on their readers.

Notes

- 1 This study was conducted within the project ‘The Making of the Reading Citizen: Public Debate and Policy 1945–2017’, funded by the Swedish Research Council, 2018–2020 (ref. 2017-01542).
- 2 ‘TT’ 1990; Lisinski 1990b.
- 3 *Expressen* 1990.
- 4 The director of the *Guardian of the Galaxy* franchise, James Gunn, was fired in 2018 for jokes made on Twitter almost a decade earlier, and then reinstated a year later. In Sweden, the battle rapper and comedian Anton ‘Mr Cool’ Magnusson was reported for a rap song written from a paedophile’s perspective, the song was removed from Spotify, but the charges were withdrawn. Two things can be noted for these current cases of protests against immorality, although falling outside of the scope of this chapter: in the current media landscape in the Western world, paedophilia or child pornography seems to be the most contentious issue, rather than sexual violence in general; and distribution seems to be the most successful way of stopping unwanted cultural expressions without resorting to the law courts or political measures (Anton Magnusson’s song ‘Knulla barn’, or ‘Fucking children’, is at the time of writing still not available on Spotify).
- 5 Cf. ‘Introduction’ in this volume; see also Heede and Schatz-Jakobsen in this volume.
- 6 Folkaktionen mot pornografi. The organization was active between 1985 and 1999.
- 7 From the case file: ‘p. 22 upper part of the page, p. 27 lower part of the page, p. 46 upper part of the page, p. 60 with the exception of the top left picture, p. 61 top picture row, p. 106 with the exception of the top left picture and the bottom right picture’ (JK Dnr 1233–89, 1990). Photographs in twelve pornographic magazines were also reported, but JK did not prosecute because their editors were not based in Sweden.
- 8 Article 13 of the Freedom of the Press Act concerns the unlawful depiction of sexual violence or coercion with the intent of distribution, unless there are

- extenuating circumstances. See Regeringens proposition 1986/87:151, *Om ändringar i tryckfrihetsförordningen m.m.* (1987, 8). The unlawful depiction of violence in moving pictures such as videos is regulated in chapter 16, Article 10b of the Penal Code. In Sweden there are only jury trials for cases concerning freedom of expression or freedom of the press, and only the Chancellor of Justice can bring such cases.
- 9 JK Dnr 3163–89–30, *Ifrågasatt tryckfrihetsbrott* (1989); JK Dnr 3722–91–30, *Ifrågasatt tryckfrihetsbrott* (1991).
 - 10 Darnton 1986, 5–30.
 - 11 See ‘Introduction’ in this volume.
 - 12 ‘Special knowledges’, as Foucault 1990 puts it, are the combination of knowledge and power that make different understandings of problems possible.
 - 13 The method is inspired by Bacchi & Goodwin 2016.
 - 14 Still, a certain aesthetic built on ideals of *Bildung* is visible in the Nordic countries, see Hylland & Bjurström 2018, 1–24.
 - 15 Lindsköld 2013; Lindsköld et al. forthcoming.
 - 16 Drotner 1999, 603.
 - 17 Lindsköld 2013; for educational policy in the twentieth century, see Lindsköld et al. 2020.
 - 18 Arnberg 2013, 96–7, 107–109.
 - 19 Nyberg 1998. No major publisher has followed the CCA since the early 2010s.
 - 20 Jalakas 1980, 171–2.
 - 21 For a further example of a Swedish trial against pornographic material, see Arnberg in this volume.
 - 22 Other examples are *Samurai* with Japanese comics (1988–1992), *Topas* with erotic comics (1988–1992), and *Tung Metall* featuring science fiction and fantasy-comics (1986–1990). *Tung Metall* was influenced by the French magazine *Métal hurlant*, also published in the US as *Heavy Metal*.
 - 23 Atterbom 1990, 2.
 - 24 Ernst 2017, 59; Sabin 1993, 69–86.
 - 25 Featherstone 2007; McRobbie 1994.
 - 26 Featherstone 2007, xv, 7; McRobbie 1994, 3.
 - 27 Schröder was appreciated by Swedish comic fans, he was awarded the title ‘Comics promotor of the year’ three years in a row (1987, 1988, 1989), and his publishing was voted as the ‘greatest comics event’ of the 1980s by the industry (*Bild & Bubbla* 1990, 16–20).
 - 28 Gaiman 1999, 8; Moliterno 2000, 426; Castaldi 2010, 89.
 - 29 Blanca 1992.
 - 30 Gaiman & Gibson 1989, 17–25, published in *Outrageous Tales from the Old Testament*, ed. Carol Bennett & Tony Bennett (London: Knockabout, 1987).
 - 31 Carulla 1989, 27–8. Made in 1983, no other information available.
 - 32 Paziienza 1989, 39–46, first published in *Comic Art*, 28 (1986), 25–39.

- 33 Moliterno 2000, 426, s.v. 'Pazienza, Andrea.'
- 34 Regrettably, and despite considerable effort, I have been unable to obtain reliable biographical information on Karen D'Amico.
- 35 D'Amico & Gilbert 1989, 55–62, first published in *Bizarre Sex, Kitchen Sink Press, 1972 series*, 8 (1980).
- 36 Seda 1989, 105–106, first published in *Weird Smut Comics*, 2 (1987).
- 37 The special censorship issue *Pox, Åtalad! Ett specialnummer av Pox om censur* (*Pox* 1989, nr 1, 18–19) also included Neil Gaiman's reflections on the prosecution. Gaiman 2008 was his later blog post about the event.
- 38 Sabin 1993, 84–5, 178. Knockabout also published a special issue on censorship trials.
- 39 Adolphson 2013, 297–308; Comic Book Legal Defence Fund 2018.
- 40 Heikkinen 2008, 84.
- 41 He was also a teacher, journalist and editor-in-chief of *Vår kyrka*, a Church of Sweden weekly magazine.
- 42 The other witnesses were Gert Z. Nordström, professor at the University of Arts, Crafts and Design; John-Henri Holmberg, chief editor of the publishing company Bra böcker; Isabella Nilsson, editor of the art journal *Paletten* and member of the working group on state support for comics; and Magnus Knutsson, comic book author.
- 43 Adolphson 2013, 306.
- 44 Compare with the exhaustive whitebook on the 1957 trial of Agnar Mykle's *Sangen om den røde rubin* (1956) (Schjødt 1958); see also Schatz-Jakobsen and Arnberg for accounts of other trials where similar questions have been raised.
- 45 Nylén 1990; Söderhjelm 1990.
- 46 Boëthius, written statement, JK Dnr 1233–89 (1990), 2.
- 47 Ibid. 3.
- 48 Ibid. 4.
- 49 Johansson 1990.
- 50 Arnberg 2013, 96–7.
- 51 Drotner 1999, 610–11.
- 52 Lisinski 1990a.
- 53 Arnberg 2010, 237–261, 279.
- 54 Lisinski 1990b.
- 55 Dalquist 1998, 178–196; for the Swedish political debate on video violence, see Blomgren 2019, 322–36.
- 56 Dahl 1990.
- 57 Lisinski 1990c. Dahl's criticism of *Pox* was satirized in a comic where an artist named 'Peter Skandahl' is gifted wrongly labelled colour pencils and is confounded when 'the sea is red, the sun is green' (Kamagurka 1989, 16).
- 58 Åman 1990.

- 59 Nylén 1989.
- 60 Weigl 1990.
- 61 Belfiore & Bennett 2008.
- 62 Johan Höjer, Joakim Pirinen, Gunna Grähs and Ola Lindahl ‘Upprop av svenska serieskapare!’ in JK Dnr 1233–89, (1990).
- 63 JK Dnr 1233–89, (1990).
- 64 Pirinen & Classon 1989, 83.
- 65 Sundkvist 1990, 33–5.
- 66 Johansson 1990.
- 67 Söderhjelm 1990.
- 68 Schröder 1989a.
- 69 Nylén 1990.
- 70 Schröder 1990, 48.
- 71 Larsson 1989.
- 72 Schröder 1989b, 5.
- 73 ‘Magnus’ 1990, 10–11.
- 74 Jönsson 2012, 134.
- 75 Arnberg 2017, 10–11.
- 76 Elvsén 1990, 32; Lisinski 1990a.
- 77 Schröder 1989d, 2, 30
- 78 Schröder 1989c, 1, 52. He would go on to sue the company in 1994 for having a monopoly on distribution; Schröder lost. After 1994, his publishing company Epix has only published comic books, not magazines (see Schröder n.d.).
- 79 Lindsköld et al. forthcoming.

PART II

CONTINGENCIES OF CENSORSHIP

Risen from the ashes

Black magic and secret manuscripts in the parish of Burseryd-Sandvik

Åsa Ljungström

Religion has historically been one of the primary reasons for censorship.¹ The Christian Church has been particularly harsh on writings that for one reason or another were considered heretical or blasphemous—including the many forms of pagan tradition and ‘magical’ folklore. In past centuries, grounds for censorship by the Church of Sweden have included any supranormal beliefs, rituals, recipes, instructions, charms, incantations, conjurations, entreaties, or spells. This study details one such act of censorship and its effects over a period of more than 200 years.

In 1774, the clergyman Johannes Gasslander (1718–1793) was reproached by his bishop for having published a record of local folklife in the parish of Burseryd-Sandvik in south-western Sweden entitled ‘Description of the Mentality and Customs of the Swedish Peasants, Yearly Rituals, Proposals, Marriages, Funerals, Superstitions, Customs of Food and Drink, Costume, Afflictions and Cures, Location and Condition of the Villages, etc.’ (hereafter *Beskrifning*).² The bishop’s condemnation of the book caused Gasslander to burn every copy he could find. The following study will review the effects of this act of self-censorship, with particular regard to three magic manuscripts that would turn up in the aftermath of the fire. The story encompasses the manuscripts’ historical context, their writers and compilers, and their provenance over a period of

three centuries.³ The goal, though, is to detail the subversive power ascribed to these texts—even if, or because, they disappeared and came to feature in local storytelling.

In terms of theory and methodology, my study is inspired by the basic tenets of actor–network–theory (ANT). This involves adopting a narratological approach to describe the way in which material artefacts relate to technology and environment, creating chains of agency involving both human and non-human actors.⁴ Even the vacuum left by things gone missing may be considered in terms of actorship. The ethnologist Lotten Gustafsson Reinius, for instance, has analysed cases of lost artefacts reappearing and the narratives they generate. Gustafsson Reinius convincingly demonstrates that missing artefacts possess an agency-in-their-absence that produces stories in a dialectic between materiality and narrativity.⁵ Gustafsson Reinius' perspective can be further enriched by the theoretical concept of agnotology. Agnotology theorizes how knowledge is created or lost, suppressed or left to disappear—and how the absence of knowledge is always an outcome of a cultural and political struggle.⁶ In this context—a study of missing texts, secret manuscripts, and suppressed narratives handed down within families—the agnotological approach has proved especially productive. By identifying the gaps that function as narrative triggers, and by following the trail of 'missing knowledge', I will attempt to reconstruct and make sense of the various narrative layers that have successively enveloped the manuscripts over time.⁷

My understanding of these magico-philosophical texts from the eighteenth century is informed by Owen Davies's *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (2009). Just like the magical texts described by Davies, the manuscripts in question here were shaped by a conception of magic typical of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in turn reflected the world view of medieval scholasticism. This world view included a tripartite understanding of the world: the divine sphere, unavailable for men to explore and gain insight into; the natural world, containing all of God's Creation, including angels and demons, all of which could be penetrated by science and

natural philosophy; and the third, supernatural sphere, containing phenomena whose causes could not be explained.⁸ This world view explains the early modern ‘scientific’ interest in exploring the borderlands of the second and third spheres—in other words, the natural and supernatural, encompassing theology, natural philosophy, and science. This is particularly evident in early modern demonological literature, in which all kinds of magic, sorcery, and witchcraft could be called upon as valid explanations of ‘supernatural’ phenomena.

Condemnation of the *Beskrifning*

Petrus Gasslander (1680–1758) arrived in the parish of Burseryd-Sandvik in November 1712. As a new parish priest, he might have begun to record traditions, customs, and non-sanctioned, supernatural beliefs in response to the government’s demand for historical inquiries glorifying the Swedish state.⁹ Gasslander’s work eventually resulted in the *Beskrifning*, published in 1774 by Frans Westerdahl, a disciple of Carl Linnaeus. Westerdahl intended for the work to be the model for a national inventory of vernacular customs and beliefs. However, only this first part ever appeared. Most likely, Petrus’ son Johannes Gasslander had given Westerdahl the manuscript since his father had died sixteen years earlier. There has been some question whether the father, Petrus, or the son, Johannes, was the author—a reasonable guess is that Johannes continued to work on the text after his father’s death, but on the grounds of style and voice Petrus is likely to have been the principal author.¹⁰

When published, however, the bishop pronounced his severe displeasure at a clergymen’s meeting, and condemned the book in public. His exact words and reasons are not known. Johannes took the condemnation seriously, though, gathered every copy of the book he could find and burnt them in an act of self-censorship. Not only did the book become rare, but the loss also created a knowledge void among his parishioners as well as for subsequent scholars. This lacuna, however, was highly productive in a narrative sense, because it gave rise to many rumours about the clergymen

and physicians of the Gasslander family and their supposed dealings in black magic. One local story can in all likelihood be ascribed to a mishearing, which in itself is a testimony to the Gasslander family's magical aura. Locally, it was held true that Johannes had burnt 'black magic', something that was probably due to an illogical mishearing of 'svartkonst' (black magic) as 'svartkol' (black coal). Probably, this narrative tradition also included rumours of the Gasslanders having engaged in wide-ranging studies of strange books in foreign languages. As late as 1900, rumours flourished about Johannes' son, the physician and 'great sorcerer' Sven Petter Gasslander. His widow was said to have sunk a collection of black magic books along with his Freemason's insignia in a lake after his funeral.¹¹

The *Beskrifning* is a sympathetic documentation of local customs and rituals that also contains medical prescriptions and instructions about various kinds of supernatural creatures. While the author marks a clear distance to these practices, underscoring that they belong to the distant, heathen past, some passages in the book nonetheless suggest that some of the superstitious beliefs were still circulating in the parish. A belief in the existence of spirit creatures by large groups of the district would also have been reason enough to censor the book.¹² Common superstition and magic, as practised among the peasants themselves, were easy enough to tolerate; when printed, with the potential of mass-distribution, however, the matter would necessarily have become more pressing and 'official'. Any bishop would feel he had to act on written evidence of customs that were considered 'perverted religion' by the Church. In addition, the Church was well aware of the revolutionary potential, as well as the perceived authority, of printed matter.

Folklorists have usually accepted the obliteration of superstition as the primary motif for the bishop's reproach. However, the Church's strategy was usually to keep its eyes shut. An equally important explanation was the bishop's fear that even more dangerous manuscripts might appear from the vicarage. There had for instance

been mentions of other texts written by the elder Gasslander, Petrus. It was also known that Petrus had taken a strong interest in the early mysticism of Emanuel Swedenborg. The bishop might also have been concerned with the West Nordic folklore tradition, in which legends of the Devil's 'Black School' in Wittenberg were included. Johannes' parish, Burseryd-Sandvik, some 100 kilometres from Gothenburg, fell within the area where these legends were known.¹³ Clergymen were rumoured to be educated by the Devil himself in the Wittenberg school in Germany, receiving a book of black magic as a symbol of their graduation.¹⁴ The bishop would not have wanted to fuel these legends. Yet, the incident of the book burning had exactly this effect. It made people talk, filling the void left by the folklife document with speculations as to the Gasslanders' occult dealings. In this sense, the bishop's concerns also proved justified since, as will be seen, the Gasslander family already possessed several books of magic, among them a particularly devilish work—the so-called Red Book.

The vicar for his part had every reason to keep the manuscripts secret, and the bishop certainly did not want any more commotion. Both parties may have been content to forget the whole incident and make sure not to leave any written trace. The vicar burnt the books. Yet a year later, following a proposal from the editor Westerdahl, the bishop let the cathedral chapter circulate the remaining copies as a model for new folklife records, as if nothing had ever happened.¹⁵

Johannes' burning of the books should be considered a performative event in several regards, generating a complex chain of responses at the local as well as at the national level. The reason the secret books of magic became known must likewise be traced back to the rumours that kept circulating for over a century after the actual event. As I will show, the Gasslander legacy thus connects the productive void of the *Beskrifning* with vacuums left by other missing manuscripts.

The Black Book, the Red Book, and the Sandvik Notebook

While the drama of the censored *Beskrifning* was acted out in 1774, there were still two or three secret manuscripts hidden in Johannes' vicarage—the Black Book and the Red Book, and an ordinary-looking collection of notes called the Sandvik Notebook (named after the place where it was found).¹⁶ The latter text is a private notebook, compiled by Johannes, documenting his parishioners' 'magical' folk practices and house remedies. It seems to have been compiled by Johannes over a considerable period of time. His ageing handwriting there can be compared to his daybooks, the work journals he kept for 25 years.¹⁷ The Black Book and the Red Book, on the other hand, were copied and compiled from books of German and French origin by more than one Gasslander, albeit mostly by Johannes, while it is possible that the Red Book was completed by Johannes' son Sven Petter (1754–1833).

The Black Book carries the uninformative title 'Diiverse Saker' ('Various Things') in mirror writing. It consists of 168 pages, quarto, bound in a black paper with a leather back, containing 361 paragraphs and magical symbols in black or brown ink on handmade paper. The pagination, some titles, and underlined passages are done in red ink. A six-page index lists 'all the animals, birds, insects and herbs, and oils noted in the book'. There is also a twelve-page alphabetic index, a printed runic calendar for the year 1755, a Hebrew alphabet, and a key to some of the symbols used in the text. The text is written in black letter and contains various occult symbols.

The ethnologist Nils-Arvid Bringéus links the Black Book with the Swedish surveys of superstitions conducted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, demonstrating that most of its material was in fact imported from abroad. Many of the prescriptions, for instance, were copied from continental books of magic and housekeeping of the *Kunst- und Wunderbuch* type, and most can be traced to a single source: the *Wolfgang Hildebrandi Magia Naturalis*, first published in Darmstadt in 1610, and then in Sweden in 1650. As a compilation of

European material, the Black Book cannot be regarded as a source of Nordic folk magic.¹⁸ This is also true of the Red Book, which should be understood as an example of the grimoire.

A grimoire is a book of charms and invocations. Its main purpose is to instruct in the ritual creation of magical objects, appeals to spiritual helpers, or protection against malevolent spirits. Typically, grimoires also contained spells that would give luck in hunting, cure illnesses, fulfil desires—and even influence divine destiny. The Red Book, which is entitled ‘Salomoniska magiska konstér’ (‘Solomonic Magical Arts’, referring to the secret, magic wisdom of King Solomon), does overlap with the Sandvik Notebook to a minor extent; however, it also has spells of a notably more malicious and sexually explicit character.¹⁹ The book itself consists of 70 pages and 92 paragraphs, some of them appearing twice. The cover was originally red, with a leather spine. It is smaller than the Black Book, and in all likelihood was compiled at a later date as well. The folklorist Nils Gabriel Djurklou (1829–1904) believed it to be no older than the first half of the eighteenth century, but I would argue that it is in the handwriting of the ageing Johannes, which suggests the second part of the eighteenth century. Djurklou copied the text in 1874 to 1876, recreating the skull and bones emblem on the title page—a reference to the Freemasons of which it was believed that parts of the Gasslander family were members.²⁰

The title page and emblem are followed by a circle in twelve sections, a page with two columns of twelve numbered parts, and then a page of ‘Mefistophile befall’ in the imperative (identical in both German and Swedish), commanding Mephistopheles (a demon featured in German folklore) along with an illegible word, possibly *Kraft* (power) or *Präst* (priest). On every page the text is framed by a thin line, and the page numbers appear in the upper fore-edge corners. Small pictures and Wittenberg letters are drawn in the margins or horizontally over the page. The text is densely written in black letter, often underlined. The handwriting of two different authors can be made out: Johannes and his son Sven Petter.

The Red Book thus contains a wide mixture of prescriptions. Relatively harmless charms for hunting, fishing, shooting, toothache, and snakebites are recorded side by side with spells of a more diabolical variety. These include charms for turning invisible, ruining the harvests of an enemy or even killing him, and, in particular, of winning various sexual favours. It passes on the secrets of how to call upon women, arouse them, make them tell their secrets, find out if they are virgins, make them strip a man's clothes, prevent pregnancies, etcetera. As will be seen, the explicit nature of some of the book's contents would prove too much for the respectable gentlemen scholars of the early twentieth century.

In most important regards, the Red Book was compiled from the French grimoire *Petit Albert*, most likely created in the seventeenth century and one of the most widely spread texts of its kind. The connection is evident from a comparison of passages in the Red Book with a Norwegian version of the *Petit Albert*.²¹ This is seemingly why the Red Book has urban descriptions and elements that would have been wholly alien to most people in the eighteenth-century Swedish countryside. We can only speculate whether rumours of the black books of Wittenberg might have led a well-read clergyman to attempt to recreate such a tome, whether in earnest or for fun. However, such a book would have to be truly diabolic to be taken as the authentic work of the Devil.

The grimoire genre

It is generally acknowledged that the Age of Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason, was characterized by an almost equally strong drive towards esotericism and mysticism.²² The mass publication of grimoires was one response to a public demand for occultism and secret knowledge. The books and notebooks kept by the Gasslanders, and the works they consulted in the making of these books, can in this sense be regarded as typical.

Like many other grimoires, the manuscripts in the possession of the Gasslanders contain charms that offer protection against

malevolent spells and signs.²³ In Europe, charms formed an integral part of vernacular Christianity, and it has been suggested that it was Christian demonology—for instance, the Bible’s depiction of evil spirits—that created a demand for such charms in the first place.²⁴ More malicious spells designed to kill or destroy were also frequent. Often, the spells consisted of nonsensical formulas such as scrambled prayers in Latin combined with Greek letters and ‘incomprehensible’ amalgamations of words and symbols. Such characters were known as ‘Wittenberg letters’. Many of them were in fact Greek and Hebrew letters or Cabbalistic symbols of deities and planets. Attesting to the overlap between Christian and occult practices at the time, symbols such as the cross, triangle, and pentagram were also used.

This use of symbols and ‘magical’ writing bears all the hallmarks of what Walter Ong has described as characteristic of ‘the onset of literacy’. According to Ong, the introduction of any script (alphabetical or otherwise) to a society necessarily first takes place in restricted sectors, and writing is at first often conceived of as ‘an instrument of secret and magic power’.²⁵ Vestiges of the close ties between (written) language and magic still abound. In Middle English the word ‘grammarye’, or grammar, referred to book-learning, but came to mean occult or magical lore, and is still present in the word ‘grimoire’, a term used for a book of magic.²⁶ Likewise, the runic alphabet of medieval Northern Europe was (and to some extent still is) commonly associated with magic, and fragments of writing were sometimes used as amulets.²⁷ Although mass reading was established quite early in Sweden, it still would seem that Sweden shared traits with societies of limited literacy and in some instances regarded writing as posing a danger to the uneducated peasants and other common folk.

One constitutive feature of a book of magic is that someone believes in its existence, and if one seeks to ‘create’ a diabolical book—be it for commercial reasons or as an elaborate hoax—the book has to be perceived as truly and ‘plausibly’ diabolical.²⁸ The belief in, and fear of, these books was also more widespread among

Swedish peasants than the books themselves. This respect can partly be ascribed to a veneration of the written word.²⁹ The idea that someone could use magic to alter the relation between right and wrong, good and evil, yours and mine, was terrifying—and alluring.

The fate of the manuscripts

While Johannes continued to live comfortably and managed to send his sons to university, the rumours about his family persisted.³⁰ His son, Sven Petter, studied medicine before returning home to the parish. In time, he became a physician with a considerable catchment area. He grew medicinal herbs, concocted treatments, prescribed visits to the local spa, and even invented a form of electrical generator. It was also said that Sven Petter fed rumours of his medical powers by encouraging the local stories of magic surrounding his family. Hence, his clientele believed that he used his father's and grandfather's magical books for healing purposes. They also believed that by magical means he could retrieve stolen property or 'freeze' a thief at the scene of the crime.³¹

Once another century had passed, Petrus's *Beskrifning* found a new appreciation for its documentation of the customs of the common people—recorded without either archaicizing or romanticizing tendencies. By the 1870s, the National Romantic movement was inspiring the further documentation of peasant life and local history. In the process, inventories of old manuscripts were drawn up. Might there be more manuscripts left by the Gasslanders? Attempts were made to trace their books and papers. It was known in Burseryd-Sandvik that Sven Petter, the non-clerical son of Johannes, had moved the Gasslander books to his Sandvik home in 1812. The property had in turn been inherited by the Lundeberg family in the 1870s.

Ludvig Palmgren (1844–1915), a young clergyman and a keen collector of rare literature, was commissioned to draw up inventories by Nils Gabriel Djurklou, a member of the Royal Academy of

History and Antiquities. Both Palmgren and Djurklou were part of the National Romantic movement in which folklore was taken to be a manifestation of a type of national community with a popular base.³² Palmgren got news of two rare manuscripts of magic at Sandvik manor, said to have been used by ‘a great sorcerer’, meaning Sven Petter, grandson of Petrus, ‘the clergyman Gasslander in Burseryd known in the History of Literature.’³³ Hinting that he would find a way to procure the manuscripts, Palmgren wrote to Djurklou about borrowing the books of magic.³⁴ In fact, Palmgren was eventually to marry the sister of Sandvik’s owner, P. W. Lundeberg. In 1874, he managed to send Djurklou both the Black Book and the Red Book in order for them to be copied.³⁵ At this time the books, along with the Sandvik Notebook, were not publicly known.

Djurklou transcribed the two books as one manuscript with a sketch of two black hands, and a skull and crossbones, the Freemasonic emblem, on the front flyleaf. Like every subsequent scholar, Djurklou must have wondered about the diabolic segments of the Red Book. They did not correlate to the known collections of folklore magic, and none of the researchers at the turn of the twentieth century connected them to the continental grimoires. From the start, Djurklou intended for the manuscript to be published. But what to do with the malicious—and especially the sexually explicit—parts? Morally, they certainly broke the bounds of public decency in the late 1800s. By making a combined transcription that disrupted the original order of the texts, the Red Book was made to ‘disappear’ into the Black Book, thereby protecting the reputation of the owner—Lundeberg—and the legacy of the Gasslander family. By focusing on parts of the books that had to do with local customs, rather than material influenced by the occult interests of the well-read European aristocracy, Djurklou could avoid dealing explicitly with the more problematic content of the Red Book. Thus suppressed, the Red Book became what Robert Proctor would term a piece of ‘unwanted knowledge’, from what, in Amy Shuman’s terms, was an ‘untellable’ narrative, since a public relation of the manuscript’s contents would be harmful to the owner’s reputation.³⁶

Djurklou returned the originals to Palmgren, but there they remained until his death in 1915. Palmgren, in his obsession with rare books, apparently stopped at nothing. Local stories talked of him carrying off books from Sandvik manor by the carriageful. Lundeberg and his family never saw the books again. It was the Red Book and Black Book, however, having gone missing in 1876, that left the most profound void—not only at Sandvik, but in the discourse of its then owners. In 1895, when Petrus' *Beskrifning* was reprinted, professor Johan August Lundell wrote to P. W. Lundeberg to inquire about a book of magic and an oil portrait of Petrus.³⁷ The letter not only piqued the family's interest in the manuscripts, but also marked the starting point for a frustrated inquiry for the missing book—and stories of the search passed down through the generations.

When later researched by folklife scholars hoping to publish the magic manuscripts, they could not be located in any public library, museum, or archive. Eventually, in 1918, defeat was admitted and the manuscripts were published from Djurklou's combined copy, under the title of the Red Book: 'Solomonic Black Magic: Excerpts from the Manuscripts of Black Magic by a Clergyman in Westbo'.³⁸ The editor of the 1918 edition had hopes of tying the manuscript to Sandvik and the Gasslander family, believing that the spells in the book derived from local traditions. It would take until 1967, however, until Bringéus could properly identify the 'clergyman' of the title as Johannes Gasslander.³⁹

And it was not until a book auction in 1924 that the actual Black Book appeared and was bought by Lund University Library. It could then be traced back to Ludvig Palmgren. At the same auction, a selective transcript of the Red Book was also put up for sale, but since the connection to its sister volume remained unknown, it was bought separately by the Museum of Cultural History in Lund. It did indeed prove to be a copy of the original Red Book—in a freely modernized version by no other than Palmgren. The real Red Book was donated to the museum in 1953 by his son. The head of the museum does not seem to have recognized its true identity,

cataloguing it as a generic ‘book of black magic.’⁴⁰ As an exquisite artefact, however, it was frequently shown in exhibitions until it was mislaid. By chance, Bringéus found it again in 1991.⁴¹ Once more the book was put on display, only to be once more mislaid—continuing to generate stories, and responses to its absence.

Conclusions

When the 1774 publication of the *Beskrifning*—regarded as a transgressive documentation of magic and superstition—met with the bishop’s condemnation and a subsequent act of self-censorship, the inhabitants of the parish were left astounded. The books that were burnt had an intimate connection to the parishioners, and they are likely to have speculated widely. Contrary to the supposed intentions of the bishop, rumours concerning further magic manuscripts flourished. In the absence of actual knowledge, these rumours in turn became stories about books of black magic, and of the Gasslander family who just might have been a family of sorcerers. While people talked about the foreign books the Gasslanders owned, actual knowledge of the Black Book and Red Book was limited in the eighteenth century. Because of the persistent rumours, however, they were eventually tracked down at Sandvik—thus indefinitely thwarting the intentions of the original act of censorship.

The story of the magic manuscripts from Burseryd is also a story about repeated acts of literary suppression. Initially, Petrus’ records of local folklore were destroyed because of self-censorship by his son. Djurklou’s transcript, appearing in the aftermath of the pyre, should in turn be regarded as a second act of censorship, since he attempted to mask the malicious and sexually explicit content of the Red Book by hiding it in the more modest context of the Black Book. Once the original manuscripts were returned to Palmgren, a third act of suppression took place when Palmgren himself took possession of the books, hiding them until his death in 1915.⁴² When the Red Book was finally donated to a museum by Palmgren’s son, its true identity was once more lost to the scholarly community,

for though it appeared in various exhibitions its actual contents remained hidden—eventually leading to the work being misplaced in the archives of the museum. Brought to light in 1991 due to Bringéus' efforts, it would then make an unlikely fifth disappearance.

As is evident, the Red Book retained a diabolic aura that warranted continued censorial efforts. At the same time, these acts of suppression fed the interest of scholars, myself included. Importantly, then, the many attempts to withhold knowledge about the magic manuscripts have merely resulted in creative efforts to fill the gaps in our information.⁴³ As I have shown, this dialectic should be regarded as an example of the narrative productivity often generated by missing objects. I would argue that the Red Book itself was created in response to the rumours of magic books in the parish of Sandvik-Burseryd. Thus, it is perhaps only fitting that this work would become a node in a long chain of stories and scholarly responses emanating from the voids that have filled and fuelled the history of the Red Book's reception.

Notes

- 1 See, for example, Bald 2006, xi, along with Karolides 2006 and Sova 2006a–b.
- 2 Gasslander 1774.
- 3 My previous publications on the fate of these manuscripts, though not from the particular perspective of censorship, include Ljungström 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d. This research, including the present article, has been conducted with generous support from The Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy.
- 4 See, for example, Law 2004, 157; Damsholt 2013, 73.
- 5 Gustafsson Reinius 2013, 137.
- 6 Proctor 2008, i–xxxiii.
- 7 This approach also takes its question from Shuman 2006, 149–162.
- 8 Davies 2009; Fors 2015.
- 9 My suggestion is supported by an anonymous reviewer of the book in 1776, who quotes the editor's mention of two royal letters from 1666 about 'the great inquiry into the ancient monuments' (*Tidningar utgifne i Upsala* 1776, 98); Bringéus 1995, 79–96.
- 10 In what follows I distinguish between the members of the Gasslander family—their own spelling—by their given names: Petrus (father), Johannes (son) and Sven Petter (grandson).

- 11 Virdestam 1931, 138; Werner 1923, 7–18; Carlsson 1901, 3–124.
- 12 Oja 1999, 283 ff.
- 13 These stories were likely to have been revitalized by the publication in Germany in the eighteenth century of the 6th and 7th Books of Moses—books allegedly written by Moses, and passed down as lost books of the Christian Old Testament. The publication of these apocrypha continued well into the twentieth century (see Norum Resløkken 2012; Davies 2009, 5, 95).
- 14 ”Prästen i Sandvik”, Dialekt-, ortnamns och folkminnesarkivet i Göteborg (VFA 1801); Edsman 1962, 88; Gunnell 1998, 87–111; Davies 2009, 167–88.
- 15 Werner, 1923, 10; Domkapitlets i Växjö arkiv (EIII:117); Domkapitlets i Växjö arkiv (Akt 207). A note exists, however, that criticizes the venture for drawing attention to the silly ways of the peasantry (see Oja 1999, 275; SOU 1924:27, 8).
- 16 ‘Sandvikshäftet’ (‘The Sandvik Notebook’, Department of Dialectology and Folklore Research, Uppsala (signum DFU 39499)); ‘Svarta boken’ (‘The Black Book’, Lund University Library); ‘Svartkonstbok’ (‘Röda boken’, ‘The Red Book’, Museum of Cultural History, Lund (signum IV: 59)). As in Davies 2009, 1, 18, a ‘book’ before the advent of print refers to ‘a portable series of written leaves or sheets joined together’, see also Ong 2002, 91–2. In Sweden to this day, any handwritten manuscript will be called ‘a book’ if bound and given a cover.
- 17 Manuscript Gasslander, Johannes, Biografiska anteckningar i interfolierade almanackor för åren 1756–1791 (Biographical Notes interfoliated in Calendars), Gothenburg University Library, Manuscripts Department, signum H 1957/13, Heh 8:o 19.
- 18 Collijn 1942, i. 385–6; Rääf 1957; Törner 1946; see also Bringéus 1967.
- 19 In its selection of material, the Sandvik Notebook is adapted to the needs of the local population. The suggested cures are rather spectacular, however, with extravagant spells to treat common problems and ailments.
- 20 ‘Svartkonstbok’ (‘Röda boken’, ‘The Red Book’, Museum of Cultural History, Lund (signum IV: 59)); Örebro läns museum 1918; Bringéus 1967, 20.
- 21 This connection is determined by Norum Resløkken 2012; see also Davies 2009, 93–138, and the transcription of *Petit Albert*, www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/petitalb.htm, accessed 28 Feb. 2019.
- 22 Lamm 1918–1920.
- 23 Roper 2004, 1.
- 24 Gray 2004, 32–46; Roper 2004, 3.
- 25 Ong 2002, 91–2.
- 26 According to Owen Davies, the derivation of the word ‘grimoire’ is not entirely certain, possibly from the French *grammaire* (grammar), referring to something difficult to understand.
- 27 Ong 2002, *ibid.*
- 28 Dégh & Vázsonyi 1983, 5–30; Edsman 1962, 88; Gunnell 1998, 87–111.

- 29 Klintberg 1965; Ong 2002, 91; Ralph 1992, 493–509.
- 30 Manuscript Gasslander, Johannes (Day-books) 1756–1791.
- 31 Carlsson 1901; Virdestam, 1931, 138; Dialekt-, ortnamns och folkminnesarkivet i Göteborg (VFA 1801).
- 32 Palmfelt 2010, 8–17.
- 33 Bringéus 1967, 17.
- 34 L. Palmgren to N. G. Djurklou, 16 April 1874, after Bringéus 1967.
- 35 Rosengren et al. 1914, 1060.
- 36 Bringéus 1991, 91; Shuman 2006; Proctor 2008.
- 37 Private ownership, J. A. Lundell to P. W. Lundeberg, 16 April 1874.
- 38 Örebro läns museum 1918, 7–112; Bringéus 1967 writes that most of the incantations were taken from the seventeenth-century treatise, *Wolfgang Hildebrandi, Magia Naturalis Libri Quatuor* (Darmstadt 1610, first pub. Sweden 1650), and their purpose was to cure sickness in men and beast (Hildebrand 1610 in Collijn 1942–44, 385–6).
- 39 Bringéus 1967.
- 40 ‘Svartkonstbok’, ‘Röda boken’, ‘The Red Book’, Museum of Cultural History, Lund (signum IV: 59).
- 41 Bringéus 1991.
- 42 Palmgren was a colourful character who actively promoted rumours of his own magical skills (a belief strengthened by his association with the missing books). See Virdestam 1931.
- 43 For the productive effects of censorship, see also the introduction, Lindegren, and Malita in this volume.

Some aesthetic side effects of copyright

Kenneth Lindegren

From a utilitarian point of view, copyright laws are regarded as ‘incentive structures that produce a socially optimal supply of intellectual creations.’¹ Constructing and managing these incentive structures is a delicate balancing act. If the protection of intellectual property is too weak, fewer would be willing to invest time, effort, and capital in producing new works. Too strong a protection would, on the other hand, make it harder to build new works upon existing ones—something nearly all authors, in some way or other, do—and create problems for critics and scholars who need to be allowed to describe and quote from the works they are discussing. Hence the importance and difficulty of finding an acceptable balance between respect for intellectual property and creative liberty and freedom of speech.

‘Western societies,’ Rosemary J. Coombe says, ‘have witnessed a massive expansion of the scope and duration of intellectual property rights since the mid eighteenth century, and an even greater growth and proliferation of legal protections in the twentieth century.’² Does this mean that the regulation of artistic expression has become unbalanced? Some think that the strong variety of copyright resembles a form of censorship and that the current situation is alarming.³ The cultural and media historian Siva Vaidhyanathan expresses this concern succinctly: ‘Gradually the law has lost sight of its original charge: to encourage creativity, science, and democracy. Instead,

the law now protects the producers and taxes consumers. It rewards works already created and limits works yet to be created.⁴

Although I share the concern, especially regarding the current duration (in most countries, the author's life plus 70 years), which can hardly be said to benefit anyone except the copyright owner, I would nevertheless argue that copyright also has aesthetically productive side effects. The discussion of copyright laws as a balancing act seems to presuppose that protection of property rights always limits the range of expressive options. Copyright laws, from this point of view, are justified, because they protect authors from financial and moral exploitation, but the effects on creative liberty are implicitly described as exclusively negative. Missing from the discussion is the fact that rules imposed on an activity also constitute the foundation for certain types of actions that would not be possible without the rules. As a regulatory system, copyright certainly does impose limits on artistic expressions, but distinctions enforced by the law have at the same time opened up space for new sub-genres and new types of authorship.⁵

I will limit my discussion to one particular activity: the use of extant fictional characters in new stories. I will for practical reasons—sometimes anachronistic and sometimes slightly at odds with its ordinary usage—employ 'sequel' as an umbrella term for all works that result from this activity. A sequel is here simply understood as a narrative work that tells a new story about a character (or characters) known from a previous work.⁶

There are two reasons for choosing sequels to discuss the aesthetic effects of copyright. Firstly, using known characters in new works is an *aesthetic* activity, in contrast to the verbatim copying of texts. Secondly, sequel writing is one of the literary practices most recently subjected to legal restrictions. Since it also is one of the oldest ways in which we critically engage with the stories that surround us, regulation of sequel writing illustrates how the expansion of copyright has reached a point where it seriously threatens to make us mere consumers of texts already written rather than participants in a cultural dialogue.

Fair use

Copyright law today provides copyright owners with the option to take legal action against sequels written by others. Even though an exact date is hard to pin down, it is safe to say that this option was not available before the twentieth century.⁷ There are exceptions in the legislation of most countries, however, which allow certain kinds of uses of copyright-protected works. In the US these exceptions are covered by the term fair use, and include uses with a critical or parodic purpose.⁸

The current situation may be illustrated by J. D. Salinger's suit against Fredrik Colting in 2009. Colting's novel *60 Years Later: Coming Through the Rye* tells the story of a 76-year-old Mr C roaming New York on the run from a nursing home. The main bulk of the narrative closely parallels Holden Caulfield's adventures in *The Catcher in the Rye*, with the difference being that the protagonist is sixty years older. Salinger sued Colting for infringing his exclusive right both to produce a sequel to *The Catcher in the Rye* and to use the character Holden Caulfield in a new story. Regarding the latter, Salinger's suit included a long list of similarities between the two protagonists, intended to establish that Colting's Mr C is Salinger's Holden Caulfield. There was also paratextual evidence. On the cover of the book, as well as in newspaper interviews with Colting, Mr C was identified as Holden Caulfield and the novel presented as a sequel to *The Catcher in the Rye*.

In his defence, Colting argued that his novel was a parody and a critical commentary, and as such constituted fair use of Salinger's literary property. His purpose in writing *60 Years Later* was to 'critically examin[e] the character Holden, and his presentation in *Catcher* as an authentic and admirable (maybe even heroic) figure'⁹ The New York District Court dismissed Colting's assertion: it did not find his version of Holden sufficiently transformative to be regarded a parody or critical commentary within the context of copyright law. As a successful example, the court referenced *The Wind Done Gone* (2001), Alice Randall's retelling of Margeret Mitchell's *Gone*

With the Wind (1936) from the point of view of Cyanara (Scarlett O'Hara's half-sister), whose mother is a slave. While *The Wind Done Gone* exposes the underlying racism in Mitchell's beloved novel, *60 Years Later* merely rehashes themes that are already extant in Salinger's novel. It does not expose anything, it just repeats the original work's contrast between Holden's admirable and pathetic personality traits. The court, in other words, ultimately agreed with Salinger's assessment that Colting's sequel 'is not a parody and it does not comment upon or criticize the original. It is a rip-off pure and simple.'¹⁰

The notion of ownership

Salinger was certainly not the first author to condemn character appropriation. Authors have expressed their concerns about this since at least the beginning of the seventeenth century, roughly around three hundred years before copyright law came to regard characters as protectable elements of a work. As my mention of a date (the beginning of the seventeenth century) suggests, while Salinger's assertion of his right to Holden Caulfield belongs to a longstanding tradition, it should not be understood as just a modern example of a phenomenon that is as old as literature itself. The notion that a character is an entity created by and belonging to a specific author, which underlies the feelings of resentment towards others who use this character, has not always been self-evident.

Using known characters is, however, a phenomenon as old as literature itself. It was an uncontroversial literary practice until the modern novel discarded the use of protagonists provided by tradition (history, legend, or classical literature) in favour of original characters. Original, that is, in the sense of new characters invented by the author.¹¹ Sequel writing continued, obviously, but changed, imbued with a provocative potential. With the popularity and valorization of original characters came a new kind of sequel writing that knowingly appropriated another author's original characters. Since the rise of this kind of sequel was connected

with the rise of the novel, it is not surprising that research into the attitudes towards characters as something that belongs to their authors often has turned to eighteenth-century Britain. In this period, many contemporary popular novels were honoured with sequels and parodies, and concerns at whether this activity constituted a transgression of some sort seem to have been immediately awakened. According to David Brewer, the dominant although not unchallenged perception was that popular characters were a kind of common property, belonging to anyone who was inclined to engage in an imaginative expansion of the lives of the characters.¹² Many popular authors nevertheless lamented over these derivative works, as Elizabeth Judge has pointed out, saying that their characters had been ‘kidnapped’, ‘seduced’, ‘debased’, ‘pirated’, and ‘ravish’d’.¹³

Brewer makes the case that it was with Walter Scott in the 1820s that discussions about the relationship between authors and characters took on a direction that we may recognize as definitively modern.¹⁴ Scott insisted far more than his eighteenth-century predecessors on ‘absolute proprietorship’ of his own characters.¹⁵ It should be noted that copyright at this time meant nothing more than the right to mechanically copy a text. Such uses of existing works as translations and adaptations were not protected by law until the latter part of the nineteenth century, and the inclusion of characters as a copyrightable element of a work lay even further in the future. Scott, however, asserted his exclusive rights to his characters.

In the eighteenth century, the valorization of original characters in combination with the frequency of the sequels that appropriated them had already made the relationship between author and character into an artistic and moral issue. The sequeller could be accused of being a lesser writer, a creatively inept plagiarist, or appreciated as a critic who exposed the falsity in the original work. Another way to put it is that the distinction between sequels written by the original author and sequels written by someone else became operative. Previously acknowledged options—that an author could either use traditional characters or invent new ones—were accompanied by a third alternative: to use characters recently invented by another

identifiable author. The term ‘pretended Continuation,’ used by Samuel Richardson in his advertising war with Ward & Chandler, publisher of *Pamela’s Conduct in High Life* (1741) by John Kelly, nicely captures the recognition of this kind of sequel as its own category of fiction.¹⁶ The feud between Richardson and Ward & Chandler, and others who sold additional stories about Pamela, was primarily conducted using authenticity claims. Richardson’s assertion that his story was genuine and the others’ spurious had a rhetorical weakness, though. Richardson tried to uphold the convention that his book was based on actual letters, something that was turned against him when his competitors claimed to possess the same ‘real’ correspondence. Everyone knew it was a fiction, of course, but it still proved problematic for Richardson, and he soon felt forced to officially drop the mask and come forward as the author, not the ‘editor,’ of *Pamela*.¹⁷ His adverts for his own hastily and reluctantly produced sequel to *Pamela* duly guaranteed that it was ‘by the same author’ as the first.

A few years later *The History of Tom Jones the Foundling, in His Married State* (1749), a rushed sequel to Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones* published earlier the same year, would underline that sequels written by someone else could be regarded as a category of their own. The preface declares that ‘the World should be satisfied that Henry Fielding, Esq; is not the Author of this Book, nor in any Manner concerned in its Composition or Publication.’¹⁸ This declaration may be read as a mockery in which, as Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor say, ‘insult is added to injury.’¹⁹ It can also be understood as a guide for the reader, making it clear that it is a sequel written by someone else, without any involvement of the original author, and that it should be read and judged accordingly.

The real–fake dichotomy

A decisive moment in the emergence of the proprietary stance towards fictional characters and the moral, artistic, and ontological issues that follows with sequels written by others can be identified

even earlier. The dialogue between Avellaneda's sequel *Segundo tomo del ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha* (1614) and the second part of *Don Quixote* by Cervantes himself, published in 1615, can in retrospect be seen as marking the beginning of a new approach to fictional characters, to originality, and to intellectual property. Using well-known characters for new works was, as Avellaneda points out in his preface, nothing new.²⁰ 'How many,' he asks rhetorically, 'have not spoken about Angelica's love, and what happened to her?'²¹ At the front of his mind were presumably Luis Barahona de Soto's *Primera parte de la Angélica* (1586) and Lope de Vega's *La hermosura de Angélica* (1602), both well-known Spanish epics at the time, which described adventures after the end of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1515, 1521, 1532). Ariosto's work, in turn, was a sequel to *Orlando Innamorato* (1483, 1495) by Matteo Maria Boiardo—a chivalrous epic that combined elements from Carolingian and Arthurian story worlds. Yet, the fact that Avellaneda found it necessary to remind his readers, and Cervantes, of this established literary practice, seems to imply that he sensed that his use of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in some way differed from, say, Vega's continuation of the love story of Angelica and Orlando.

One crucial difference was that Cervantes was alive. When Vega wrote about Angelica, Ariosto was dead, as was Boiardo when Ariosto had produced his sequel. The pseudonymous Mateo Luján de Sayavedra, on the other hand, had in 1602 continued the hugely popular picaresque novel *Primera parte de Guzmán de Alfarache Grizman* (1599), when the original author, Mateo Alemán, was still around to protest. And protest Alemán did, in *Segunda parte de la vida de Guzmán de Alfarache* (1604). Avellaneda was most likely aware of this case, but chose, wisely, not to mention it.

Another difference lay in the character's tie to specific authors. Boiardo may have introduced Angelica and added her to the traditional set of Carolingian characters. But she was not, partly because Boiardo's work had been overshadowed by Ariosto's, conceived of as Boiardo's creation in the same way as the knight and squire in question undoubtedly were Cervantes's great innovation. The artistic

achievements of the work *Don Quixote* were embodied in the characters—in Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. The consequences of this for the status of Avellaneda's story is, perhaps unintentionally, hinted at by Avellaneda himself. He tries to present his work as a sequel of the traditional type, but while he describes this tradition as 'several hands' telling the story of a single character, he concludes by stating that the world is big enough for two Don Quixotes and two Sancho Panzas. That is, he touches on the ontological puzzle of whether the same character in stories written by different hands really is the same character. If not, it is just one small step to establishing a real–fake dichotomy with regards to sequels.

Cervantes's retort in his own sequel follows this line of reasoning. After using the preface to ridicule Avellaneda for being a coward who hides behind a pseudonym and a moral weakling who had fallen for the temptation of getting easy fame and money, he incorporates Avellaneda's book in his story world in order to further undermine its validity. In Chapter 59, towards the end of the novel, Don Quixote and Panza overhear two noblemen at an inn talking about a second part of Don Quixote's adventures. When he hears that this book claims he no longer loves Dulcinea, Don Quixote is enraged and rushes to defend his honour. The noblemen—Don Juan and Don Jerónimo—are immediately convinced that they stand before the real Don Quixote and Panza, the ones who were portrayed in the first book. Avellaneda, they conclude, has stolen Don Quixote's name and made an attempt to undermine his accomplishments. They can also see that Avellaneda's portrayal of Panza as a simple-minded, gluttonous drunkard is a patent lie. In this way, Cervantes reaffirms the 'realness' of his characters by letting Avellaneda's book appear as an untruthful fiction in the reality of Cervantes's fictional world.

Later, Cervantes goes one step further and uses one of Avellaneda's original characters. Don Quixote meets Don Alvaro Tarfe and convinces him that the real Don Quixote now stands before him, while the person he previously met was an imposter. To bring it home to him, he persuades Don Alvaro Tarfe to put it in writing.

The magistrate of the village happened to come into the inn, along with a scribe, and Don Quixote submitted a petition to him saying that under the law it would be a good idea if Don Alvaro Tarfe, the gentleman here present, should declare before his grace that he did not know Don Quixote of La Mancha, also present, and that he, Don Quixote, was not the one that had appeared in a history entitled *Second Part of Don Quixote of La Mancha*, written by someone named Avellaneda, a native of Tordesillas. In brief, the magistrate gave his legal decision; the statement was made with all the juridical force that could be brought to bear in such cases, which made Don Quixote and Sancho very happy, as if such a statement mattered a great deal, and as if the difference between the two Don Quixotes and the two Sanchos could not be clearly seen in their actions and words.²²

Cervantes's attack on Avellaneda is not without its playful contradictions, and it is hard to tell how seriously offended he actually was. He lets Don Alvaro Tarfe declare his willingness to 'say again and affirm again that I have not seen what I have seen or experienced what I have experienced'.²³ There remains an unresolved question of what ontological status Avellaneda's 'Don Quixote' and 'Panza' are granted in Cervantes's fictional world. Are they fictitious persons in a made-up story, in contrast to Cervantes's first part, which in the second part have the status of a true, albeit according to its protagonists not always fully trustworthy, story? Or are they a couple of imposters, masquerading as Don Quixote and Panza? Is Avellaneda telling lies about Don Quixote and Panza, or a true story about two imposters? Panza's proposal, that Don Alvaro Tarfe has been enchanted by evil magicians, is perhaps the most ingenious solution to the riddle.

Don Alvaro Tarfe seems in any case real enough. That is, he is present in Cervantes's fiction as a real person, on the same ontological level as Don Quixote and Panza, and as the identically same character as in Avellaneda's story. In other words, while Cervantes undermines the validity of Avellaneda's story by introducing a

distinction between real and fake versions of a character, he has no problem using one of Avellaneda's characters as if this distinction is optional. The inconsistencies of the different layers—fiction, history, reality—within the fictional world are not a mistake by Cervantes. In addition to following the logic already inherent in Cervantes's work, it also reflects the indeterminacy of character identity between narratives written by different authors. This type of indeterminacy was not invented by Cervantes. But he raised the issue and made artistic use of an ontological question that previously had gone unnoticed. I would argue that this artistic possibility, which Avellaneda spurred Cervantes to recognize, depended on a new conception of the original character—an individualized character that is not a mere type, nor inherited from tradition, but created by and belonging to a specific author—together with a book market that gave this kind of character a financial value. In early seventeenth-century Spain there was both artistic and financial worth at stake in character identity.

Unauthorized and authorized sequels

One of the long-term effects of the real–fake dichotomy—based on the author–character relationship—was the formation of a new sub-genre, the unauthorized sequel. Unauthorized sequels, it should be noted, are not designed to mislead. They do not pretend to present their characters as original (which would constitute an unacknowledged theft of another's creation), nor do they hide the fact that these stories are told by someone else than the originary author. As the title page of Henry Fielding's *An Apology for the life of Mrs Shamela Andrews* (1741) declares, this sub-genre can be used to criticize the original story: in *Shamela* 'the many notorious falsehoods and misrepresentations of a book called Pamela are exposed and refuted; and all the matchless arts of that young politician, set in a true and just light.'²⁴

There is a particular potential for mischief and provocation in unauthorized sequels that differs from other literary transgressions,

such as blasphemy, obscenity, and defamation. The moral, artistic and ontological provocation of unauthorized sequels does not depend on content, style, or form, but on the conception of characters as the property of an individual author. The unauthorized sequel contests this conception, as well as the corollary that it is the originary author who knows the truth about the character in question. And because contemporary copyright law in effect encourages sequellers to treat original characters in a parodic or critical way—in order to pass the fair use test—the variety of unauthorized sequels that claim to expose falsehoods in the protected work is legally sanctioned.

The lengthening of copyright terms in the twentieth century has also created an aesthetically productive separation between authorship and ownership. Here I am talking about the authorized sequel, a sub-genre exemplarily exploited by the estate of Ian Fleming, which after Fleming's death commissioned authors to write new Bond novels, an enterprise that is still going strong. These authorized sequels are supposed to be faithful to the Bond the public already know, and anything but parodic and critical. Copyright has thus been directly responsible for the emergence of a type of sequel between the real (written by the originary author) and the unauthorized: new adventures written by another author, which are meant to be read as if they could have been written by the original author, and with an authenticity claim validated by the copyright owner.

In 2013, the Swedish publishing house Norstedts announced that they had contracted David Lagercrantz to write a sequel to the Millennium Series, Stieg Larsson's trilogy about Lisbeth Salander. The news was met with everything from mild anticipation to full-blown indignation. Some pointed out that it was not an uncommon practice in contemporary publishing (with the numerous Bond continuation novels as a prime example), and posed no serious threat to the integrity of the original work. Others considered it an exploitation of the public's eagerness to get more of Lisbeth Salander, a cynical move based on the false premise that

Lagercrantz's Salander could be identical with Larsson's Salander. Kristina Ohlsson, herself a fairly successful crime novelist, took a brisk line with a comparison with Mozart. No matter how much we would love to devour a new piece of music by Mozart, she said, it is never going to happen, because Mozart is dead. And so is Larsson.²⁵ It might be said that Ohlsson's reasoning conflates a new story by Larsson with a new story about Lisbeth Salander. But it is a relevant conflation since authorized sequels are often expected to tell the new adventure about a beloved character in a manner that resembles the original author's narrative voice.

Authors, publishers, and critics treat authorized sequels as aesthetically different from unauthorized sequels. To avoid being sued, the writer of an unauthorized sequel must make sure that the portrayal of the character departs sufficiently from the source text's character, but at the same time is close enough for readers to grasp that it is meant to be understood as the same character. An authorized writer has the opposite challenge, for even if some degree of newness is expected, the play of differences and similarities that makes for much of the allure of an unauthorized sequel is not so important. The mark of a good authorized sequel is not originality, but fidelity to the original. The character in the new story should be close enough to give the reader the experience of following a further adventure of the actual familiar character, rather than an imitation or an alternative version.

The back blurb of *The House of Silk* (2011) proclaimed that this was the first time Conan Doyle's estate had authorized a new book in its 125-year history. Even though not entirely true, it was an indication of what type of new Holmes story the reader could expect.²⁶ As the new novel's author Anthony Horowitz explained, 'There have been plenty of [books] that have done all sorts of things with Sherlock Holmes. He's met Churchill and Hitler. He's fought in the First World War. He's come across Tarzan, Jekyll and Hyde, Dracula. By and large, they're all terrible—most of them. I wanted to write a book that was just true to the original.'²⁷ The reviews agree that the novel makes a different and quite specific claim. After musing on

the vast amount of ‘profane’ Sherlock fiction produced in the last seven decades or so, *The Guardian’s* critic states, ‘But *The House of Silk* is in a class of its own: Horowitz’s novel is the first Sherlock Holmes addition to have been written with the endorsement of the Conan Doyle estate. It is not a pastiche. It is not an update. It is, as its cover proudly declares, “the new Sherlock Holmes novel”. Horowitz is the anointed successor. And to whom much is given, of him shall much be required.’²⁸

What is required of this kind of writing is described by Will Brooker with regard to the further adventures of another Victorian icon, as told in Gilbert Adair’s *Alice Through the Needle’s Eye* (1985):

Adair’s challenge is to make the reader feel he or she is back in Carroll’s hands, to reassure us and encourage us to trust him as we settle comfortably into the illusion that we really are experiencing a third adventure—or at least, a good enough simulation of it. Of course, a new story requires novelty, but Adair has to ensure that his invented elements are the kind of elements Carroll ‘would have’ invented, according to our sense of his persona. In addition to recreating Alice as a character, then, Adair has to recreate Carroll as an author, and then inhabit that imagined authorship—in Noon’s terms, a kind of automated Carroll, or replicant—to write what Carroll ‘would have written’. He enters into a complex conjuring act with the reader—we want to be complicit in the illusion, because we want a new adventure for Alice by ‘Carroll’, but too many disruptions will destroy our pleasure.²⁹

Carroll’s works are in the public domain, which means that the distinction between authorized and unauthorized sequels is not relevant in the legal sense. Adair’s book was not explicitly promoted as ‘authorized’, but he wrote as if he was writing an authorized sequel. Or to put it another way, he borrowed the specific aesthetic, generated by the legal possibility to commission someone to use characters still under copyright protection. In other words, this kind of writing has taken on a life of its own beyond the reach of

copyright law. Its particular restrictions and demands, once established and recognizable as constituting a category of sequels, have been cut loose from the circumstances of its legal foundations to become an aesthetic option which can be applied—if the author so chooses—to characters in the public domain.

One important aspect of writing faithful sequels is that the artistic stakes are higher, compared to critical or parodic sequels. Especially if the original author is considered inimitable, as Carroll is. As one reviewer says about Adair's attempt: 'There is a kind of intense if bizarre self-pity and tenderness in [the Alice books] that Mr Adair, simply because he is not Lewis Carroll, cannot match.'³⁰ To write as P. G. Wodehouse, to take another very British example, is deemed equally impossible. 'This is madness, obviously', begins a review of Sebastian Faulks' Wodehouse sequel *Jeeves and the Wedding Bells* (2013).³¹ Madness, because while it is easy to employ the characters created by Wodehouse, it is quite another thing to match his style. 'To bust out Jeeves and Wooster is no more than to put on your tennis whites; to do Wodehouse requires you then to play like Roger Federer.' Despite that, the reviewer was impressed. Even if Faulks is 'not as funny as Wodehouse', and there are passages where he hears 'the voice of Faulks, not of Wodehouse', he finds the novel 'a pretty remarkable performance'. The high praise is perhaps a consequence of low expectations, but it nevertheless shows that to write in the style of another—or in Brooker's words, to inhabit an imagined authorship—is an endeavour that can be judged on its own artistic merits.

The new ghostwriter

The practices regarding sequels—how they are written, categorized, and read—is one area where the aesthetic side effects of copyright can be seen. The foundational concept of a privileged tie between a character and the author who created it predates copyright, and the distinction between sequels based on who the writer is can be seen at work as early as the seventeenth century. But probably not

much earlier. The valorization of originality, the individualization of characters, and a growing book market made the question of who owns a character morally and artistically important.

The resulting distinction between genuine and spurious sequels, and between real and fake versions of a character, would later be strengthened by legislation. Modern copyright laws have put some sequellers on trial and, presumably, stopped many authors from venturing to write sequels in the first place. But copyright is also responsible for the emergence of two categories of literary fiction: the unauthorized and the authorized sequel. The authorized sequel is the newer of the two, made possible by the expansion of copyright in the twentieth century. While both depend on the notion that a fictional character is something created by and belonging to a specific author, the latter also depends on the additional condition that rights to a character can be owned by someone other than the author who created it.

Horowitz and Faulks are indicative of a growing recognition and appreciation of writing-as-another as a kind of authorship that is worth pursuing not just from a speculative standpoint, but also for artistic reasons. They are not one-trick ponies, in it for the money or the fun of it, but take on the varied challenges of writing as another author. Horowitz wrote one further Holmes novel and then in 2015 moved on to Bond.³² Faulks, likewise, now has a Bond novel to his name.³³ They perform the difficult task of impersonating other authors better than most, and are critically rewarded for it.

As the example of Lagercrantz illustrates, this kind of sequel-writing has a lot in common with ghostwriting. Lagercrantz's two 'ghostwritten' autobiographies—the adventurer and mountaineer Göran Kropp and the footballer Zlatan Ibrahimović—gained him a reputation as being unusually good at subduing his own voice and letting the biographee's personality shine.³⁴ Both books are first-person narratives, where the 'I' is the autobiographical subject, written by Lagercrantz, and based on interviews which he conducted. *Jag är Zlatan Ibrahimović* (2011, *I am Zlatan*) in particular was both a bestseller and a critical success. It is unusual for

an autobiography by an athlete to receive the amount of attention in the newspaper culture sections that it did. Critics commented on Ibrahimović's life story and personality, but focused mainly on Lagercrantz's accomplishment, on how his rendering of Ibrahimović's voice was more convincing and brought the reader closer to Ibrahimović than if he had written the book himself. It thus made perfect sense for Norstedts to ask him to write a fourth book about Lisbeth Salander. And with the Millennium sequel, Lagercrantz further established himself as an author primarily known for his ability to write engagingly and convincingly in the voice of another.

Notes

- 1 Coombe 1998, 7.
- 2 Ibid. 6.
- 3 For the interdependency of freedom of speech and regulative mechanisms, see the introduction to this volume.
- 4 Vaidhyanathan 2001, 4.
- 5 For the productive effects of state censorship, see Malita in this volume.
- 6 In this context, the chronological relation between the narrated events in the sequel and in the original work is of no importance. Prequels, midquels, and refocalization stories are all sequels, being of a later date than the work on which they are based.
- 7 According to Decherney 2011, 135–54, the case of *Chaplin v. Aplin* in the 1920s might be considered the first court ruling that granted someone exclusive rights to a character.
- 8 There are national differences when it comes to the wording of the exemptions in copyright, as well as in judicial interpretation and practical application, but my discussion here is general and limited to the need to allow certain uses of protected works for the purpose of critique, comment, parody, and education, as is acknowledged in many countries (see Band & Gerafi 2015). For an analysis of parody in three different legal systems, see Karlsson 2013; for copyright law generally, the broad legal framework is set by the Berne Convention, an international copyright agreement with (as of November 2019) 177 member states.
- 9 *Salinger v. Colting*, 641 F. Supp. 2d 250 (S.D.N.Y. 2009) No. 09 CIV 5059, 1 July 2009, <https://www.courtlistener.com/opinion/1482913/salinger-v-colting/>, accessed 8 Jan. 2019.
- 10 Complaint, submitted 6 June 2009 to United States District Court, Southern District

New York <https://ia902702.us.archive.org/1/items/gov.uscourts.nysd.346633/gov.uscourts.nysd.346633.1.o.pdf>, accessed 8 Jan. 2019.

- 11 These new characters also had their sources, such as newspaper stories and court testimonies, or were inspired by the author's personal acquaintances, but they were not taken from earlier literature and were not presumed to be known to readers.
- 12 Brewer 2005.
- 13 Judge 2009, 22–68.
- 14 Brewer 2005, especially 192, 202.
- 15 Ibid. 196.
- 16 *London Evening News*, 23–5 June 1741, facsimile in Keymer & Sabor 2005, 60.
- 17 Keymer & Sabor 2005, 59.
- 18 Anon. 1749.
- 19 Keymer & Sabor 2005, 66.
- 20 Avellaneda 1614.
- 21 Avellaneda 1614: 'Cuántos han hablado de los amores de Angélica y de sus sucesos? Las Arcadias, diferentes las han escrito; la Diana no es toda de una mano.'
- 22 Cervantes 2003, 927.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Fielding 1741.
- 25 Ohlsson 2013.
- 26 Leslie S. Klinger mentions two recent examples: Caleb Carr's *The Italian Secretary* (2005) and Lyndsay Faye's *Dust and Shadow* (2009), quoted in Medley 2011.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Samson 2011.
- 29 Brooker 2004, 162.
- 30 Fuller 1985.
- 31 Leith 2013.
- 32 Horowitz, *Moriarty* (2014), *Trigger Mortis* (2015), and *Forever and a Day* (2018).
- 33 Faulks, *Devil May Care* (2008).
- 34 Kropp & Lagercrantz 1997; Ibrahimović & Lagercrantz 2011.

‘A Romanian Solzhenitsyn’

Censorship and Paul Goma’s *Ostinato* (1971)

Liviu Malita

This case study revisits the inescapably asymmetrical relationship between the artist and the repressive institutions of an omnipotent totalitarian communist regime, using documents that have largely gone unpublished to illustrate, here, the situation of Romanian culture under communism.¹ Paul Goma’s tribulations in the late 1960s, when he was trying to publish his novel *Ostinato*, reveal the political mechanisms of constraint, control, and manipulation used by the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) in the sphere of literature, and the strategies of artistic resistance which Goma resorted to.² An extraordinary exception to the rule, Goma successfully used his confrontation with the authoritarian institution of communist censorship in such a way as to promote his book in the European market. His example sheds light on the counterproductive nature of the official censor, which often, unawares, endorsed the very literary works it had intended to ban, pushing them on to fame in the process.³

Political context

In 1947, under Stalin’s protection and in close coordination with Moscow, communism was introduced by force in Romania. Officially installed at the country’s helm, the RCP established a regime of terror that modern Romania had never experienced before, however

well accustomed to dictatorships it may have been. Launching a major offensive, the RCP exerted absolute control over public and private life, building in parallel the legislative framework necessary to operate such a monolithic system. Other political parties were dismantled, as were the plurality of voices in the press and civil society—and, cultural life not being exempt, the publishing houses. After the Soviet model, a single Writers' Union of Romania (WUR) was established. Its outlook was expressed in a handful of periodicals, controlled by the party, and it boasted of the fact that it was the sole political force in the country. The entire cultural structure of Romania was dynamited.

The battle for absolute control over culture was ideologically motivated by the RCP's need for legitimation, a need that was all the more pressing as access to power had been secured arbitrarily. It should be noted that the RCP was set up in 1921, but was declared illegal only a few months later. The party officially re-emerged on the political stage only after 23 August 1944, when it had fewer than a thousand members nationwide, and its access to the government was made possible by the Soviet commissars. Once in power, the regime took concerted action to discredit and repudiate genuine values. The Romanian Academy, universities, and cultural institutions were purged of their foremost intellectuals. Many of the outstanding scholars and artists were subject to show trials, on diverse pretexts, which almost always ended with prison. Contacts with Western culture and 'bourgeois' Romanian traditions were prohibited. The regime's aim was to colonize the people's imagination and to ensure the triumph of its propaganda. Throughout its existence, the RCP endeavoured, exclusively for its own benefit, to identify art with propaganda, to the point of completely erasing the boundaries between them.

To establish a cultural monopoly, several institutions of ideological and political control had been set up. After the Soviet model, they were now brought together in a single institutional framework, the General Directorate for Press and Printing (GDPP), which was renamed the Committee for Press and Print (CPP) in

1975 (hereafter referred to as the ‘official censor’). Tailored to a maximalist design, it was to exert total control over information, monitor publications, and block any manuscripts and intellectual or artistic products suspected of being hostile to the regime. In the name of the party, censors selected by strict criteria of allegiance to party politics undermined various forms of art, styles, and works, the prohibitions varying according to different literary genres or even subgenres. Some of the aesthetic directions and attitudes (formalism, naturalism, aestheticism, the fantastic, the absurd) were permanently monitored by political readers. There were also certain themes—history, revolution, religion, contemporary issues, self-identity, eroticism—that tended to be censored more than others.

The rules of the official censor’s operation were consistent, based on relatively stable principles. Its mission was twofold: to protect the totalitarian communist regime by prohibiting sentences or phrases that were deemed subversive; and to strengthen the regime, through disfiguring surgical excisions intended to transform the literary work into a publishable product compatible with communist ideology. The two defining roles of totalitarian censorship—prohibitive and formative—were intertwined.

The periodization of institutional censorship

Not just the procedures, but the very process of censorship registered variations in intensity, depending on a political dynamic that was itself irregular. The history of communist Romania comprised, also in keeping with the Soviet model, harsher periods or brief spells of liberalism. The first period (1948–1964), referred to as the Dej Era after Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Secretary General of the Party, was characterized by an inflexible dictatorship, short-circuited by episodic bouts of relative liberalization. The coming to power of Nicolae Ceaușescu in 1965 led to a ‘thaw’, with a symbolic high point in 1968. When the USSR invaded Czechoslovakia, Romania disavowed it, condemning the Soviet intervention as an act of

‘interference in the internal affairs’ of one Warsaw Pact state by another. This gesture was interpreted by Western analysts, and profitably exploited by Nicolae Ceaușescu for a time, as an ‘act of dissidence’ against Moscow. The ‘July Theses’ of 1971, which incidentally or not followed on Ceaușescu’s recent visits to China and North Korea, put an end to the period of openness that had lasted a mere seven years, and inaugurated a programme of re-Stalinization in Romania.⁴ Simultaneously with an accelerating personality cult, Ceaușescu oversaw a turn to isolationism in international politics, and, internally, to authoritarianism, conservatism, and national communism. The country’s general situation degraded gradually, culminating in the harsh 1980s, described by the Romanian writer Mircea Zăciu as ‘the satanic decade’.

Following a largely similar route, the GDPP/CPP changed its behaviour according to the ever-changing directions and directives of its rulers, and, implicitly, according to the dynamics of literature.⁵ In the first period (1948–1964), censorship had, by law, a punitive function. It was top secret and its attitude was rigid and intolerant. Its purpose was to regulate and prohibit any deviation. In practice, it aimed to prevent the perpetration of the ‘crime’ by identifying and promptly punishing the subversive potential of any text. Amplified by the abuses committed by the censors, the regime’s rule of terror eviscerated literature. Socialist realism, adopted dogmatically from the Soviets, was the all-pervasive method of creation. Officially, it was infallible: sanctioned by a decree issued by the state organs of communist power, socialist realism imposed uniformity of artistic styles and forms, nipping any creative élan in the bud. The great themes of world literature—love, friendship, death, freedom—were either instrumentalized in the service of the party or banned. Almost the entire literary production that received the censor’s seal of approval would be relegated to obscurity after the end of the communist regime.

The relative political liberalization of 1965–1971 was also visible in the way in which a newer, more professional generation of censors read literary texts. Their outlook had changed. Relinquishing their

violent, repressive attitude, they no longer mechanically checked whether texts abided by the political directives and complied with the doctrine of socialist realism. They were professional readers of literature, accustomed to looking for clues between the lines. Art itself was granted permission (once socialist realism left the stage) to tackle more themes, and with a wider range of artistic techniques. Literature reconquered lost ground and reasserted its status, but although in the context of the entire communist period in Romania the artistic moments that followed were the most dynamic and productive, challenges multiplied and some topics remained taboo. The censors were confronted with works that talked about the lack of political freedom and expression, about social marginalization, illegalities of all sorts, the absence of prospects, about dullness, failure, and despair. Giving up many of its excesses, the official censor adapted, becoming more flexible, shifting emphasis from a prohibitive to a formative goal. Reforming its structures and practices, and even its staff, the GDPP resorted to a relative relaxation of control, replacing explicit constraint with manipulation and seduction. It deftly capitalized on the advantages of collaboration, which writers who wanted to have their works published found impossible to refuse. The GDPP’s main objective was no longer to prohibit (in future, censors only did that *in extremis*), but to foster—by coercing authors, but also by making enticing promises—the production of art that was compatible with the exigencies of ideology and with the will and whims of the party. Claiming to make great concessions, Romania’s dreaded inquisition of books could now limit itself to disfiguring texts.

By the early 1980s, political discourse in Romania had exhausted its scant store of liberal clichés and relapsed into intolerance. The July Theses, announcing new ‘measures’ for strengthening ideological control, were issued with the aim of imposing a form of neo-dogmatism. The official censor was promptly restructured, its methodology changed again to undo the concessions it had been forced to make during the period of relative liberalism. Censors gradually abandoned the median line, and, as they were encouraged

to do, they marched in the vanguard of the ideological offensive. In spite of the expectations and the efforts undertaken, censorship could not consolidate itself by returning to the methodology of the 1950s, when a brutal determinism had prevailed that countenanced only propaganda functions for literature. The new aggressiveness of political dogmatism failed to destabilize the autonomy of the aesthetic, acquired and decisively strengthened in the meantime. This led to what amounted to a period of cohabitation. Ideological pseudo-literature, cooked up in the party's laboratories, mimicked authentic creation, while failing to compete with it, far less dislodge it as the authorities intended. The distance between literature and the Communist Party increased exponentially, so much so that the party ended up by considering art in itself subversive. To make art and only art was in the 1980s a serious offence.

According to official documents, in 1977 the official censor GDPP/CPP was formally disbanded. Far from being a sign of liberalization, the end of this official institution simply marked a change of strategy in the party's policy on censorship. Declaring censorship to be irreconcilable with democracy was, then, out of the question: all censorship had to do was to adjust itself and become compatible with the standards of modern society. The mutation that had occurred was not, as officially claimed, a form of genuine liberalism, but a tactical manoeuvre that added to the totalitarian system. The abolition of the GDPP/CPP proved to be a masterstroke: afterwards, not only did censorship *not* disappear, it was strengthened. It expanded its sphere, and became in many respects even more formidable. Its function continued insidiously, as classic censorship was substituted by another, ubiquitous form of monitoring. In the absence of a specialized official censor, control was exercised through various party organs or so-called community organizations and through other political readers, who provided ideological vigilance and ensured the accuracy of the communist values imposed on literature and art, or on publications in general. Writers had to be far more at the disposal of their 'official readers', who had multiplied. The border between what was allowed and

what was disallowed became even more diffuse, and arbitrariness increased. The supposed democratic revolution which had led to the abolition of censorship was, in reality, limited to a change of focus. Censorship did not cease, but was carried out ‘differently’; censorship continued to be ubiquitous, but became volatile. Not only were the true intentions of the Communist Party to create an ‘ideological playpen’ better camouflaged by the democratic surface, but the regime itself took an important step towards a higher degree of governance, in which its power became infrastructural and the state could penetrate all layers of society. The totalitarian regime tended to naturalize censorship, turning a standardized political tool into the very environment for the production of culture. Thus, as time would tell, it was nothing but an act of coarse manipulation—a real *coup de théâtre*, which enabled censorship to survive its self-orchestrated disappearance.

At the same time, through its totalitarian and intolerant spirit the official censor kept the spirit of confrontation alive. Its inquisitorial activities produced authors who were forbidden, (self-)exiled, or morally and aesthetically corrupt, authors who were tolerated by the regime, but also compliant and profit-hungry (pseudo-)artists. No one could evade the distorting influence of communist censorship.⁶

The case of Paul Goma

At the end of the 1960s, it appeared that the Romanian authorities and writers were willing to compromise. Understanding that it would have to give up some of its claims, the RCP set itself to see artists not merely as its subjects, but also as possible partners, however erratic and fickle, who had to be manipulated and permanently supervised. In turn, writers tacitly accepted the self-professed right of the communist regime to decide in matters of literature and art, on condition they were allowed to produce an art devoid of political commitments. Each paid a price they were not allowed to set on their own, without being able to anticipate the long-term consequences of a pact that was by

definition fateful. Aesthetic freedoms, as many or as few as they were, were either obtained by writers through combined efforts and by astutely exploiting the right circumstances, or were the result of strategic concessions made by a party that was sometimes forced by the international context or by coinciding interests to adjust its dictatorial pretences.

In this climate of truce, writers invented strategies of artistic promotion. As they gained notoriety and/or benefited from the trust of the Party, some of them increasingly distanced themselves from ideology and the party (if not in their public attitudes, then in their artistic texts), being less and less willing to compromise in their fictional works. They were joined by younger writers. Together they conquered, one way or another, a space of relative artistic freedom, from inside which they approached themes and stated things that were otherwise prohibited. It was not just about acts of political courage, but about the desire for success among readers. No clear line of demarcation could be drawn between them, and this meant that the censors' behaviour was also not uniform: faced with attempts to push the limits, they adapted the punitive arsenal of the official censor to the status of the writer investigated. Towards some, then, the official censor was more lenient, taking just precautionary measures, while others, who had come to be seen as political undesirables, were watched carefully and, on occasion, prohibited from publishing their works.

Paul Goma (b. 1935) is a prominent Romanian writer who on multiple occasions courted controversy by taking on the repressive institutions of the totalitarian regime in Romania.⁷ He had his first brush with censorship when he was a student at the School of Literature in Bucharest, and was preparing to become a writer.⁸ After the Hungarian Revolution was put down in 1956, Goma returned his Youth Workers' Union membership card in protest. Because of his dissent, expressed much more insistently than was permitted at the time, the young Goma was arrested, tried, and convicted. From 1956 he served two years as a political prisoner, followed by 36 months of house arrest. He was released in 1964. This

experience became the subject matter of his 1971 novel *Ostinato*, towards which the censors, though generally more lenient during this period, were particularly alert, especially on account of the book’s politically undesirable topic and of Goma’s status as a former political prisoner. By sheer force of implication and thanks to the international fame he had acquired, Goma became an intriguing case both for the writers/editors and the Communist Party. In the late 1960s, when publication restrictions meant that books rarely made it into print, the official censor repeatedly rejected two of his novels: *Ostinato* and *Ușa* (1970, ‘The Door’).

Ostinato was the subject of a scandal. Published abroad (almost simultaneously in Germany and France), its launch at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October 1971 led to the withdrawal of the official delegation from Romania, in protest against the book’s publication in the West without permission from the communist authorities. Goma’s previous efforts to publish his novel in Romania—starting in 1966, when he first submitted his manuscript to Editura pentru literatură (PHL, the Publishing House for Literature)—had met with trenchant objections from the official censor’s readers and their superiors. Several of his themes (the abuse of power, dogmatism, the persecution of Transylvanian Saxons) and the manner of treatment were considered unacceptable. For the official censor’s readers, the theme of imprisonment was taboo, because it reflected unambiguously the punitive, repressive impetus of the regime, which claimed to be producing ‘the new man’ with Enlightenment, humanist instruments. Few literary works had tackled the subject of imprisonment, and those which did looked through a glass darkly, sometimes placing the action in the past—between the wars or in the Dej period (in other words, in a period criticized by the party itself, because Ceaușescu wished to appear an innocent victim of his predecessor). Writings on this topic irritated the RCP to the maximum, fuelling its intransigence.

The official censor's objections

The official objections to *Ostinato* were its overly detailed representation of prison conditions in the communist period, 'the gloomy atmosphere of prisons', 'the direct account of physical squalor', 'the harsh treatment of prisoners', and the frequent use of torture. An additional sore point was the reconstruction of the biographies of political prisoners (a category of prisoner not officially recognized) when writers 'described the abuses, the "special" treatments forced upon them'. In the communist censors' *referate*, this 'enhanced the metaphorical significance of freedom deprivation and gave the narrative direct political implications'.⁹ It was particularly aggravating that the novel suggested that the regime used torturers, portrayed as instinctive and immoral beings, and other human scum as 'blind' instruments of its will. Several successive *referate* spoke critically of the fact that the novel highlighted the 'injustice and cruelty of the investigative bodies of the Securitate (the Romanian secret police), or the heinous treatment meted out to political prisoners until around 1964'.¹⁰ In Goma's work the figures of the Securitate officers were associated with members of the prison administration: narrow-minded, intolerant, insensitive people. The cynicism of the authorities, who had discretionary power over the lives of its prisoners, was set in narrative contrast with the 'humanity and solidarity of those in jail (including odious criminals)'.¹¹

A particularly serious fact (later noticed by Western critics too) was that only upon his release from prison did the protagonist find himself in real detention. Paradoxically, prison was the only place in which inmates felt free. Goma considers that he managed to reinforce this point in his second novel, *Ușă*, whose manuscript was examined under the proverbial magnifying glass by the censors. On another, even more serious level he returned to the theme of imprisonment in *Ușă*, with an even closer investigation of inner detention. As Goma said,

it is no longer a matter of a physical prison, but of the prison that exists within us. I meant to say that people, even without having experienced prison directly, were prepared for possible detention. ... *Ușa*, then, is a tragic novel because it is about people who are mutilated in order to be prepared for detention, even before they experience prison in a concrete way.¹²

Through symbolic contamination, prison becomes an extended metaphor for the entire communist regime, with Romania as an immense yet invisible prison yard. From the perspective of the censors, however, it would seem the metaphorical construction was less vexing than the transitive register in which *Ostinato* described prison in all its unadulterated horror.

The censors levelled further criticism against the preference for the theme of suicide, suggested at the end of the novel. Disallowed because it directly contradicted the ideology of optimism, suicide as a narrative solution was rejected by the censors because the failure of the individual suggested the failure of the re-education process. What it contradicted was the propaganda that the errors and illegalities committed by the Communist Party had been corrected, and its victims had been rehabilitated, reorienting their biography towards more positive goals. Consequently, Goma was asked to rewrite the end of the novel to bring it into line with party doxa. Much to the satisfaction of the heads of the official censor, Goma complied. In an intermediate version (in 1970) he changed the ending that had ‘suggested the hero’s suicide attempt, because he could no longer integrate himself after his release from prison,’ for another, in which ‘the hero is trying to get out of a prolonged crisis and to adapt to life as a free man.’¹³

Documents in the GDPP/CPP archive indicate this optimistic cliché of an ending could have made the difference between publication and prohibition. A brief comparison of *Ostinato* with *Păsărilor* (‘Birds’, 1973) by Alexandru Ivasiuc—the one banned, the other passed by the censors—shows that what radically separated the two authors was their vision. Goma adopted and asserted the

perspective of the victim, while what Ivasiuc said was in tune with the voice of power.¹⁴

The multiplicity and complexity of the objections raised by the censors against *Ostinato* clearly indicate that the Securitate, that all-powerful ideological institution, rejected any suggestion that the communist regime had a monstrous side. A literary objection was raised, finally, which derived from the political objections, albeit much paler in comparison: 'in the novel there are numerous vulgar expressions or obscene paragraphs.'¹⁵

Goma's stratagem

Goma's novel *Ostinato* was not published in communist Romania because high-ranking party activists refused to give permission for the 1970 version, which even the leaders of the GDPP had deemed publishable.¹⁶ Later, Goma radically rethought his position, and subsequent versions not only 'explained the initial comments [of the official censor], but also (thanks to some new chapters) emphasized more strongly a deeply flawed political orientation.'¹⁷ This spectacular volte-face and the possible motivations underlying it warrant analysis.

According to his own testimony, Goma had from the beginning worked on two versions, attempting a double editorial solution. In 1966, he submitted one manuscript to Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă (SPLA, State Press for Literature and the Arts). Shortly thereafter, in 1967, he sent a first version for publication abroad, followed by a second one in October 1968. In doing so he showed a courage that was almost unparalleled at the time, although tempered, according to some of today's literary historians, by fortunate connections. Goma did not keep his clandestine initiative a secret; on the contrary, in his ongoing battle with the censors and the publishers, he used the news of the book's subsequent translation to force through the novel's publication in Romania.¹⁸ Of course, he was not taken seriously.

It can be assumed that from October 1969, when Goma in all likelihood received an assurance that *Ostinato* would be published abroad in German, French, and Italian, he had a more secure position, and was even less willing to comply with the observations of the censors. However, his goal was still to publish the novel in Romania. After all, he had succeeded with another manuscript, submitted in 1966 and published in 1968 after ‘serious revisions’, and having accepted that the title be changed, from ‘Moartea noastră cea de toate zilele’ (‘Our Daily Death’) to its final form, *Camera de alături* (1968, ‘The Adjoining Room’).¹⁹ This was his literary debut, and at the same time the only book he published in Romania before 1990. He wanted *Ostinato* to be published, but not at all costs—he could not countenance far-reaching alterations imposed by the official censor rendering it unrecognizable, especially not at the risk of his book becoming what he called ‘paraliterature’—and Goma’s attitude was in fact consistent with his conception of the writer’s role in communist Romania: speaking truth to power.²⁰

In the period that followed, 1969–1971, Goma seems to have hit upon his own strategy in dealings with the official censor. This is visible in his obvious change of attitude, which occurred, according to the censors’ reports, in January 1971. Initially, his attitude had been one of cooperation. A month after he submitted the manuscript of *Ostinato*, in October 1969, the GDPP sent the directors of the publishing house ‘a series of comments with political content’. As a result, as the report noted, the novel was withdrawn, without a ‘to-be-resolved’ note (approval). Goma resubmitted the manuscript to the GDPP in February 1970 in a substantially different version, from which he had deleted some politically delicate episodes and made ‘massive’ changes. In the words of the censor’s report, ‘these have solved the main political issues’. The censor’s report also specified that the ‘changes made ... have toned down the violent language, have limited the pornographic scenes’.²¹

The author’s cuts seem to have been to the liking of the heads of the official censor. In two successive reports on 21 March and 25 June 1970 they expressed their satisfaction, stating that, ‘in its

current form, the GDPP can give the imprimatur for the work. However, as a precaution—and in keeping with their *modus operandi*—the censors ‘reported’ the novel to the Council of Culture and Socialist Education (CCSE) in early May 1970.²² The GDPP document mentioned the possibility of approving publication for this version, following some changes made by the author. For a while, the manuscript was held up; a note issued by the GDPP concluded that as of 17 July 1970 ‘the novel has not been returned for approval’.²³ Despite the fact that the official censor had given official assent, the novel could still not be published, most likely due to the cavils of another political institution that monitored cultural activity: the CCSE.

There are no documents that reveal what happened next, but then on 28 January 1971 another report issued by the GDPP, stamped ‘Confidential’, said that Goma, in a surprise move, had submitted a new, longer version of the novel to the publishers Editura Eminescu. He had introduced further taboo themes and new episodes, which might prove controversial from a political point of view. Goma tried to wrong-foot the self-proclaimed democratic regime by laying bare its retaliatory practices; the abuses of a regime that claimed to be in harmony with its own citizens and reliant solely on the strength of ideological conviction. The conclusion of the final censors’ report (prior to June 1971) was that such a novel, which ‘focused on the theme of imprisonment’ and ‘suggested a carceral universe as big as our whole society’, was ‘not to receive publication approval’.

I have selected the case of Goma because it is a telling example of a strategy adopted by a Romanian author in his confrontation with the communist official censor in the 1960s. It is also very relevant to look into the possible reasons for Goma’s change of attitude in early 1971. By cooperating at first, he had provided a substantially revised version, in accordance with the requirements of the censor. Yet at the very moment when, according to the official censor’s reports, a compromise appeared to have been reached and the book was about to be printed, Goma changed his mind and amplified the political implications of the theme: ‘every time they

proposed I should take something out, I did the opposite, I added something, emphasizing and consolidating precisely those passages which had shocked the censors.²⁴ Later, Goma confessed that, up to a point, his was not an entirely deliberate strategy; however, the GDPP documents attest the fact that he also used the exact same strategy for his second novel, *Ușa*, and at much the same time.²⁵

My contention is that in view of all the circumstances, the following hypothesis about the Goma stratagem can be advanced. Wind back the clock a few months, and it seems that Goma may have felt emboldened to provoke the official censor by the illustrious example of Solzhenitsyn, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1970, primarily for *Cancer Ward* (1968), a novel that he had managed to publish in the West together with *In the First Circle* (1968). Goma was perhaps encouraged by the signs of a receptive audience for literary treatments of communist re-education, and possibly had evidence that certain foreign publishing houses intended to publish his own novel, written on a similar theme. It is very likely that, in 1970, his manuscript was already being translated.²⁶ The association with Solzhenitsyn was fortuitous and opportunistic at the same time. The soubriquet ‘A Romanian Solzhenitsyn’, coined by his German editor, was used frequently in literary reviews in the West. With a real chance of seeing his novel published in the West, Goma may have felt tempted to push the limits, forcing the leadership of the official censor to make extreme decisions. A book banned in a communist state, as Solzhenitsyn had shown, could be eminently marketable in the West for that very fact.²⁷

Goma has his own explanation for his paradoxical behaviour. In subsequent interviews, he has said he did not yearn for political difference, and that he wished his novel would be appreciated for its literary value and not for the fame that a scandal would confer on him *post festum*.²⁸ He describes the process of cohabitation with the official censor as contradictory: he was required to rewrite the novel politically, but ended up by aesthetically changing its poetics. The book thus gained not only in political impact, but in artistic force and depth: ‘I submitted the book in ’67 and the promises kept

coming until 24 February '71 ... And I ought to thank them, I had the pleasure of polishing my work. If today the novel is closer to what I would have wanted it to be, it is thanks to censorship, which took care not to let me publish it with the imperfections it began with.²⁹

Conclusions

Explaining political insurgency through aesthetic necessity, Goma made a statement (an ironical one, of course) about the involuntary way in which censorship had helped him to escape the worst of self-censorship.³⁰ After all, it led him to react like a human—in other words, naturally—in a completely aberrant political context: 'I must thank those who allowed me to postpone my debut until the age of 32; without them I would not have known that you cannot write until you have had your fingers crushed. Now, I must thank censorship for helping me to get rid of self-censorship, because it is so impudent, insistent, and devoid of logic that I reacted humanly.'³¹ He experienced liberation, and the novel was enriched with meanings that it did not have originally. In his opinion, his fight with the official censor had beneficial results from a literary point of view. The novel only gained in complexity, his writing in depth and relief. Much the same was said by other authors, many of them from totalitarian communist regimes, but others too with experience of very different political circumstances. Scholars have yet to reach a consensus on this topic. In my opinion, these literary works represent the perverse secondary effects (because they were unintended) of the censorship act.³²

As for Paul Goma, his tactics checkmated the communist institutions of control: the responsibility for rejecting *Ostinato* was regularly shifted from the publisher, to the GDPP, to the CCSE. All the skirmishes over censorship then abruptly ceased the moment the novel was published in the West. The battle moved on to a strictly political plane, and the consequences, including the withdrawal of Goma's Romanian citizenship and his exile, were to be endured by the author himself.

Notes

- 1 I have consulted the following archives in the National Archives of Romania, the Central Historical National Archives Branch: Fund 2571 CPP (in particular those relating to the Directorate of Instructions and Control and the Directorate for Literature and Art) and Fund 2898 (in particular those relating to the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, the Propaganda and Agitation Branch, 1921–1976). Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.
- 2 For the artistic strategies made possible by copyright see Lindegren in this volume; for the dialectic of censorship in British modernism see the introduction to this volume.
- 3 *Ostinato* thus serves as yet another example of how ‘censorious events’, somewhat counterproductively, can create interest in the very thing they seek to repress (see the introduction to this volume).
- 4 ‘The July Theses’ refers to a speech delivered by Ceaușescu in July 1971: seventeen proposals regarded as the starting point for a Maoist-style ‘cultural revolution’ in Romania, targeting intellectuals and cultural autonomy and advocating a strict adherence to communist ideology.
- 5 For censorship and the official censor in communist Romania, see Vianu 1998; Petcu 2005; Malita 2016.
- 6 For the full complexities of the Romanian literary field and the interaction of literary institutions under communism, see Macrea-Toma 2009.
- 7 Some of Paul Goma’s later publications such as *Basarabia* (2002) and *Săptămâna roșie/The Red Week* (2003) include problematic anti-Semitic statements. This contribution, however, focuses on the context of the 1960s and 70s when Goma was a dissident and an anti-communist writer.
- 8 The School of Literature in Bucharest was founded in 1950 by the Romanian Labour Party, after the Soviet model, to train carefully selected writers who were loyal to socialist realism.
- 9 Reports (*referate*) were the most important documents compiled by censors, having read the manuscripts submitted to publishing houses with ideology in mind. Meant only for the official censor, the reports included all relevant observations, which often included advice for the GDPP/PPP leadership on whether to approve for publication (sometimes on condition that certain amendments and revisions were operated in the texts) or to deny on the grounds that they did not comply with the ideology of the Communist Party. The head of the Directorate approved the reports, whereupon they became official verdicts, binding on both the publishing houses and the authors of the manuscripts.
- 10 National Archives of Romania, the Central Historical National Archives Branch (ANIC), Fund CPT, NOTE *Ostinato*–Paul Goma, Editura Cartea Românească, File 14/1971, fol. 60.
- 11 Ibid.

- 12 Tănase 1977, 40: ‘Censure, auto-censure et paralittérature.’
- 13 ANIC, Fund CPT, NOTE *Ostinato*–Paul Goma, Editura Eminescu.
- 14 Lovinescu 1990 suggests that while *Ostinato* ‘is not only a novel about prison, but also one of the inability to stay out of it’ (487) under the communist regime, *Păsărilor*, ‘presented as one of the most daring novels of late, is brave only in appearance and only in the details. ... The critique of the mechanisms of power is directed in such a way that it does not put into question the whole ensemble. Neither for the past nor for the future’ (519).
- 15 ANIC, Fund CPT, NOTE *Ostinato*–Paul Goma, Editura Eminescu. The erotic theme was incriminating in literature (and art). The approach to censorship derived from the official ideology, which regulated even the privacy and sexuality of the so-called ‘new man.’ The censors’ reports went so far as to say that scenes of a sexual nature were pornographic. Nudity itself was repudiated prudishly. With glaring semantic exaggeration the censors censored everything, including eroticism, using the fuzzily derogatory term ‘obscenity.’
- 16 High-ranking party activists (in particular, members of the RCP’s Central Committee, in charge of ideological activity) were authorized to intervene in the GDPP’s censorship process. By virtue of the Regulations, they had to be asked for their opinion in ‘exceptional’ cases.
- 17 ANIC, Fund CPT, NOTE *Ostinato*–Paul Goma, Editura pentru Literatură, No. 245, 23 October 1969.
- 18 Goma 2010, 16.
- 19 One month after the publication of the book in Germany, Goma admitted in an interview with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* that he had used, unsuccessfully, ‘every means an author has in Romania for publication [requests for audiences with senior political officials, petitions addressed ‘to the highest level’, etc.]. However, it is clear that an author in Romania has no such means—with the exception of compromises’ (20 November 1971, printed in Goma 2010, 38).
- 20 ‘Thus was born in Romania, after the strikes of 1968 and 1971,’ says Goma, ‘a ... *paraliterature* made of words published with the approval of the police: a “nice” literature, which says nothing about nothing and has enormous circulation numbers (for censorship loves trivialities), a “brave” literature in which they fire their cannons at flies (sharp criticism is targeted at shop assistants who steal, at waiters who are desperate for a tip, at girls who get involved with foreign tourists)’ (‘Censure, auto-censure et paralittérature’, in Tănase 1977, 34–5).
- 21 See the following documents in the archives of the DGPT: (1) the Literature Section, No. 245/23.X.1969, NOTE *Ostinato*–Paul Goma, Editura pentru Literatură. The censor’s report shows many notes in pencil, which mark the fragments that were removed or modified and those that ‘have remained.’ (2) No. 1753/21.III.1970. NOTE *Ostinato*–Paul Goma. Editura Eminescu, in File 17/1970, ff. 100–103. (3) NOTE, in File 18/1970, f. 59 [contains, to the left of the title, an indication, written by hand: “Not to be published. T.S.B. 17 VII.1970”],

- accompanied by: (4) NOTE *Ostinato*—Paul Goma, Editura Eminescu (undated document, which is the next one in File, v., 60–62.), in File 18/1970, ff. 60–62. (5) No. 1111/13.II.1971. NOTE *Ostinato*—Paul Goma, Editura Eminescu. (6) NOTE *Ostinato*—Paul Goma. Ed. Cartea Românească, in File 14/1971, f. 60.
- 22 Special cases had to be reported to other party authorities for strategic consultation, among them the Council of Culture and Socialist Education (which had replaced the Ministry of Culture and the Arts) and, in exceptional cases, to the Central Committee of the RCP. Political control was thus multi-tiered.
- 23 Any intermediate stage involved the resumption of the process of censorship and the recollection of opinions issued by various institutions.
- 24 Interview with Claude Bonnefoy, originally published in *La Quinzaine littéraire*, no. 154, 16–31 Dec. 1972, quoted in Tănase 1977, 62.
- 25 ANIC, Fund CPT, NOTE *Ușa*—Paul Goma. Editura Cartea Românească, File 19/1970, ff. 216–19.
- 26 Interviewed by Dieter Schlesak in *Merkur*, no. 296, December 1972, he confirmed this hypothesis: ‘Until May 1970, they did not dare to prohibit *Ostinato*, they merely found fault with the words and dissected sentences’ (quoted in Tănase 1977, 53).
- 27 ‘In fact,’ said the author in an interview, ‘I am pleased that those who forbade the publication of the book in Romanian gave an advertising boost to the same book in the West’ (‘Experimentele sunt necesare,’ in Tănase 1977, 39).
- 28 Ibid. 39.
- 29 Ibid. 44: ‘Censure, auto-censure et paralittérature’.
- 30 Although censorship itself was efficient, it was not the most important success of the official censor: self-censorship was. Most often, Romanian authors internalized political prohibitions to such a degree that all censorship had to tackle were matters of nuance.
- 31 Ibid. 38. The information is summarised in an interview with Sanda Stolojan; see Paul Goma, *Scrisuri*, I, 49.
- 32 Cf. Malita 2019, 5–35.

PART III

CENSORSHIP AND POLITICS

Poison, literary vermin, and misguided youths

Descriptions of immoral reading
in early twentieth-century Sweden

Kristin Johansson

The decades around the turn of the last century are often characterized as a time when the old collided with the new; where the traditions of the nineteenth century stood in stark contrast with the modernity of the twentieth.¹ While it is important to note that in history the old is in some respect always being confronted with the new, there is no denying that the early twentieth century in many ways was a particular time of change.

In Europe, the ongoing industrialization of society, rapid development in communications, and the explosive rate of urbanization were only a few of the processes that meant great changes.² New city landscapes emerged and new demographic groups were claiming their place in public life when women, the working class, and youths were becoming more vocal and organized in their demands for equal rights.³ Sweden has a strong tradition of people's movements which had their golden age around this time, and though they were centred on a variety of core issues, they all organized around the will to better society for certain groups, inspired by the ideas of *Bildung* and popular education.⁴ In this climate of clashing ideas and ideals, culture played an important role, and literature especially was an arena for debate. Books were a place where the conflicts

both were mirrored and actually took place. ‘New’ public groups of women, working-class citizens, and children had by this time also become readers to a much larger extent than before, prompting the old readers, predominantly privileged, white men, to want to govern reading practices and tastes of these ‘new’ readers in any way they could.⁵

In Swedish literary history, the conflict between the authors of the 1880s—the Swedish representatives of what Georg Brandes called the Modern Breakthrough in Scandinavian culture—and the 1890s, which continued well into the twentieth century, is an important factor in understanding the cultural context of the time.⁶ The insistence of the 1880s authors on realism, political radicalism, and social issues against the 1890s authors’ interest in mysticism, nationalism, and historical motifs shows how opposing views on society were confronted in the literary field. The most famous expression of this in Sweden was the Strindberg feud (1910–1912), when one of the most internationally famous Swedish authors and playwrights, August Strindberg (1849–1912) started a fierce debate by criticizing not only the writers of the 1890s generation but also the Swedish Crown, the Swedish Academy, and the military—all institutions with highly traditional values. In an international perspective the Strindberg feud, and Strindberg’s earlier and at times tumultuous authorship, can be compared with the controversies surrounding Oscar Wilde and Charles Baudelaire.⁷ Strindberg, like Wilde and Baudelaire, was the subject of legal prosecution, in his case for blasphemy for his collection of short stories, *Giftas* (*Getting Married*, 1884). Strindberg’s criticism of society and literature in *Getting Married*—a programmatic critique of marriage as a divine and bourgeois institution—was an example of authors putting themselves at the heart of a cultural debate that also signified the clash of values and moralities.⁸

The combative cultural climate, combined with the rapidly growing market for popular literature in the early twentieth century, gave rise to an increasing worry at the harm supposed bad literature might cause readers and their morals.⁹ Conservative actors

throughout Scandinavia and Europe argued strongly against the violent, erotic, and decadent themes of contemporary literature.¹⁰ This study focuses on one of these actors, the Swedish Association for Moral Culture, founded in 1909 in response to what members viewed as the moral decline of Swedish society, inspired by similar groups in Denmark. By studying their publications this study has two objectives. The first is to acquire a deeper understanding of the effects reading was believed to have on the reader by studying the language-as-discourse used against supposedly dangerous literature, and also to chart how the discourse of reading was shaped by the condemnation of immoral content, and how harsh rhetoric could be used in disciplining readers in a Foucauldian sense.¹¹ The second aim is to analyse views on reading and morality in relation to their historical and cultural context, in order to give a fuller picture of the social climate of early twentieth-century Sweden, and an important contrast to today's dominant view that reading is something inherently good.¹² The present case study has been chosen as an example of how social control can be exercised through the regulation of the discourse of reading.¹³

The Swedish Association for Moral Culture

In the autumn of 1908, the author and public educator Cecilia Bååth-Holmberg published a polemic in a Stockholm-based newspaper in which she attacked the state of morality in contemporary Swedish society. She specifically targeted the role of literature and the press in the decline of moral values, and concluded the article with a battle cry for action: it was essential that people who cared for the well-being of the Swedish people united to fight against 'the spirit of impurity' that was spreading in society.¹⁴ The article garnered a great deal of attention and a heated debate ensued.¹⁵

The following year, Cecilia Bååth-Holmberg, along with her husband Teodor Holmberg (hereafter referred to by their given names to avoid confusion), took action when they founded an association to fight what they viewed as immoral culture. The

association operated as what Howard S. Becker has defined as 'moral entrepreneur' in its objective to enforce and protect traditional social norms when confronted with new ideas about society, sexuality, and morals.¹⁶ Founded in 1909 as Svenska riksförbundet mot osedlighet i litteratur, präss och bild (the Swedish Association against Immorality in Literature, Press and Pictures), after the first year it changed name to the more all-encompassing Svenska riksförbundet för sedlig kultur (the Swedish Association for Moral Culture), which indicated that not only culture in the aesthetic sense was of interest. The association was active until 1930, with the Holmbergs as key members and leaders throughout. Cecilia was chairman until 1916 when she was succeeded by Teodor, while she continued working as the association's secretary, contributing to its publication series until her death in 1920. The couple were prominent figures in the Swedish popular education movement, and had already been involved in public debates about morality before they formed the association, for example with the periodical *Sveriges Väl* ('The Well-being of Sweden'). All their work was firmly grounded in their conservative, nationalist views. They were a prime example of how countermovements against literary decadence in Europe showed their dedication to the nation-state, often resorting to patriotic and strongly militaristic expressions.

While the association and its members were active in public debate, giving speeches and lectures across the country, their main communication channel was the association's publication series. A range of members contributed essays and other texts, but Cecilia and Teodor were by far the most prolific. It is these publications that constitute the main material for the present study.¹⁷

The source material thus consists of a total of 76 booklets published by the association. They were sold in bookshops and by subscription to members of the association, who were strongly encouraged to solicit new members and distribute the booklets in the hopes of spreading the association's message to society at large. The first 9 issues were simply referred to as the *Skriftserie* (lit. publication series), published from 1909 to 1914, and set the scene

by discussing the current state of culture and its perceived demise, and explaining the importance of the association's work. In 1915 the series was given a drastic makeover: a more cohesive format with recurring types of content and a publishing rate of four issues per year. Renamed *På Vakt* ('On Guard'), a total of 62 issues were published from 1915 to 1930. Among its recurring features were 'Blickar i bokvärlden' ('A look at the world of books'), with short reviews of recent publications and book recommendations, and 'Drag ur samtidens lif' ('Features of contemporary life')—or 'Tidens anlete' ('Time's countenance') as it was called in later issues. Typically, these included short reports on contemporary events, usually criminal offences noticed in the daily press. Towards the end of the association's existence it published a few booklets alongside *På Vakt*, which, as they focused more on individual questions and did not follow the same format, were not included in the larger series. In the two last issues the fate of the association was first discussed and then ultimately declared dissolved since no one was willing to replace Teodor as chairman when he wished to step down because of his health and advancing years.

The dangers of reading

The present case study charts a representative cultural discourse in Western Europe. A prime example of a conservative actor in early twentieth-century Sweden, the association's publications are studied thematically to analyse its dire warnings of the dangers of reading immoral literature. The material is analysed with the help of the scholarly literature on the same period or on similar types of questions, looking at the historical and contemporaneous contexts that shaped the views expressed in the booklets. The association's views on dangerous reading were part of a long tradition of worrying about the harms of reading 'bad' material or about readers thought incapable of handling improper themes or narratives.¹⁸ The ideas on the social effects of the arts have been thoroughly explored by Eleonora Belfiore and Oliver Bennett, who identify three different

traditions: the positive, the negative, and the autonomous.¹⁹ In this study, the association is viewed through the lens of the negative tradition, but it is important to note that they did not view reading as a whole as something destructive. On the contrary, Cecilia herself was a prolific author of both biographies and fiction, and literature was seen as an important part of popular education and the overall elevation of morality in society. This is also evident in the previously described feature of their publications called 'Blickar i bokvärlden' where books were recommended on the basis of their moral and educational content. However, as the publications had a stronger focus on the negative effects of reading, and since the association was founded in reaction to the heated cultural debate about morality at the turn of the century, the concern here is what was perceived as dangerous reading.

While the rich source material offers many different avenues of research, three main themes concerning the way reading was presented as harmful and immoral will be explored in this study.²⁰ These three strands are in alignment not only with the history of ideas presented by Belfiore and Bennett, but also with post-Enlightenment traditions.²¹ These three themes were present in all the publications throughout the period, and the patterns found in them will be illustrated with some example quotes, predominantly from the association's early and middle years. Part of the explanation for this is simply the repetitiveness of the texts: many of the arguments were established early on and then repeated with little variation over the years. There was also a distinct difference in how large a role literature played for the association over its history, as will be seen. It should be emphasized, however, that the actual impact of the association is not addressed here—only its ideas. What influence on society the association might have had is for another study to explore.

Unhealthy reading

A very prominent theme in the material is the use of medical language and sickness as metaphor for bad literature. It was also the case that a large number of the contributors, especially in the first publication series, had medical backgrounds—their professions are clearly stated under their names to legitimize the rhetoric. Thus in the seventh issue, one C. G. Santesson, a medical professor at the national hospital, Karolinska Institutet, contributed a speech on ‘Andlig förgiftning’ (‘Spiritual Poisoning’).²² Santesson compared the responsibility of doctors and pharmacists to ensure that the patients take their medicines according to prescription with that of the author and the publisher towards the reader—meaning that without proper guidance from literary authorities, readers might ‘poison’ themselves with bad literature. The analogy of poison was also used by the priest Hagbard Isberg. In the very first issue, Isberg contributed a text on ‘Huru unga sinnen förgiftas’ (‘How young minds are poisoned’) in which he warned of the suggestibility of young people, describing the violent motifs of popular literature as something that infiltrates the reader, changing him or her from within like a virus.²³

It is effective to use connotations of poison and disease to describe the spread of unwanted behaviour as it draws on a fundamental human fear of contagion.²⁴ It also enforces the view that the unwanted effects can be cured by eliminating bad books and instead promoting good ones—making it doubly effective. The negative metaphors are also easier to put into perspective when mirrored by their counterparts, describing good reading and good books as food and nourishment.²⁵ The association in this respect is part of a longstanding tradition, traced from at least the Enlightenment, where ‘literary poison’ is thought to have concrete and physical effects on the reader.²⁶

The connection between reading and bad health is a strong discourse, since health and morality have historically been closely connected, especially regarding sexuality—in other words, bad

health has been viewed as a direct result of bad morals.²⁷ This perception has then been used to shame, scare, and discipline the reader into more proper reading behaviour.²⁸ The intermingling of the concepts of health, morality, and sexuality is evident in an early issue in which Martin Ramström, another medical professor, discussed how thoughts can influence the development of young men's morality. He specifically warned that reading may lead to dangerous excitement:

the immoral stories, the racy adventures conjured up by the imagination—all this becomes the very excitants that puts the sexual sphere in unnaturally lively activity. And the step from thought to action is then not particularly large if an opportunity presents itself. It is a great deal harder to refrain from that step when the imagination is full of sexual stimulus.²⁹

Here the relationship between body and mind through the medium of text is evident. By indulging in narratives describing improper sexual behaviour, Ramström claimed that young men would not be able to control themselves, thus implying the powerful effect of these types of books.³⁰ When young men are seen as helpless against its powers it becomes vital that moral actors, such as the association, ensure their protection.

An author targeted by the association for his erotic narratives was Hjalmar Söderberg, in the Nordic countries most famous for his novels and the highly controversial play *Gertrud* (1906), which depicts a married woman and her relationships with three men. Söderberg was critical of what he saw as the hypocrisy of bourgeois marriage, and used this as a recurring motif in his writing.³¹ With one sentence in *Gertrud*, which has become one of the most famous phrases in Swedish literature, Söderberg came to epitomize everything that the association thought was wrong with the new decadent literature: 'I believe in the lust of the flesh and the incurable isolation of the soul.' Hence, Söderberg features more prominently than any other literary author in the booklets, and he was seen as

the embodiment of the dangerous new literature with its supposedly unhealthy obsession with sexuality. In Issue 28, in which the association marked its first ten years with a retrospective, Cecilia presented Söderberg as one of the main reasons for founding the association. She used his own words, but put the emphasis on his dangerous and powerful effect on the readers by calling *Gertrud* a 'gospel of the flesh'.³²

Analogies of war

The analogy of war is used throughout the publications in several ways. Firstly, actual war played an important role. It was surely no coincidence that the drastic restructuring of the publication series took place the year following the outbreak of the First World War. The new name, *På vakt*, mirrors the militaristic expressions used when presenting the new format:

The leading thought for this publication will be: alongside with the assurance of our people's independence of outer enemies by a satisfactory defence, an inner defence must be organized against the different powers that erode the moral health of the nation. Our people are only entitled to exist if they maintain the moral cultural levels they have already achieved and raise them further.³³

This rhetoric, likening the outer threat of war with the inner threat of declining morals, shows how grave the problem was felt to be and what role the association wanted to claim. They saw themselves as explicitly 'on guard', defending the country from the threat of immoral culture on both the national and the individual level. As Sweden was nominally neutral in the war, it is especially interesting to see how it was used in the association's arguments.

National defence had long been an infected issue in Swedish politics, and became even more contentious on the outbreak of the First World War. Food shortages due to the interruption of international trade also heightened the atmosphere of internal unrest.³⁴

Despite Sweden's neutrality, the war and subsequent political turmoil in Europe were used to legitimize the necessity of the association's work. While other countries were fighting, it was not only possible but even an obligation for Sweden to raise its 'moral cultural levels'. These elements in the texts also illustrate the classic tension between different definitions of the complex concept of culture.³⁵ For the association, it was clear that bad culture in an aesthetic sense had a direct correlation with bad culture in an anthropological sense: in other words, bad literature would cause societal decline, which in turn would make the nation vulnerable during wartime.

The First World War often features in the association's publications in a symbolic sense, but there are also more tangible ways that it is present in the texts. A great admiration for Germany was openly expressed, and the work there against immoral literature used as an example that Sweden should follow. In Issue 15, Cecilia, herself of German heritage, describes under the contentious heading 'Mot litterär ohyra' ('Against literary vermin') how a 'smaller war' was being fought behind the scenes of the war proper, where even in the trenches German soldiers were protecting themselves from immoral reading by gathering 'filthy' books and burning them.³⁶

War is also explicit in the material in another sense: that of moral interests pitted against commercial ones. There is an explicit campaign against the publishers who sold books with violent, erotic, or subversive content. Albert Bonniers förlag—then and now one of Sweden's largest and most respected publishing houses—was specifically targeted for spreading 'literary garbage', when they shortly after the war decided to publish a novel by the antifascist German author Heinrich Mann. Mann was outspokenly critical of imperial Germany and later of the Nazis. His social-democratic orientation is evident in his satirical novels, which subsequently led to his works being burnt and him fleeing Germany. The association's affinity with Germany underlies their criticism of Mann and everyone connected to him. Teodor closes an article on the topic with a disdainful, anti-Semitic note on Mr Bonniers' good business sense, likening the publication of Mann's books with a charcuterie

selling rotten meat.³⁷ That commercial interest came before the moral state of the people was something that the association simply could not forgive. Teodor was particularly upset in one text in which he stated that the association's usual work of encouraging moral development through lectures was no longer sufficient, and offence had become even more important than defence:

It is a greater duty to crush and extinguish the barbarism that effuses from the cynical authors and money-hungry book publishers like a dark flood over our misled Swedish people. To action! To action!³⁸

By emphasizing that the publishers had financial interests and implying that they did not care about the contents or the effects of the books they published, the association again positioned themselves as the protectors of the people in a general sense. Although 'decadent' literature written by prominent authors such as Söderberg or Mann was usually the association's main target, popular literature, often embodied and fuelled by the successful regulation of the *Nick Carter* detective stories a few years earlier, increasingly became the focus of the association's efforts.³⁹ While this shows that the association was not constrained by the traditional value system of high and low in literature—its interest lay in what it subjectively saw as immoral literature, regardless of genre—it did single out the financial aspects of popular literature to a slightly greater degree than for the cultivated literary circuit, which could be taken as an illustration of contemporaneous elitist distrust of 'the masses', meaning the intended audience for the cheaper books: workers.⁴⁰

Lastly, the general 'war' on immorality was of course central to the association. This must be understood in the light of the conservative, nationalist ideas so widespread in the early twentieth century. The threat of immorality is discussed in terms of degeneration early in the publication series; most explicitly by Seved Ribbing, another medical professor, in his essay 'Degeneration—Regeneration', in which he argued that regeneration by improving the nation's morals

was a civic duty.⁴¹ The theme of degeneration becomes all the more prominent and alarmist over time. After Cecilia's death in 1920, Teodor's influence over the association increased further, and the question of aesthetic culture largely makes way for discussions of criminality, birth rates, and eugenics. In Issue 43 there is even an attempt to quantify the state of immorality in Sweden by presenting statistics on divorce and illegitimate children.⁴² To understand the reorientation away from literature it is important to know that Teodor was very active in nationalist politics.⁴³ He represented a particular aspect of the zeitgeist of the interwar period in Europe, where total control over the population was seen as the only way to ensure a healthy, strong, and 'good' nation. Teodor was even made chairman of the far right-wing National Youth League of Sweden (SNU)—even though he had turned 70 at the time of his election.⁴⁴ The League's anti-democratic radicalism and aggressive rhetoric shared many similarities with the way Teodor described the threats of immoral literature against the nation-state in later issues of *På vakt*.

Youths and mothers

The third and last theme presents both a problem and a solution of sorts according to the association. Many of the threats of immoral culture were said to be especially harmful for the young. Bad literature was believed, for example, to cause 'kissing epidemics' among young girls.⁴⁵ This is similar to the quote used in the first theme, when according to Professor Ramström boys risked being unable to restrain themselves after reading 'racy adventures'.⁴⁶ Throughout the publications, young people were used as a way of amplifying the effects of bad books, as can be seen in a comment on an unidentified American article:

There is a peculiar conjunction between good reading, good upbringing, right thinking, and good habits. An impure book is a source of impurity, and no one can even guess how widespread the impurity is. Many young men and women have been led

astray at a young age by the reading of a bad book, which poisoned their life.⁴⁷

As well as highlighting a number of the connotations of illness, it is indicative of the idea that not only were bad books dangerous 'here and now', but as they were bad influences on Sweden's citizens-to-be, literature could even accelerate the dreaded degeneration of society.

The strong focus on young people can be understood in several ways. One of them is simply that it is an effective rhetoric to use, because it positions the association as responsible adults looking after and guiding the young. Yet another important factor was that youths were starting to have more influence on society in early twentieth-century Europe, as they were vital to the various people's movements: political parties started to form youth leagues, and the young were a key target group for the growing commercial culture.⁴⁸ In short, young people were becoming a demographic group with a power it had not had before, and thus many wanted to guide and control their behaviour.

The parental concern of the association is also repeatedly expressed by its preoccupation with the mother figure. With its focus on maternal care, the association wanted to ensure that the young were given a proper upbringing and guidance to protect them from the immorality of modern society. This is explicit in the material, as it was in fact Cecilia who introduced the celebration of Mother's Day to Sweden in 1919.⁴⁹ After this, the first issue of the year was always dedicated to Mother's Day, with essays on the societal importance of mothers, especially in such immoral times, along with poems and songs praising motherhood.

The ideal woman according to the association was, needless to say, a very traditional one, who focused on her role as mother and wife within the domestic sphere. She was not a 'new woman'. The new woman was a broad concept describing the types of women—like the British suffragettes, or any woman who questioned the institution of marriage—who from the turn of the last century eschewed traditional female roles.⁵⁰ One such Swedish woman, also famous

internationally, was Ellen Key. Key's ideas about women and free love were—and remain—both controversial and praised. She is still a very important thinker in the Nordic history of ideas, although she has been criticized for her version of feminism.⁵¹ If Söderberg was the main author targeted in the association's publications, Key is the single most discussed writer in any other than just the literary sense; she was also similarly used as the embodiment of the type of woman the association wanted to suppress and contrast itself to. The whole of Issue 9 consists of Teodor's 'Ellen Key on Christianity and Morality', in which he criticized her views on religion and, primarily, marriage.⁵² Teodor opposed her opinion that love is a personal affair; to him it was very much a concern of the state. Cecilia also repeatedly argues against Key, for instance in the very first issue when, without explicitly naming Key, she warns against a highly dangerous 'doctrine of life' spread by books.⁵³ For her readers it would have been evident that Cecilia was attacking one of Key's most controversial texts, the three-part work *Lifslinjer* (1903–1906, 'Lifelines'). Later, in the tenth anniversary issue, Cecilia named Key as a specific reason, like Söderberg, for founding the association.⁵⁴ Since Key in fact had some similar thoughts as the association on reading, such as strongly advocating popular education and the need to direct children's reading—it is clear that the reason for the association's hostility can be ascribed to Key's function as a representation of the new woman.⁵⁵

Lastly, the association's own mother was of course central to all its publications. As a woman and the founder of the organization, Cecilia—although childless herself—is presented throughout as an ideal mother figure, which is amplified by the introduction of Mother's Day and again by her sudden death. In a lengthy eulogy, Teodor wrote about Cecilia's virtues and her belief in the importance of appreciating mothers, as it is they who create the home which is the foundation of the 'large home'—society.⁵⁶ Cecilia was held up as a type of mother of society, who took care of the Swedish family and guided its children to live good lives by fighting immorality in literature and culture.⁵⁷

Conclusions

By analysing the language used to describe and warn against literature we can learn a great deal about the underlying ideals that shaped society, and about how a discourse of immorality was formed by the ideas of literary effects. In the materials included in the present study, parallels have been found to a range of questions important in the early twentieth century: the new woman, sexuality, and degeneration to name only a few.

The Swedish Association for Moral Culture, as has been illustrated in this study, can be used as an example of the power sometimes ascribed to literature, and also of how literature can be used as an instrument in societal debate, as a tool for discipline. It was not reading or literature per se that was regarded as dangerous by the association—something that is apparent in their shifts between the various definitions of the concept of culture—but the ways in which unsuitable content might be a bad influence on the people.⁵⁸ By warning against this, with alarming analogies to sickness or the war on morality, the association wanted to govern and civilize readers into choosing literature aligned with its own values and ideologies. By positioning themselves against prominent and controversial persons like Hjalmar Söderberg and Ellen Key, the association's leaders could further distinguish themselves as the last guardians against the new immoral culture of modernity.

Notes

- 1 Jörngården 2012, 19 and, for example, Ledger & Luckhurst 2000.
- 2 Nydahl & Harvard 2016, 9–23.
- 3 Berggren 1995, *passim*; Ledger & Luckhurst 2000, 75–6; Ranby 2009, 235–77; Sundgren 2007; Waterhouse 1994, 276–98.
- 4 Arvidsson 2005, 13–34.
- 5 Lyons 1999, 313–44.
- 6 The Modern Breakthrough refers to the period 1870–1890 in the history of Scandinavian literature, perceived as a 'breaking away' from the rest of Europe. The Modern Breakthrough signifies an aesthetic paradigm formed as a naturalistic counter-movement to romanticism, emphasizing literature as an instrument of

societal change and debate. Although clearly demarked in time, the ideas and the aesthetic programme of the Modern Breakthrough are considered to have heavily influenced Scandinavian literature in the twentieth century, for example the radical cultural movement of the first half of the century.

- 7 See the introduction to this volume.
- 8 Westerståhl Stenport & Szalczzer 2012, 235–47.
- 9 Boëthius 1989.
- 10 Ledger 2007, 5–26; Stenberg 1999, 173–225.
- 11 Foucault 1991.
- 12 Persson 2012.
- 13 See the introduction to this volume; see also Müller 2004.
- 14 Bååth-Holmberg 1908, 9.
- 15 Boëthius 1989, 167–71.
- 16 Becker 2018, 141–56.
- 17 All primary source material, the *Skriftserie* and *På Vakt*, is held by the National Library of Sweden in Stockholm.
- 18 Warner 1998.
- 19 Belfiore & Bennett 2008.
- 20 Some of the other avenues will be studied in the author's forthcoming doctoral thesis.
- 21 Liedman 1999.
- 22 *Skriftserie*, 7 (1912), 3–14.
- 23 *Skriftserie*, 1 (1909), 22–31.
- 24 Roberts 2016, 418–39.
- 25 Sheldrick Ross 1987, 147–63.
- 26 See, for example, Kennaway & O'Connell 2016, 242–51; Faubert 2016, 389–417.
- 27 Johannisson 1990, 29.
- 28 Wagner 2016, 320–40.
- 29 *Skriftserie*, 8 (1913), 7. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are the author's.
- 30 For later incarnations of the same trope, see Arnberg and Lindsköld in this volume.
- 31 Högström 2018.
- 32 *På Vakt*, 28 (1919), 3.
- 33 *På Vakt*, 10 (1915), 1.
- 34 Hedenborg & Kvarnström 2009, 219–23.
- 35 Eagleton 2000, 7–34; Williams 1988, 87–93.
- 36 *På Vakt*, 15 (1916), 14–16.
- 37 *På Vakt*, 27 (1919), 14–15. A heavily loaded comment as the Bonnier family is of Jewish descent and because of the connotations of the 'rotten meat' in the charcuterie being pork.
- 38 *På Vakt*, 23 (1918), 28.
- 39 Cf. Boëthius 1989, *passim*. Cecilia Bååth-Holmberg was part of the campaigns

- that subsequently led to regulations in the distribution of pulp fiction in early twentieth-century Sweden.
- 40 Persson 2002; Källström 1998, 23–42.
- 41 *På Vakt*, 13 (1915), 2–5. The concept of degeneration (cultural and physical) was a central idea at the turn of the century; see, for example, Ledger & Luckhurst 2000, 1–2.
- 42 *På Vakt*, 43 (1923), 8–9.
- 43 Teodor Holmberg is still a feature of Swedish right-wing politics, because he is an ideological role model for the Sweden Democrats, a party that describes itself as social conservative with nationalist foundations.
- 44 Berggren 1995, 130–43.
- 45 *På Vakt*, 12 (1915), 6.
- 46 *Skriftserie*, 8 (1913), 7.
- 47 *På Vakt*, 19 (1917), 13.
- 48 Arvidsson 2005; Berggren 1995; Söderberg 2000, 5–21.
- 49 *På Vakt*, 26 (1919), 14–15; Tornbjer 2002.
- 50 Ledger & Luckhurst 2000, 75–6.
- 51 Lindén 2002, 189–261.
- 52 Holmberg 1914, 9.
- 53 *Skriftserie*, 1 (1909), 7.
- 54 *På Vakt*, 28 (1919), 4.
- 55 Gram 2008, 106–25.
- 56 *På Vakt*, 32 (1920), 8.
- 57 Interestingly similar to Key's views on the role of women in society (Lindén 2002, 184–8).
- 58 Parallels can be drawn to the politician Arthur Engberg's view of cultural politics (see Erlanson and Henning in this volume).

Cultural policy as biopolitics

The case of Arthur Engberg

Erik Erlanson & Peter Henning

Since the Constitution of 1809, censorship of the printed press has formally been abolished in Sweden, thus affording extensive publishing rights to writers and publishers with only a few legal limits.¹ Importantly, though, this freedom of speech has not excluded the production and circulation of literature from the government's sphere of interest.² On the contrary, throughout the twentieth century, the emerging welfare state implemented a range of political measures that suggests an extraordinary interest in questions of literature and its production. Not only effecting its social and material conditions, these developments also highlight a transformation of the conception of literature—casting it as an endangered species in need of protection and support. For this reason, the question of milieu—that is, the ideal conditions for literature's growth—at the same time became a critical issue in political discourse. In the following, we outline and analyse this new understanding of literature, exemplifying its articulation through the published works of Arthur Engberg, Minister of Church and Education in the Social Democrat governments of 1932–1939.³

While censorship generally imposes restrictions on free speech within the judicial sphere, the regulative ambitions of the welfare state extend beyond it. Thus, Scandinavian cultural policy in the twentieth century sought to intervene in the production, circulation, and consumption of literary texts, either by issuing grants

and subsidies intended to safeguard the autonomy of literature, or by supporting public libraries in the hope of securing literature's diversity and accessibility. From their initial implementation until only recently, these support measures were explicitly justified as possible means to counteract commercial interests.⁴ Reforms of this kind, then, may be regarded as an attempt to advance and defend qualitative art and literature over more popular cultural expressions such as commercial films, popular music, and weekly magazines.

As cultural policy research has shown, however, 'quality' is a vague and ideologically freighted notion. Since quality in the early twentieth century was implicitly equated with 'high art', the concomitant development of the democratic subject thus formed an aesthetic education determined by the tastes of the cultivated bourgeoisie.⁵ While public authorities were founded in order for the cultural heritage to be disseminated to a larger population, they effected a cultural democratization built on inherently elitist grounds.⁶ According to this widely accepted interpretation, early cultural policy follows a logic of distribution—ambitioning to transmit a predetermined, qualitative content to a number of recipient subjects; in this case, uncultivated workers and children. As we will argue, however, Engberg's writings effectively challenge this view by outlining a more complex form of literary regulation, better described in terms of biopolitics than distribution. Furthermore, Engberg's standpoint on cultural policy requires us to expand the notion of 'quality' beyond the discourse of aesthetic judgement. For Engberg, quality was no less than the telos of the welfare state.

Engberg is well known to researchers of Nordic cultural policy, and is generally considered an important, if esoteric and high-flown, influence on Swedish politics. Summarizing the current view within scholarship, Tobias Harding remarks that Engberg appears to be defined by seeming ideological paradoxes.⁷ While his early years were spent on the far left wing of the Social Democratic Party (SAP), Engberg's socialist rhetoric would eventually soften.⁸ On account of his taste for the classics, his relentless insistence on

their importance for the citizen's education, and his distaste for jazz, movies, and virtually all innovations in the arts, Engberg has instead been remembered as a champion of bourgeois culture.

However, to regard Engberg as a closet conservative, or, like Geir Vestheim, to label him a backward-looking reactionary on account of his aesthetic preferences, is to judge him by the inclusive ideals of current cultural policy.⁹ Equally important, such a view disregards those aspects of his thinking that fall outside the scope of contemporary politics. That the veritable rage of Engberg's youth, informed by a Marxist analysis of capitalist society, subsided in the 1930s must in part be attributed to the internal ideological conflicts of the SAP.¹⁰ Thus, following the general observations of Nils and Lars Beltzén, the present study instead underscores Engberg's ideological consistency throughout his political career.¹¹ Above all, Engberg all of his life remained faithful to an idea of societal transformation, which has been disregarded in previous studies. Without a clear notion of this positive vision, constitutive elements of his thinking are bound to appear paradoxical.¹²

Methodologically, we approach Engberg's writings by way of Michel Foucault and his studies of the formation of the modern nation-state, the particular form of power it articulates, and the different 'arts of governing' developed in its name.¹³ Foucault's insistence on investigating the processes and practices in which concepts are formed also opens a new line of inquiry in regard to previous research. Earlier commentators have indeed concentrated on the allegedly elitist dichotomy of high art and popular culture in the political discourse of the early twentieth century. By contrast, we seek to elaborate Engberg's central concepts from within his writings. Instead of asking to what extent Engberg was conservative or progressive, we aim to abstract from his texts a conceptual scheme that rationally connects notions such as art, literature, *Bildung*, and culture.

In line with Foucault, our primary object is not the actual practice of governance in the Swedish welfare state; instead, we outline the art of governing as it developed in Engberg's speeches and

articles. Thus, our study does not evaluate the regulation of literature exercised by cultural policy, but instead traces the actions and measures which Engberg deemed necessary to realize the ideal conditions of literary production. To this end, Foucault's framework is helpful once more, since it allows for a distinction between different forms and technologies of power with respect to their function and target.

The general relevance of Foucault's work for an analysis of the Swedish welfare state has previously been demonstrated by Sven-Olov Wallenstein, among others. Wallenstein convincingly argues that the brand of functionalism advocated in the 1930s can be seen as an expression of what Foucault calls the biopolitical paradigm.¹⁴ According to Wallenstein, the architecture of the early welfare state operated 'within reality itself, in order to make its components interact in a more profitable fashion.'¹⁵ Without explicitly referencing Foucault, Yvonne Hirdman presents a similar standpoint, suggesting that the architects and politicians of the 1930s took on the role of 'social engineers' in order to shape and govern the everyday life of the population.¹⁶ This specific mode of governance, which intervenes in the fabric of reality so as to adjust and perfect the life of its citizens, will likewise be a central topic in our study of Engberg's writings.

Lastly, two important distinctions need to be made. The Swedish term *kulturpolitik* can signify both 'cultural policy' and the wider concept of 'cultural politics': while the former refers to a specific policy area, the latter encompasses the whole range of meanings pertaining to the concept of 'culture'. My Klocker Linder's study of the term *kulturpolitik* suggests that its current technical usage was not popularized until the 1950s.¹⁷ Engberg uses 'cultural politics' in the wide sense of the term, and its exact meaning can only, as we will show, be outlined in relation to his comprehensive political project.¹⁸ Secondly, our investigation will not always be able to distinguish between different forms of art. On the one hand, literature represents a privileged category in Engberg's thinking on account of its central role in the project to safeguard the quality of the Swedish

language and the citizens' language skills. On the other, literature is subsumed in a general category of art, alongside theatre, music, the visual arts, and so on. For this reason, we will henceforth use the terms 'art' and 'literature' interchangeably.

Bildung as the antidote to decadence

To judge from Engberg's general diagnosis of society, the label 'conservative' would surely appear to be justified. The parliamentary debate on the spring budget in 1921 is a case in point. Here, the young Engberg spoke at length about the threats of degeneration facing contemporary culture, underscoring the high stakes by presenting national cultivation as a call to arms: 'As I see it, this cultural budget ... is of extraordinary significance for the whole of our nation and its position. It is a budget of war in the battle for culture and the nation's upbringing and awakening.'¹⁹ The militaristic rhetoric, typical of the discourse of culture at the end of the long nineteenth century, reflects the Spenglerian influence on Engberg.²⁰ In this regard, his outburst against celebrity and sports culture, warranted by a French boxing star's visit to Sweden, serves as a further example:

such a degeneration into cult of raw strength and muscle-culture is a sign of decadence that one must watch out for. When nations have previously met their doom, history has shown us similar examples. As spectators watched the gladiators enter the arena in old Rome, antique culture had practically ended. Let us make sure that such omens will not be taken as proof that Swedish culture will tread the same path.²¹

For Engberg, the 'cult of raw strength' around Georges Carpentier not only typified a loathsome form of entertainment culture—'nöjeskultur'—but also indicates a spiritual decay in both the working class and bourgeoisie. From having revered Homer and the classics, even the educated classes now displayed symptoms of cultural rot.

Furthermore, the nation's poor spiritual state must, as Engberg argues, be taken as a premonition, a reminder of the European spirit's 'homelessness' before the outbreak of the First World War.²² While Oswald Spengler's prophecies of the declining West had been an explicit inspiration for Engberg, it is important to note that his response differed profoundly from Spengler's fatalism.²³ While conceding that cultural decay had already spread far, Engberg nonetheless proposes an antidote in the form of a slow but decisive transformation of society.

As will be seen, Engberg's principal strategy for reaching this goal entailed the education and perfection of the citizen through 'bildning' and 'folkbildning'. Engberg uses the terms interchangeably, pointing to the intersection between the German concept of *Bildung* and the Swedish *folkbildning*. The latter usually denotes the democratizing efforts directed at the education and enlightenment of the lower classes, most notably by the labour movement's study associations.²⁴ In *Demokratisk kulturpolitik* (1938), an official SAP campaign pamphlet authored by Engberg, *folkbildning* was presented both as a 'sacrifice' of 'self-interest' in the name of democracy, and as a call for the cultivation of the free individual:

The idea of democracy consists in a free cooperation between independent personalities, which, one for all and all for one, take responsibility for the common weal. The result hereof depends ultimately on the individual himself, on his consideration, insight, skill, and his readiness to sacrifice self-interest for the benefit of the public good. Therefore, democracy and *folkbildning* cannot be separated. They necessitate each other. For no democracy may last and succeed unless it rests upon enlightened, responsible, and independent citizens.²⁵

As Engberg's reasoning makes clear, the citizen's ability of governing him- or herself cannot be taken for granted. On the contrary, he or she must be subjected to 'an omnidirectional ambition to make the citizens meet the demands of self-governance'.²⁶ In order to gain

the privilege of governing themselves, to become ‘independent’ and ‘enlightened’, the citizens must be governed—thus prompting Engberg to consider the ways in which virtues such as freethinking could be imparted.

First and foremost, Engberg stressed that *Bildung* must be distinguished from the simple development of one’s skills and knowledge. ‘Education is one thing, *Bildung* another.’²⁷ What, then, did it mean to educate and improve oneself in this sense of *Bildung*? The question has a special relevance for art and literature, which, as Engberg stressed, ‘can neither be learnt nor practised’, but nonetheless forms an integral part of the ambition to ‘secure the citizens’ acquisition of skills and insights.’²⁸ Obviously, then, the attempt to impart an aesthetic sensibility cannot solely take the form of distribution. On the contrary, as Engberg insisted in a frequently cited passage in *Demokratisk kulturpolitik*, the principal role of the state is to provide the necessary spiritual infrastructure for the citizen’s *Bildung*:

[Democratic cultural politics] has to care for air, space, and light, good communications between the different provinces of spiritual life, counteract attempts at isolation, give aid to self-help for everything that is viable, and promote broad-mindedness and tolerance.²⁹

A more concrete way of providing tools for the citizens’ spiritual awakening may be found in the ‘socialization of art [konstens socialisering].’³⁰ For Engberg, this process consisted in the population’s exposure to major contemporary art alongside cultural treasures of the past—offering a wholesome alternative to the meagre fare of popular culture:

Truth to tell, the cultural reality of the common people is harsh. It takes powerful measures to overcome it and drive it off. In this regard, no other way is possible than to awaken the souls’ longing for something higher and more beautiful. The solution

has already been hinted at: letting the generations, to the highest extent possible, experience art.³¹

In seeking to integrate art into the daily life of all citizens, both in present and coming generations, Engberg attempted to solve a two-fold problem. Firstly, by distributing art to the homes of the poor, it would allow for their sense of style to improve—thus contributing to the ‘spiritual elevation’ of the working class.³² Secondly, it would secure the vitality of art as well as its economic conditions: ‘If art shall live and flourish, it must be embraced by the people’s love and become a life within the life of the people.’³³

This second aspect of art’s socialization is essential. Not only proposing that art should function as a means to refine the taste and sensibility of the population, Engberg saw this process as a vital condition for the qualitative production of art and literature.³⁴ In this regard, the question of socialization necessarily transcends the conventional logic of bourgeois didacticism, ultimately dealing with the fate of art as such. We thus turn to this notion, analysing how the production and experience of art becomes a model for Engberg’s political end-goal: namely, a life in the realm of freedom.

Art as paradigm for a life in freedom

In a 1937 speech at Skansen, an open-air museum in Stockholm, Engberg passionately defended the freedom of the arts and sciences. In fact, Engberg went so far as to suggest that the state’s most fundamental task is to ensure the continued growth of the citizens’ spiritual life in ‘the air of freedom [frihetens luft]’—again, by means of ‘aid to self-help.’³⁵ Here and elsewhere, Engberg’s appreciation of art comes off as purely non-instrumental. Art does not form an ideal on aesthetic grounds, nor is it promoted for its ability to improve the subject’s sensibility; rather, the activity of producing and experiencing art in itself represents an ideal of freedom summarized by the term *självverksamhet*, or self-activity.

The term, adopted from Marx’s concept of *Selbsttätigkeit*, denotes

an activity performed without external cause or influence. While the production of food responds to hunger, the production of clothes to the cold, someone engaging in the production and experience of art responds solely to his or her own pleasure and free will. Again, art understood as ‘self-activity’ does not imply a normative conception of the form and content of art and literature. Rather, art becomes a paradigm—a model—for a form of life in which the individual’s freedom is fully realized.

Already in 1918, Engberg described this final goal of political struggle in terms of a ‘realm of freedom’:

For we must realize ourselves. Thus, the meaning of history is the realization of freedom, and we ourselves have to fulfil this meaning ... Our ‘kingdom of God’ marks the beginning of man’s true history, an end to the ‘prehistory’ of darkness and bondage where the realm of freedom succeeds the realm of necessity.³⁶

In the realm of freedom, work is no longer chosen for reasons of livelihood, but instead—in line with Marx’s argument—becomes an expression of ‘free creation’ withdrawn from the law of necessity.³⁷ Here, work is transformed into yet another form of ‘self-activity’ which, in turn, makes it indistinguishable from art.

This conception of art connects Engberg not only to Marx, but also to the German idealists, and in particular to Friedrich Schiller and his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795). However, a significant difference must be noted in their respective understandings of the state’s role. Like Engberg, Schiller sketched a dark picture of the quality and spiritual level of contemporary life, and, just as in Engberg’s case, neither the cultivated bourgeoisie nor the broader population were spared his judgement.³⁸ Unlike Schiller, though, for whom art provided the soul’s one and only remedy, Engberg was convinced that current circumstances may be altered through governmental practice.³⁹

If decadence was spreading in Swedish culture, Engberg traced its roots to various social and economic structures. It is not, Engberg

writes, again referring to Marx, 'the consciousness of man that forms the base of his social being, but his social existence in itself ... that forms the base of his consciousness.'⁴⁰ Thus, the question of 'how we will create a Swedish national culture' is necessarily dependent on 'the question of restructuring the economic and social life of our society.'⁴¹ In order to establish the necessary conditions for art and literature to flourish, society as a whole must be transformed.

Clearly, then, the efforts to educate and refine the citizen's taste and sensibility cannot secure the future production of art alone. Rather, the socialization of art belongs to a larger project: an art of governing that seeks to affect the reality in which the historical and biological forms of human life are shaped. If, in order to construe the ideal milieu of artistic production, society as a whole must be transformed, then all reforms designed to improve and adjust society must be seen as measures of artistic regulation. Indeed, the welfare apparatus as a whole must, from Engberg's point of view, be conceived as a political technology able to regulate the cultural expressions of the population.⁴² As we will argue next, the rationale behind this idea should be sought in the widespread notion that cultural production and cultural consumption together constitute proper measurements of the population's quality.

Art as expression of the population's life

When Engberg denounced Carpentier's fan base within the bourgeoisie, when he spoke of the rotten core of the educated classes, or even when he lamented the increasing popularity of the accordion on the countryside, cultural consumption was in each case used as an instrument for evaluating the spiritual capacity of Sweden. However, this measure was incomplete if only consumption was accounted for. Of equal, if not greater, importance was the nation's state of production.

In a speech held at the opening of a new school in Eskilstuna, a town famous for its steel industry, Engberg suggested that notions

of character and reputation were directly linked to the quality of one's production:

Undoubtedly, there is some truth to Hegel's idea that the result of a work is the work process, at once preserved and sublated. It seems as if the product sums up and embodies all the active spiritual energies that have been released during the work process. Here, intelligence, volition, and feeling converge. The product then becomes, one might say, a function of all the qualities of the living workforce, of the personality itself.⁴³

Work is a process through which the worker's personality is transferred in its totality, or, in Hegelian terms sublated, into the product. All of the 'spiritual energies' involved—'intelligence, volition, and feeling'—impact on the production process, both in industrial and artistic contexts.⁴⁴ For this reason, the quality of the workforce is absolutely central, or, as Engberg phrased it, 'the quality of production is an expression of a function of the nature of the human material.'⁴⁵ However, since the transference of 'spiritual energies' takes place in all aspects of the nation's life, the relation between personality and production ultimately concerns the spiritual quality of the population as a whole. For this reason, Engberg's argument in the Eskilstuna speech was also central to his understanding of cultural politics.

On the broadest level, the relation between part and whole is exemplified by native language, which Engberg similarly regarded as a mirror of the nation's character, 'a reflex of its inner being'. Caring for one's native language consequently becomes 'the closest and most natural of' the people's 'cultural assignments.'⁴⁶ The production of language and steel, though, ultimately points towards the same goal: namely, to strengthen 'the voice of the Swedish spirit in the world.'⁴⁷ This position was further clarified when in 1933, Engberg described the relation between workforce and produce in terms of survival: 'In our people's struggle for existence, it all comes down to the quality of our production.'⁴⁸ Seen from Engberg's perspective,

then, the future of the nation relies in all respects on continual improvements in the population's excellence.

The Darwinian concepts actualized by Engberg, and his way of combining them with elements of historical materialism, were not in any way unique. On the contrary, his idea of a struggle towards the realm of freedom borrowed much from the socialist interpretation of evolutionary theories that informed, and were popularized by, the workers' study associations around 1900.⁴⁹ As Håkan Blomqvist summarizes it, the propagation of these perspectives became key elements in the education of the working class, and for Social Democrats in Sweden and abroad, evolutionary and anthropological theories provided a scientific framework that could validate their ideas of societal change. Just as the human species had evolved from barbarism to civilization through a continual struggle for survival, the working class paved their way to power following a revolutionary determination modelled upon evolutionary science.⁵⁰

Engberg's own interpretation of this evolutionary socialism may be compared with that of Rudolf Kjellén, a prominent conservative and political scientist whose paradoxical influence on the SAP has been documented in previous research.⁵¹ According to Kjellén's theory, each state is conceived as a direct expression of the beliefs, values, ideas, and habits of a particular people; an organism of which the individual citizens constitute organs and limbs.⁵² For Kjellén, moreover, cultural struggle is conceived as the driving force of history, and likewise forms the motor of a nation's progress: 'The competition between peoples has to be reckoned with as natural and necessary, as the very nerve of evolution, without which progress would stop and the peoples rot away like stagnant water.'⁵³

While Engberg and Kjellén each confessed to a politicized brand of Darwinism, their ideas of societal change differed profoundly. Whereas Kjellén viewed the current world order and its clash of civilizations as an unchangeable given, Engberg hoped to transform the struggle's basic conditions. What ultimately united them, however, was a belief in the necessity for the state to govern beyond the confines of the legal sphere. In this regard, Kjellén's argument

in *Staten som livsform* (1916, 'The State as a Life Form') can also speak for Engberg. Demonstrating that the modern state is defined by its interest in the well-being of the individual, providing him or her with various forms of support—from advice to economic subsidies—Kjellén continues:

It is striking that the state here shows its interest for the individual, even though no connection to the formal law or the legal order can be detected. And this interest extends beyond the material well-being of the individual. By (partly or entirely) assuming responsibility for all instances of the people's education, the state emerges as an entity with great cultural-spiritual interests. The entire cultural sphere soon appears within its range of vision, far beyond the bounds of the legal order.⁵⁴

In Engberg's art of governing, just as in Kjellén's organicist theory of the state, the citizen is not considered a subject of right, but as a member of a population whose spiritual and physical prosperity was imperative to the well-being of the state.⁵⁵ The object of cultural politics here coincides with that of the welfare state as a whole, while conversely, 'caring for and tending to the development and schooling of the powers, gifts, and capabilities of man' became the primary object of a cultural politics guided by 'evolutionary principles'.⁵⁶ As Engberg's choice of metaphor makes clear, the advancement of culture requires the state to administer the population stock's deficiencies much like a gardener tends to his grounds.⁵⁷

Returning to the previously quoted passage from *Demokratisk kulturpolitik*, the same idea is mirrored in the tasks assigned to the cultural policy of the SAP. While aiding self-help formed the basis of the party's political programme, such help could only be administered to that which was already viable: 'capable of living'.⁵⁸ As Engberg crudely puts it, the struggle for existence sees an ever-increasing demand on our 'capability and creative force'. In such a world, only the best will be fit for service and entitled to support—requiring 'the untalented' to 'stand back for the talent'.⁵⁹

Conclusions

Engberg's aesthetic ideals, conservative when judged against the standards of the cultural policy of today, have prompted later researchers to posit 'taste' as a central problematic in his political thinking. As the current investigation has demonstrated, however, such a focus disregards the most important aspects of Engberg's art of governing—thus overlooking an important key to the formative years of Swedish cultural policy.

As we have shown, Engberg's conception of artistic production coincides with a basic tenet of his idea of *Bildung*—and indeed with his vision of society's end-goal: namely, that it constitutes a realization of the individual's freedom. Engberg made it perfectly clear that the form and content of art and literature should not be regulated by the state; on the contrary, art can only be produced and experienced in freedom, delivered from the law of necessity. Engberg's cultural politics, then, does not in theory concern itself with the artworks themselves. When classical art, as it often did, figured as an ideal in his writings, he sought not to idealize the artworks themselves so much as the spiritual prowess and quality of life of its creators.

If Engberg's cultural politics did engage in the regulation and control of artistic practice, it does not adhere to the prevalent image of early cultural policy as a programme for the redistribution of bourgeois culture. As he stressed in his diagnosis of contemporary life, financial measures provide equally inadequate tools for supporting and improving the arts. Change must instead be brought about on all levels of society, fostering a free spiritual climate that simultaneously would establish Sweden as a competitive nation globally. To succeed in this mission, citizens had to be provided with aid to self-help—a gift, however, that was not to be distributed indiscriminately. On the contrary, it should only be given to those who were deemed fit for survival, thus proving themselves capable of freedom. For better or worse, Engberg never specified the criteria or practical implementation of this weeding out.

The problem to which Engberg's art of governing responded was only indirectly related to specific forms of cultural expression. While violently dismissing this and that practice or artform, a nation's aesthetic output was ultimately conceived of as an expression and measure of the population's quality. Or, to be crass, of the people's relative degeneration. Art, then, was not primarily to be understood as a means of change, but as an end in itself. As such, it constituted a measure of the success of cultural politics and the extent to which the realm of freedom was realized. Accordingly, Engberg's attempt to regulate culture was not principally directed at the 'cultural world', but towards the reality of which it was considered a function. In this respect, Engberg's care for the life of the population presupposed a 'biological' understanding of politics; a governmentality that unfolds without clear-cut borders between matter and spirit, nature and culture, and biological and political life.

Notes

- 1 This study was part of the project 'The Welfare Regime of Literature: The Function of Literature in Sweden 1937–1976', funded by the Swedish Research Council, 2019–2021 (ref. 2018-01078).
- 2 The implementation of freedom of speech never was unconditional in the liberal democracies of the West. As Rosenfeld 2001, 117–45 argues for the French Revolution and its aftermath, measures to promote the free circulation and expression of ideas also brought about new means of regulation. See also the introduction to the present volume.
- 3 When not otherwise noted, citations are taken from Engberg 1945, hereafter *ETS*.
- 4 Lindsköld 2012, 44.
- 5 See, for example, Harding 2015, 161–81.
- 6 Frenander 2014, 96.
- 7 Harding 2015, 166.
- 8 Gustavsson 1991, 194.
- 9 Vestheim 2014, 51.
- 10 For Engberg's position in the party after the death of Prime Minister Hjalmar Branting, see Karlsson 2001, 439–43. In the subsequent power struggle, Engberg sided with the left wing of the SAP against an eventually successful centrist fraction led by Per Albin Hansson. Hansson went on to be Prime Minister, and

- only reluctantly made Engberg Minister of Church and Education (at Engberg's specific request).
- 11 Beltzén & Beltzén, 1973, 256.
 - 12 Cf. Vestheim 2014, 27–53, who points to a conflict in Engberg's apparent contempt for working-class culture. Importantly, however, this does not invalidate Engberg's socialist ideology; after all, Engberg worked for the abolition of class society, and thus of the entire working class.
 - 13 Foucault 2008, 1 ff.
 - 14 Wallenstein 2010, 188–99.
 - 15 Ibid. 192.
 - 16 Hirdman 2010, 92–101.
 - 17 Klockar Linder 2014, 165.
 - 18 See also Harding 2015, 162.
 - 19 'Den blivande ecklesiastikministern' (1921), in *ETS* iii. 15: 'Denna kulturbudget är efter mitt sätt att se ... av en utomordentlig betydelse för hela vår nation och dess ställning. Det är en krigsbudget i kampen för kultur, för nationell fostran och nationell uppräckning.'
 - 20 Frenander 2014, 97; see also Johansson in this volume on the widespread militaristic rhetoric of conservative associations.
 - 21 'Den blivande ecklesiastikministern' (1921), in *ETS* iii. 20: 'en dylik urartning till kult för den råa styrkan, till kult för muskelkulturen, är ett dekadensfenomen, som det gäller att ha ögonen öppna för. Vi ha i historien sett liknande exempel vid nationers undergång förut. Den gången, då man såg gladiatorerna träda in på arenan i det gamla Rom, den gången var det också praktiskt tagit slut med den antika kulturen. Må vi här hemma se till att icke dylika tecken skola kunna med rätta uttolkas såsom bevis för, att Sverige i kulturellt avseende kommer att gå samma väg.'
 - 22 'Georges Carpentier' (1921), in *ETS* iii. 11–14.
 - 23 Cf. Harding 2015, 167.
 - 24 See *ibid.* 164–5.
 - 25 Engberg 1938a, 3: 'Till sin idé är det folkliga självstyret en fri samverkan mellan självständiga personligheter, som ha att en för alla och alla för en bära ansvaret för gemensamt väl. Utfallet av en slik samverkan beror då ytterst på den enskilde själv, på hans omsikt, insikt, skicklighet och hans redobogenhet att offra egen nytta för allmännyttan. Folkstyre och folkbildning kunna därför icke skiljas från varandra. De förutsätta varandra. Ty intet folkstyre kan varaktigt bestå och lyckas, därest det icke uppbäres av upplysta, ansvarsmedvetna och självständiga medborgare.'
 - 26 *Ibid.*: 'en strävan att i olika riktningar göra medborgarna skickade att fylla de krav, som det folkliga självstyret ställer på dem.'
 - 27 'Moralisk fostran' (1941), in *ETS* iii. 167: 'Utbildningen är en sak, bildning en annan'. With this distinction, Engberg was following the *Bildung*-tradition from

- late eighteenth-century Germany to Sweden at the turn of the twentieth century. Among Engberg's predecessors, Ellen Key deserves special mention. She made a similar distinction between abstract, specialized knowledge ('fack-bildning') and a personality-driven synthesis of knowledge ('allmän-bildning', or 'sammanmältningen af de skilda bildningsmomenten till en helhet') (Key 1897, 3–7).
- 28 Engberg 1938a, 4: 'varken kan inläras eller inövas', 'trygga medborgarnas tillträde till förvärvet av färdigheter och insikter'; see also 'Tal vid invigningen av Falu nya läroverk' (1935) in *ETS* iii. 70: 'Luckily, I almost said, the most valuable thing in art is not what one has learnt, but that which one owns without having learnt it. ... To know is one thing, to render alive and create something else' ('Och dock är det så—jag höll på att säga lyckligtvis—att det värdefullaste i konsten icke är det som man lärt sig utan det som man äger utan att ha lärt sig. ... Kunna är ett, levandegöra och skapa ett annat').
- 29 Ibid.: 'den [demokratiska kulturpolitiken] har att sörja för luft, rymd och ljus, goda förbindelser mellan andelivets olika provinser, motverka försök till isolering, ge hjälp till självhjälp åt allt livsdugligt och främja vidsyn och fördragsamhet.'
- 30 'Konstens socialisering' (1921), in *ETS* iii. 28. The concept was originally developed by the Belgian art critic Edmond Picard, and introduced to Sweden by Georg Pauli in *Konstens socialisering: ett program* (1915). See also Rapp 1978 for a discussion of its significance in Sweden at the turn of the last century.
- 31 Engberg 1936, 4: 'Den s.k. gipskattskulturen är Gudi klagat en bister verklighet. Det tarvas krafttag för att övervinna och förjaga den. Och här finns ingen annan väg att gå än att väcka själarnas längtan efter något vackrare och högre. Vägen är med andra ord den redan antydda: att i största möjliga utsträckning låta generationerna uppleva konsten.'
- 32 *ETS* iii. 27, 'Konstens socialisering', 'stilsinne', 'andliga lyftning'; see also Savolainen in this volume on the complications that may arise when this idea is translated into practice.
- 33 *ETS* iii. 27: 'Skall konsten kunna leva och blomstra, måste den inneslutas i folkets kärlek och varda ett liv i folkets eget liv'; see also Engberg 1936, 4: 'It would be a futile endeavour to establish a literary market within an alphabetic people. Literacy and the desire to read are the market's natural conditions. The same goes for art. If its products are to be demanded from the larger and broader layers, the first and necessary condition is the creation of an understanding and need for art among these layers' ('Det torde vara ett hopplöst företag att söka få marknad för skönlitteratur inom ett analfabetiskt folk. Läskunnighet och läslust äro här marknadens naturliga förutsättningar. Sammalunda med konsten. Skola dess alster röna efterfrågan från större och bredare lager så torde den första och oundgängliga förutsättningen vara den, att det bland dessa lager skapats både förståelse och behov av konst').
- 34 Cf. Hylland & Bjurström 2018, 1: 'Aesthetics and politics meet whenever cultural policy gives art any form of agency. Such agency is given to art when it is

- supposed to fulfil other functions and represent other kinds of value than its intrinsic value—in other words, when art is promoted for the sake of something and not for art's sake.' We would argue that Hylland & Bjurström's definition does not cover the full implications of cultural politics in the period of our study.
- 35 Engberg 1938b, 11, 14.
- 36 Quoted in Beltzén & Beltzén 1973, 247: 'Ty vi måste förverkliga oss själva. Historiens mening är sålunda frihetens förverkligande, och vi själva ha i våra händer att låta denna mening gå i uppfyllelse ... Vårt "gudarike" betecknar början till mänskighetens verkliga historia, där "förhistorien" i mörker och trældom är slut och frihetens rike tar arv efter nödvändighetens.'
- 37 See Marx & Engels 1970, 54 for their vision of liberation from the division of labour and restrictions to an exclusive sphere of activity; see also Marx 1972, 124 for self-realization and 'real freedom' as realized through 'really free labour', exemplified by 'the composing of music', an activity that is both free and demands 'the greatest effort'.
- 38 Schiller 1962, fifth letter.
- 39 See Schiller 1962, sixth letter for the negative judgement on the state and the conclusion that the only hope is 'eine höhere Kunst'.
- 40 'Framtidsmusik' (1918), in *ETS* i. 30: 'människornas medvetande som utgör bas för deras sociala tillvaro, utan det är denna sociala tillvaro själv ... som utgör basen för deras medvetande.' Note that Karlsson (2001, 444) sees Engberg's view of culture as less deterministic than the more orthodox Marxist interpretation. Engberg considered culture to be conditioned, not determined, by its material base.
- 41 *ETS* iii. 17: 'huru vi skola få fram en svensk nationell kultur', 'frågan om en omläggning av vårt samhälles ekonomiska och sociala liv'.
- 42 It is important to note that the concept of socialization not only applies in art. In 'Socialisering' (1936) in *ETS* ii. 95, for example, Engberg explains that 'socialization, reasonably, means nothing else than the process whereby society continuously adapts the industry according to the supportive demands of the people' ('Med socialisering förstås rimligtvis ingenting annat än samhällets fortgående anpassning av näringslivet efter folkförsörjningens behov'). Here, however, socialization nevertheless becomes a means to secure the population's 'capability and creativity' ('duglighet och skaparkraft'), ensuring that 'our people, both spiritually and physically meet the demands of their tasks to the highest possible degree' ('vårt folk både fysiskt och andligt i största möjliga grad dugliggöres för sina uppgifter').
- 43 'Tal vid invigningen av Falu nya läroverk' (1935), in *ETS* iii. 78: 'Det ligger obestridligen något riktigt i den redan av Hegel företrädde meningen, att i ett arbetes resultat är själva arbetsprocessen på en gång bevarad och upphävd. Produkten liksom uppsummerar och förkroppsligar alla de andliga energier, som varit i verksamhet och utlösts i och under arbetsprocessen. Här sammansmälta

- intelligens, vilja och känsla. Produkten blir, om man så vill, en funktion av egenskaperna hos den levande arbetskraften, av personligheten själv.
- 44 *ETS* iii. 78–9: ‘Ju längre en slik utbildning av den levande arbetskraften drivits, desto större är förutsättningarna för en fullödlig arbetsprodukt, det må gälla den materiella eller andliga produktionen.’
- 45 ‘De vuxnas bildningsarbete’ (1933), in *ETS* iii. 48: ‘Man kan med fullt fog påstå, att produktionens kvalitet är ett uttryck för en funktion av människomaterialets beskaffenhet.’
- 46 ‘Modersmålet’ (1922), in *ETS* iii. 32, 34: ‘en reflex av sitt eget väsen,’ ‘den naturligaste och närmast till hands liggande av,’ ‘kulturella uppgifter.’
- 47 *Ibid.* 34: ‘den svenska andens stämma i världen’; see also Engberg’s speech ‘Tal vid invigningen av Högre allm. läroverkets för flickor nybyggnad i Örebro’ (1938), in *ETS* ii. 136, where he goes so far as to speak of personal freedom and *Bildung* as the basis of global power: ‘For a small people that, with all its force and determination, seeks, entices, develops, and schools the high-grade talents given them perchance, providing scope for them within an order of things that guards their personal freedom and independence, great cultural power lies within the range of possibility’ (‘Ett litet folk, som med all kraft målmedvetet uppsparar, framlockar, utvecklar och skolar vad det till äventyrs kan äga av högvärdiga begåvningar och låter dem komma till sin rätt i en tingens ordning, som hägnar deras personliga frihet och självständighet, har möjlighet till kulturell stormaktsställning’).
- 48 ‘De vuxnas bildningsarbete’ (1933), in *ETS* iii. 48: ‘I vårt folks kamp för tillvaron är det främst på kvaliteten av dess produktionsresultat det kommer an.’
- 49 In ‘Minnesdagen’ (1931), in *ETS* ii. 89, written in memory of August Palm’s first public speech on the subject of socialism in 1881, Engberg recalled that Swedish social democracy was formed at the same time as Charles Darwin’s theories were popularized: ‘It was the time when all of life’s problems were brought up for discussion. In moral, religious, literary, and artistic regards, the 1880s undoubtedly put a number of old superstitions and prejudices, artificiality, affectedness, and blind faith, out of the way. The natural sciences shaped the view of the world. The theory of evolution shed new light on the whole of organic life. Thinking was conquered by Darwinism. Spencer was studied and adopted. In all those passionate controversies over the freedom of religion, free thinking, utilitarianism, Darwinism, protectionism, naturalism, rationalism, and many other “isms”, Swedish socialism developed its spiritual physiognomy’ (‘Det var den tid, då livets alla problem ställdes under debatt. Moraliskt, religiöst, litterärt och konstnärligt röjde 80-talet otvivelaktigt upp med en mängd gamla fördomar och vidskepelser, förkonstling, tillgjordhet och övertro. Respektlöshet, tvivel, kritik och omvärdering av alla värden voro karakteristiska för tiden. Den naturvetenskapliga världsbilden slog igenom. Utvecklingsläran ställde hela det organiska livet i ny belysning. Darwinismen erövrade tänkesättet. Spencer studerades

- och anammades. I alla dessa lidelsefulla fejder om religionsfrihet, fritänkeri, utilism, darwinism, protektionism, naturalism, rationalism och många andra "ismer" fick svensk socialism sin andliga fysionomi"). Unsurprisingly, Engberg also underscored 'the epoch's significant interest in *Bildung*' ('epokens starka bildningsintresse').
- 50 Blomqvist 2006, 188–9.
- 51 See Gunneflo 2015, 35–7; Hall 2000, 261.
- 52 See Kjellén 1916; on the notion of the state as an organism, see in particular *ibid.* 31 ff.
- 53 Kjellén, quoted in Björck 1946, 62: 'Vi måste därför räkna med folkens konkurrens såsom naturlig och nödvändig, såsom själfva nerven i utvecklingen, utan hvilken framsteget skulle stanna och folken ruttna bort som stillastående vatten'; see also Kjellén 1916, 33 for a similar argument.
- 54 Kjellén 1916, 11: 'Det måste frappa, att staten här visar sig intresserad för individens gärning utan att något sammanhang längre kan påvisas med den formella rätten eller samfundsordningen. Och detta intresse stannar ingalunda vid individens materiella välgång. Genom att (helt eller delvis) öfvertaga folkuppfostran i alla instanser framträder staten med stora andliga kulturintressen. Hela kulturlivet visar sig till sist falla inom dess horisont, långt bortom rättens gränser.'
- 55 Engberg 1938b, 10 notably places his discussion 'completely outside the bounds of politics' ('helt och hållet utanför politikens ramar'), concerned with 'a description of essentials that concern all of us, crossing and exceeding political differences' ('en framställning av väsentligheter, som över och tvärsigenom allt vad politiska skiljelinjer heter, angå oss alla'). See also Foucault 2009, 79 for his compact analysis of the shift from legal subjects to population.
- 56 'Tal vid invigningen av Eskilstuna nya läroverk' (1935), in *ETS* iii. 78: 'Vården och ansen om människans krafter och gåvor, deras utveckling, dugliggörande och skolning'; Karlsson 2001, 444: 'evolutionära principer'.
- 57 In an account of the art of the ancient Greeks, Engberg, in 'Tal vid invigningen av Karlshamns nya läroverk' (1937), in *ETS* iii. 126 similarly uses the gardener as a central metaphor for the principle of harmony that governed their life: 'The intellectual gifts of the soul were to be brought into blossom. However, the ideal was not the wild, unrestrained, and lawless, not the flora of the jungle, but that of the expert gardener. The object was to apply the right measure of care and discipline, to instill the proper order, to each of the soul's talents' ('Själens olika gåvor skulle bringas att slå ut i blom. Men det var icke det vildvuxna, det regellösa och tygellösa som skulle eftersträvas, icke djungelns flora, men väl den skicklige trädgårdsmästarens. Det gällde att åt varje själsgåva ge den ans, den tuktan, det skick, som motsvarade det rätta måttet'); see also Foucault 2008, 15–16 on the altered relation between governmentality and nature since the late eighteenth century: 'For political economy, nature is not an original and

reserved region on which the exercise of power should not impinge, on pain of being illegitimate. Nature is something that runs under, through, and in the exercise of governmentality.

58 Engberg 1938a, 4: 'livsdugligt'.

59 'Bort med spärrarna' (1943), in *ETS* iii. 217: 'duglighet och skaparkraft ... den obegåvade ... träda tillbaka för den begåvade'.

Protecting books from readers

Children in Finnish public libraries, 1930–1959

Ilona Savolainen

Readers can be prevented from gaining access to literature in many ways. Sometimes prohibitory mechanisms are tied to institutional structures and practices. These mechanisms are not necessarily derived from institutions' official goals and policies; they can even operate against them. Therefore, it is possible for a public library to commit to offering free access to books while simultaneously upholding practices that discourage or prevent readers from borrowing. Often control is directed at certain groups of readers, and restrictions cover only some categories of books.

Typically, child readers have faced more obstacles gaining access to literature than adults. The production and distribution of books is entirely in the hands of adults, and in addition children's financial dependence and limited mobility restrict their possibilities to obtain reading material. Children have also been targets of protection from the supposedly harmful effects of reading. The objective of protecting children has sometimes led to actual censorship, but even more often to more vaguely defined practices of regulation. Despite the definition, in the eyes of the child reader the outcome might still be the same: children are denied access to some forms of literature.

In my study, I look at the contradictory goals of children's library services in Finland in 1930–1959. This was an era when children's library services developed from a non-existent or modest level to

a self-evident, even central, part of Finnish public libraries. This process was not accidental, but a conscious effort led by public officials. However, public libraries only gradually embraced child readers, creating a contradictory situation where children gained access to libraries but often did not feel welcome there. Though services were provided, child readers did not necessarily experience that they were allowed to use them.

Children's library services evolved as part of a wider change in children's societal position and in tandem with other public services. The first half of the twentieth century was a period of modernization and institutionalization for Western childhood.¹ There were new professions and institutions concentrated on children, developmental psychology advanced rapidly, and childhood became more uniform as compulsory school reached all children.² Childhood gained ground in the public sphere, ground that was intended for children and was separated from the adult world. New public spaces for children were provided: schools, kindergartens, children's homes, and child welfare clinics. Finland was no exception.

The modernization process of childhood was not always easy or painless for its subjects, children. Saara Tuomaala has shown in her research on children's experiences of compulsory school in agrarian Finland in the 1920s and 1930s that children were often torn between conflicting demands of the modern state and their families' traditional way of life. In Tuomaala's material, these contradictions were symbolized by the transformation of children's hands from working hands into clean, writing hands.³

In addition to compulsory school, clean hands were a matter of great importance in the public library system. In Finland, a network of public libraries had been built in the late nineteenth century, inspired by the ideas of popular enlightenment and national spirit.⁴ However, children's library services were very poor or non-existent in most parts of the country until the 1950s.⁵ It was only after the adoption of the ideals of the North American Public Library Movement that children were considered potential library users.⁶ From the 1920s, the Finnish state played a pivotal role in

this change. The State Library Bureau strongly encouraged public libraries to provide children with the chance to read and lend. In the idealistic view of the library branch developers, the public library was an emancipating force in children's lives—especially for lower-class children. To provide children with books meant to provide them with opportunities for self-improvement and advancement.⁷ But what of children's experiences of their encounters with public libraries during the transformation period? Was the library an emancipating force in their lives, or did they feel unwelcome and discouraged?

As the material for this study, I use childhood memories about three Finnish libraries, 1930–1959. I look at descriptions of the places, services, and staff to understand how children experienced their possibilities for library use. Childhood recollections are analysed against inspection reports by the State Library Bureau in the same period and about the same three libraries. Combining two different sets of material gives an opportunity to examine whether the objectives set by the State Library Bureau had anything in common with the library services the actual child users encountered. Was there a clash between the ideals and reality? If so, what obstacles did the children face?

Libraries as children's places

In my analysis, I use the concept of place. Place can be interpreted as both a spatial location and metaphorically, as a place in society. In modern society, certain places are designated specifically for children. Thus, say, school, children's homes, and the children's department in a library combine the two meanings of children's places: they are at the same time places designated for children and places that mark the children's societal position as separate from the adult world. In addition, children's places can also be understood as places that children use on their own terms and for their own purposes.⁸ Naturally, sometimes places designed for children are also children's places, but that is not always the case. One of the

objectives of this study is to see if children's departments in libraries—places intended for children—were actually children's places.

Room solutions necessarily support some forms of behaviour while excluding others. Architectural decisions are never neutral, but carry with them ideals of desirable human conduct. Modern institutions such as schools, children's homes and libraries, of course, guide their users' conduct with room divisions, schedules, and practices that regulate the use of space and time.⁹ Libraries' room solutions and practices that come with them—age limits, separate opening hours for different age groups, specific rules of conduct in different library rooms—are also effective ways to regulate reading. Therefore, the building of public library rooms is a form of governance in itself.

Children's place in modern society is paradoxical. While children are treated as objects of protection and constant surveillance, they are also expected to be self-managing subjects. According to Eva Gulløv, surveillance and self-management are, in fact, 'co-existing features in the cultural formation of citizenship'.¹⁰ In the modern period, reading has become a central part of subjectivity. Reading—not only the ability to read to keep oneself informed, but also the choices and values connected to leisure reading—is vital for a self-managing, individual, rational, and autonomous modern subject.¹¹ Thus, children's library services are to be expected to contain the contradictory aspects of modern childhood, simultaneously aiming at controlling children and increasing their possibilities for self-management.

The library is an exceptionally multidimensional place in that it contains entrances to fictional and factual universes. Both library users and inspectors acknowledged the worlds that unfolded between the book covers and, on some level, counted them into the square metres of the modest library rooms. For children, these worlds were the reason to come into the library. Inspectors, on the other hand, saw a possibility to open new worlds for children while at the same time guiding them away from literature that was thought to be harmful. The objective was to offer children,

somewhat paradoxically, a controlled and limited freedom.¹² The idea of a limited freedom applied to both the children's behaviour in libraries and the literary universes they were allowed to access.¹³

Regulation of literature was, therefore, inscribed in the very idea of children's services in public libraries. Whereas harmful literature represented a moral danger, suitable literature was believed to strengthen children morally, thus improving their chances of self-management.¹⁴ It did not follow, however, that all practices of regulation in libraries aimed at the same goal. There were surely many intersecting motives for controlling children's access to literature on different levels of power: library inspectors, librarians, and library board members.

Material and method

The material of this study consists of two kinds of primary sources: nine written recollections of childhood library experiences and twenty-four inspection reports produced by the State Library Bureau's inspectors. Both have their advantages and limitations. The recollections are narratives rich with detail, emotion, and impressions, but being written retrospectively by adults they cannot be treated as straightforward representations of children's experiences; the inspection reports were written at the time of the inspection or not more than a few days after, but their form and established practices of reporting unavoidably limit the expression of the inspectors' impressions.

I have chosen recollections from two large collections of library memories, 'Library tradition' (Kirjastoperinne, 1984–5) and 'The Library in my Life' (Kirjasto elämässäni, 2000), collected by the Finnish Literature Society. The Society published open invitations to write about library memories, and both competitions inspired many people to write. Together the two collections comprise thousands of pages of memories. They are held in the Finnish Literature Society's archives and have been used in many studies of Finnish library history.

The State Library Bureau's inspection reports are held in the National Archives of Finland along with the rest of the Bureau's archived material. Most of the reports are written on a form that contains questions about the size and location of the library, departments and collections, lending rules and techniques, opening hours and catalogues, personnel and library boards. The form only changed a little over the years. The heads of the State Library Bureau, Helle Kannila and her successor Mauno Kanninen, usually abandoned the form and wrote their reports freehand.

Because of the heterogeneity of the material, the recollections and inspection reports had to be analysed separately, but both sets of material were treated in a similar manner. I looked for themes that were repeated in the material, and categorized the themes into larger topics.

The evolution of public libraries in Finland

In Finland, the state played a central role in the transformation of libraries into modern public libraries. The State Library Bureau (Valtion kirjastotoimisto) was established in 1921 to provide libraries with official guidance. In 1928, the Popular Library Act (Kansankirjastolaki) prescribed conditions for state funding, thus making governmental oversight normative for libraries that received state funds. State Library Bureau inspectors travelled to municipal libraries and ensured that libraries complied with the conditions for state subsidies. They also tried to influence municipal councils and library boards, and gave concrete advice to librarians, helping with furniture, catalogues, classifications, and lending systems. Over the years—and at least partially because of the system—Finnish libraries were transformed into modern public libraries with open shelves, card catalogues, and services for all customer groups.¹⁵

The first head of the State Library Bureau, Helle Kannila (née Cannelin), strongly encouraged public libraries to provide children with the opportunity to read and lend. In her inspection reports, she stressed the importance of children's library services. In her view,

libraries could not fulfil their purpose as civilizing institutions if they left children out. For Kannila, children's library services were also a pivotal part of child welfare, bringing children in from the dangerous streets to a safe and beneficial environment. The idea of the public library system as a tool for child protection was common in the North American Public Library Movement, and since Kannila adopted her library ideals from it wholesale, it is not surprising that she emphasized the significance of libraries for child welfare.¹⁶

Kannila saw libraries as an emancipatory force in children's lives. In her idealistic point of view, libraries opened new possibilities for all children in the form of books and safe and comfortable spaces. However, reality lagged behind the ideal, and book-craving children faced many obstacles.

The libraries in Kokkola, Lahti, and Oulu

Kokkola is a small town in Western Finland in the Central Ostrobothnia region, where Swedish—the other official language of Finland—is very common. In Kokkola, Swedish was the majority language until the 1930s, and the Swedish and Finnish populations were served by partially separate libraries. During the research period, Kokkola was inspected by the State Library Bureau eight times (in 1930, 1934, 1936, 1937, 1941, 1946, 1950, and 1959), while Kokkola's Finnish library was inspected separately in 1938, 1941, and 1946. In the inspection reports, Kokkola's library received criticism for its small and worn children's collection. Both the Finnish and the Swedish children's departments were criticized for being too small, unpractical and uninviting, until the report of 1950 notes with satisfaction that the separate children's departments have been incorporated. However, the children's collection was still considered too small and worn in the 1959 report, despite several decades of reporting. Also, according to the reports, the library's opening hours were too limited, and it lacked card catalogues. Interestingly, the last report pays attention to Kokkola's children's library work: questions of the week quizzes and story hours, for instance.

Lahti, in the Päijänne Tavastia region in southern Finland, started out as a small town but grew rapidly during the period in question. In this time, Lahti city library was inspected six times (in 1934, 1936, 1939, 1946, 1949, and 1954). Most of the inspections were done by Helle Kannila herself, which is apparent in the emphases of the reports. She pays attention to the small size of the children's department and encourages the library to move the newspaper reading room away from the actual library building to gain more space for the children. Kannila emphasized that children's services were more important to the library's civilizing mission than providing adults with newspapers. Kannila also wrote repeatedly about the meaning of children's services for child welfare. Furthermore, she urged the library board and chief librarian to consider branch libraries to provide children with more opportunities to read.

Oulu is in Northern Ostrobothnia on the west coast of Finland. In the 1930s and 1940s, Oulu city library aimed at developing an extensive reference library, neglecting child users. This policy provoked long and eloquent inspection reports from Helle Kannila. Kannila inspected the Oulu city library in 1930, 1932, 1935, 1938, 1945, and 1947, and in her reports she did her best to convince the chief librarian and library board to provide children with better services. Despite Kannila's tireless efforts, Oulu city library stuck with its policy, and children's library services remained poor for decades. In the 1930s, the children's reading room was only open once a week, one hour for illiterate children and two hours for literate children, and books could not be borrowed.

The library as a system of rules and practices

A modern public library is a complex system that requires its user to adopt practices, rules, and certain forms of behaviour. The library inspectors were somewhat conscious of this, pondering what kind of a card catalogue would be easiest for users and encouraging libraries to pay attention to signage and include instructions for card catalogues. However, children's experiences show that the complexity of

the library system was in fact a more profound problem for children's library use than the library inspectors anticipated. The difficulties went beyond understanding particular parts of the system. It seems that the complexity itself created in some a feeling of not belonging. A woman describes her first encounter with the Kokkola city library:

I stepped inside. I didn't have the courage to talk to anyone. I just saw amazed how the walls of the children's department were covered with bookshelves and books from floor to ceiling, and how small boys and girls looked at the shelves and read books as if they had always been there. Nobody spoke to me and the aunt didn't even ask my name. I didn't know what I should have done. The situation was terribly solemn and I remember that my breath caught in my throat.¹⁷

She goes on to say that it took her months to summon up the nerve to ask for a library card. After that, she progressed from looking around to borrowing books, but the feelings of perplexity and being left out were characteristic for her library use her whole childhood.

Naturally, not all children were as timid as she was, and for some the library rules and practices were easier to adopt. That they still were considered a nuisance comes out in several remarks such as this from a boy in Lahti: 'The library ... was full of rules and customs that existed nowhere else. I learnt them quickly. You only got books if you followed them. It was a small price to pay for that joy.'¹⁸ The will to use the library is so strong in all the material that only one child gives up, even though seven out of nine write about clashes with the library system during their childhood. All the stories describe library rules as unconditional: on the children's part, there is no room for negotiation, but on rare occasions, librarians decide to make exceptions out of pity or other reasons.

Another library user from Lahti felt that the library was nothing but rules:

You were allowed to borrow four books at a time, but two of them had to be fact books. And you weren't allowed to return a book until the next day, even though you'd already read it. It said so in the rules. Somehow the library appeared to be full of rules. They started in the hall—"Take your hat off! Do not spit on the floor! Silence in the library!"—and they continued as separate rules for the three lending departments. On a door at the back of the adults' department it said 'Staff only' as a full stop to all the prohibitions and rules.¹⁹

Lahti city library's policy of allowing returns only after a minimum of one night causes trouble for one boy, who lives so far from the library that he decides to read the books he has borrowed in the park. When he goes back to the library to return the books, he faces a suspicious librarian. In an absurd scene, the librarian starts to interrogate the boy about the plot of one of the books to find out if he has actually read it. Fortunately, the boy passes, and the librarian bends the rules and allows him to return the books and borrow two new ones. 'Take thicker books,' she instructs the boy.²⁰

Lending restrictions and age limits are the most common set of rules the stories talk about. Understandably, these were the rules that affected children the most, because they craved more and more books. All the writers were keen readers—or at least keen borrowers—and the children's collections were small. Consequently, the adults' department soon became their goal; however, only one writer says the librarian made an exception, and all the others had to wait until they were 15 (in Kokkola and Lahti) or 16 (in Oulu). The adults' department, with its long rows of bookshelves, represented a forbidden paradise for these children. In two stories, the bitter sense of being left out of something vitally important is emphasized by the harsh attitude of the librarians who guard the adults' department.

The code of silence

The most important library rule in the stories is silence. Unlike many other rules, children easily understand the code of silence. A man describes his noisy first entrance to Oulu city library with his two friends:

It was only there [behind the library door] that we almost ended up in a fight, but only with one another, because nobody wanted to be the first, and so we pushed ourselves in through the door at the same time with quite a racket. . . . All we saw was a woman with a bun and a cardigan buttoned all the way up to her chin. She stood up behind her horseshoe-shaped desk, turned her specs-shiny face towards us and lifted her index finger before her lips. We got the message and started creeping across that impressive square.²¹

Although the demand for silence was easy to grasp, obeying it was not always simple. In Lahti, stepping on creaking floorboards led to difficulties:

In the children's department, there were a couple of floorboards that creaked viciously every time you happened to step on them. Then the librarian turned her head towards the troublemaker and pointed her index finger towards the door: 'Get out!' I quickly learnt to step over the protesting floorboards to avoid making a noise.²²

Silence also created a solemn and serious atmosphere. For children who felt at home in the library, the reverent silence was an important part of the library's appeal. However, others felt that it made their stay in the library even more difficult, forcing them to observe and control themselves in an unnatural way. In addition, communicating in whispers was difficult for children. A man from Lahti notes that the practice of whispering weakened his position in a conflict with

a librarian—and his position was not strong to begin with—as it was very difficult for him to keep his voice at the right level while at the same time trying to find the right words to defend himself. In his eyes, the librarian was a ‘professional’ whisperer.²³

Librarians

In the children’s eyes, the library was the librarian’s kingdom, and she ruled it with an iron hand. The librarian was the library’s rules and practices incarnate, and the children’s failure to obey to them immediately lead to a frightening encounter with the librarian, who in the children’s view was both the source and the guardian of the rules. Even in memories where children were able to build a safe and trusting relationship with the librarian, her authority was unquestionable.

The descriptions of librarians are detailed and intense, which probably stems from both the frequency of contact between the child and the librarian and the strength of children’s impressions. Gender plays an important role in the descriptions—in my material, all librarians are female—and librarians are often referred to as ‘aunts’. Age is also an important aspect, and in two stories the strict ‘aunt’ is ultimately replaced by a smiling ‘girl’, who has remarkably less authority; in both of those stories the replacement symbolizes the transformation of the library from scary and rigid to a pleasant place of relaxation.

The children paid attention to the librarians’ clothes, hair, and build. The librarians’ similarity with other authority figures, such as teachers or priests’ wives, is pointed out in the descriptions. Black and grey are the most common colours associated with librarians. In one story, the librarian moves ‘like a grey wizard between the dark shelves’. Descriptions of clothing and hairstyle bring out the same dark authority, for example ‘steel-grey curly’ hair or a ‘serious dark dress’.

Because of the most important behaviour code in the library, silence, the librarians controlled children with gestures, looks,

and expressions. The librarian's finger is a recurring motif in the material: the index finger pointing to a disobedient child or raised to tightly pursed lips to silence library users. A boy from Lahti learnt by heart the librarian's wordless multiphase message system:

Quiet whispering was tolerated in the children's department. An occasional cough was also allowed. Louder sounds made the tall librarian look over her glasses. The next warning was a dry cough combined with a look. The third one included lifting a finger before her mouth and a small shush. After that came a rap on the table with a ruler and a stern stare at the disturber. Her finger was lifted to point at the insubordinate. She never needed to go any further. They did say that some boy from Kärpänen [a district in Lahti] had been dragged out to the hall by his ear. That taught the little rascal.²⁴

The fear that the librarian provoked is seen in the threat of physical punishment, though completely based on rumour. The humorous tone of the story and the adult narrator's perspective as an active and (now) well-behaved library user is probably the reason why the victim of the alleged violence is called a 'little rascal'. On the other hand, there is a level of irony in the story, and the narrator continuously criticizes the librarian, which opens the possibility of interpreting this scene too as ironic. In that case, ironically blaming the victim only underlines the despotic attitude of the librarian.

In several stories, children feel that they should not approach the librarian with questions. The librarian's role is to guard the library space and collections and to make sure that rules are obeyed. Children are not even allowed to ask about the rules that they are expected to follow: 'I never dared to ask how to behave in a library and what I was allowed to do in there', a woman writes about her experiences in Kokkola city library.²⁵

In the same story, the child comes across the 'Questions of the week' quiz. Questions of the week or month were a popular way to teach children to use the reference library, and library inspectors

often recommended them in their reports. Kokkola's long tradition with questions of the week, too, was favourably mentioned in an inspection report in 1954. However, putting the questions on display does not yet mean that children will answer them, as is shown in this example:

In the corner of the room, where the aunt was sitting behind the desk to keep watch, there was a round tile stove. In the metal sheet that covered it, there was a big drawn picture on cardboard, I guess from some southern land or some animal, they varied. Under the picture, there were ten numbered questions and an invitation to answer the questions. ... I must have wondered for months, whom the exercise was for, but I never dared to ask. I immensely admired one boy who took a pencil and paper, filled in the answers and dropped it into the box. I thought that I had no right to touch anything. Only look from a distance.²⁶

The narrator goes on to say that ten years later she suddenly realized that the competition was open to all children, and that she still feels annoyed that the librarian never told her, and that she did not have the courage to ask.

In the children's eyes, librarians were guardians of books, doing their best to protect them from avid readers. Because children saw librarians as the source of library rules and practices, all types of lending limitations were also connected to the librarian. Librarians simply seemed reluctant to lend books to children. Thus, autobiographical material shows that the reality in Finnish libraries was still far from the ideals reflected in the inspection reports.

Social class and library use

The State Library Bureau saw children's library services as especially important for children in the lower classes. Libraries were thought to open possibilities for education and self-improvement for poor children, but also to be an important and affordable child

welfare service, as they gave children the chance to spend time in safe indoor space, away from the dangerous streets. However, the material shows that working-class children had a different perspective on their position in public libraries. Two writers with working-class backgrounds point out the contradiction between the ideal of popular education embodied by compulsory school and public libraries, and the way they were treated by teachers and librarians—at least partially because of their less advantaged background.

A knowledge-hungry boy in Lahti was thoroughly disappointed in the library because of the humiliating treatment he received:

When she [the librarian] was checking out books, she must have felt the boundless joy of a despot as she reluctantly opened the bookcases in front of a little boy. At the same time, she trained the young person with her behaviour, remarks, and talks like this: you're not supposed to lend more than *two books at a time* and they must be returned *not later than in two weeks* or else there will be *consequences*. These kinds of incidents influence young minds. Somehow this contemptuous attitude without any reason, unless it is reason enough that my home was a working-class home and I was wearing boots the local authority had given me for walking to school. It felt really bad.²⁷

Children with working-class backgrounds also had to deal with contradictions between their families' values and the society represented by the school and the library. In the 1930s, the people of Finland were still disunited after the 1918 Civil War. The political atmosphere, and even the literary system including libraries, was Rightist.²⁸ In the material, the difficulties of coping with families' Leftist and society's Rightist attitudes come up in one story by a man from Oulu. He writes that his schoolteacher used to leave the classroom bookcase open during detention to tempt children to read books with the right kinds of values. According to the writer, children read with pleasure all the adventure books without

sparing a thought for the values in them, but their parents would not have approved. 'Some serious fights were fought between home and school for the souls of children,' he writes. Unfortunately, this socially alert writer finishes his story of his library use with his first visit to Oulu city library, and we never find out how his family's values fit in with Oulu city library.²⁹

Conclusions

In the material for this study, all writers eventually fall in love with the library system. Two felt at home from the beginning, six had mixed feelings in their childhood, and only one had to wait until adulthood to see his way to the possibilities the library had to offer. In some way, then, the public libraries in Kokkola, Lahti, and Oulu appear to have been successful in fulfilling the objectives the State Library Bureau set them. We must bear in mind, however, that the material used in this study is extremely skewed. The method of collection eliminated almost all stories with unhappy conclusions, since it is very rare for people to take the time to write about something that is insignificant to them. Therefore, it is possible—and even probable—that not all children coped with the confusing rules and humiliating practices in libraries.

When the inspection reports are compared to the picture outlined in the recollections, both similarities and differences between them are apparent. Both express discontent with the size of the children's book collections and the strict age limits. Children and library inspectors appear to have agreed on the ultimate objective of the children's library services: to provide children with as large a collection of books as possible with the existing resources. Similarly, they agreed on some of the obstacles along the way. However, inspection reports paid no attention to the most common problem children faced in the libraries: the scary librarian with her humiliating attitude.

The library itself was an unfamiliar system for children, and as such for some it was intimidating and confusing. Library inspectors

were conscious of the difficulties children had with the library system, but they handled them strictly as a problem of the users' knowledge, to be solved by advising libraries to add more signs and instructions to inform customers of the library system, when in fact these measures could even worsen the children's feeling of being in the wrong place, as is shown in the children's anguish about library signage.

Children's societal position affected the way they experienced places intended for them. Though library services were specifically targeted for children from lower classes of society, libraries upheld practices that discouraged working-class children from using those services. In their recollections, reading and libraries were an important part of constructing identity. The writers defined themselves through their reading history, and especially childhood reading. Therefore, their experiences of using libraries in childhood played a pivotal role in the construction of their adult identity. Painful memories of not feeling welcome in a place of books and reading were connected to other experiences of societal injustice and outsidersness.

I began by asking if libraries' children's departments were actual children's places in the period in question. According to the recollections, they were not. Though some children—a minority—felt that they belonged to the library, they were still on strange turf, and had to obey the librarians' rules, which sometimes were completely arbitrary. Children's departments were far from the cosy nests Helle Kannila envisioned; further from them than she ever could have imagined. They were especially uninviting for Kannila's primary target group: working-class children. A lesson to be learnt is that setting out a service for someone does not mean it is truly available to him or her. Literature can also be forbidden simply by making people feel they are in the wrong place.

Notes

- 1 Cunningham 2005, 41.
- 2 Hendrick 1997, 34–62; Tuomaala 2004.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Mäkinen 2015, 287–99.
- 5 Eskola 2001, 73–4.
- 6 Vatanen 2001, 23–72.
- 7 Savolainen 2020, forthcoming.
- 8 Olwig & Gulløv 2003, 1–19.
- 9 Foucault 1991; Ojakangas 1998, 44–5; Rose 1999.
- 10 Gulløv 2003, 32–48.
- 11 Mäkinen 1997.
- 12 For how this dialectic between limited and unlimited access to books is negotiated with respect to adults, see also Helgason in this volume.
- 13 Savolainen 2020.
- 14 See also Johansson in this volume.
- 15 Eskola 2001, 73–4.
- 16 Lyons 2007, 597–608.
- 17 SKS KRA. Kirjasto elämässäni (The library in my Life), 2566. In Finnish, *täti*, ‘aunt’, is very commonly used for women working in the service sector, for example *kirjastontäti*, ‘library aunt’.
- 18 SKS KRA. Kirjasto elämässäni (The Library in my Life), 2353.
- 19 SKS KRA. Kirjastoperinne (Library Tradition), 114.
- 20 SKS KRA. Kirjasto elämässäni (The Library in my Life), 2353–2354.
- 21 SKS KRA. Kirjastoperinne (Library Tradition), 781–782.
- 22 SKS KRA. Kirjastoperinne (Library Tradition), 114.
- 23 SKS KRA. Kirjasto elämässäni (The Library in my Life), 2354.
- 24 SKS KRA. Kirjasto elämässäni (The Library in my Life), 2353.
- 25 SKS KRA. Kirjasto elämässäni (The Library in my Life), 2571.
- 26 SKS KRA. Kirjasto elämässäni (The Library in my Life), 2568.
- 27 SKS KRA. Kirjasto elämässäni (The Library in my Life), 827.
- 28 Sevänen 1994.
- 29 SKS KRA. Kirjastoperinne (Library Tradition), 777.

Truth, knowledge, and power

Censorship and censoring policies in the Swedish public library system

Jon Helgason

As Nicholas J. Karolides states in *Banned Books: Literature Suppressed on Political Grounds*, the suppression of literature is not limited to dictatorships and authoritarian states.¹ In fact, governments of democracies for various, mostly ‘well-intended’, reasons sometimes attempt to censor different forms of expression. Also, and for the purposes of this study more importantly, Karolides refutes the belief that censorship for political reasons only emanates from national governments. Another common source of politically motivated censorship is found at the local community level. The source of such activities is sometimes school board members or citizens, individually or in groups, who for political reasons try to censor textbooks and fiction used in schools or available in school libraries.² Even though Karolides’ description in this case primarily concerns American conditions, similar observations, as will be shown in this study, can be made in a democratic society such as Sweden.³

In recent decades there have been several (some of them highly publicized) complaints to the Parliamentary Ombudsmen, concerning what has been perceived as ideological censoring and censorship in the Swedish public libraries sector, primarily concerning publications with a perceived right-wing, nationalist, or anti-immigration agenda. The task of the Parliamentary Ombudsmen, who are independent and answer directly to Parliament, is

to ensure that public authorities and their staff comply with the law, to review the implementation of the law in the public sector on behalf of the Swedish Parliament, and to monitor the public administration and the executive. Their remit includes the courts and other public authorities.

This investigation will study three cases where the Parliamentary Ombudsmen ruled in favour of complainants concerning ‘censorship’ and ‘ideological activism’ by Swedish public libraries.⁴ It shows how other public cultural policies seem to come into conflict with constitutional principles such as the freedom of opinion, especially where librarians and other public officials were accused of unlawful ‘activism’, examining the legal ramifications and the nature of the conflict between the various principles and policies. Together, the three cases underscore the inherent conflict in the Enlightenment heritage of modern liberal democracies, which has to do with ‘the search for means both to liberate the individual and to foster social cohesion and conformity’.⁵

Democratic society and the public library system

‘A democratic society must rest on a democratic culture.’ This is one of the conclusions of an official report on the state of democracy in Sweden published in 2016.⁶ The report elaborates on the importance of free speech and free culture, and emphasizes culture and the arts (literature, music, theatre, and other cultural expressions) as being instrumental in democracy, since such modes of expressions convey thoughts and ideas that are not normally encompassed by the formal institutions of the state.⁷ This sentiment is also telling for the instrumental function of the Swedish public library system. In another recent official report, the Swedish public library system is referred to as ‘the fifth estate’.⁸ As a motto, this is revealing about the self-understanding of the Swedish library sector. By extension, ‘the fifth estate’ refers to the classic Estates of the Realm (clergy, nobility, and commoners, and later the ‘fourth estate’, the press) and the traditional separation of powers in democratic societies

(the legislature, the administration, and the judiciary). The report stresses the need for a well-functioning public library system in order for Sweden to withstand the rise of the authoritarian and right-wing populist movements witnessed in both the US and Europe.⁹ The library system, the report states, should act as a counterweight to the failing traditional media and to ‘alternative facts’. By referring to it as ‘the fifth estate’, the report acknowledges the library system as ‘an independent, autonomous, neutral force that provides knowledge and information to the citizens in order for them to function as citizens’. This line of reasoning underscores the perceived constitutional function of the Swedish public library system as well as the legal framework the Swedish public library system rests on.

The Library Act

The first Library Act (SFS 1996:1596), which set out the basic regulation of public libraries, came into effect on 1 January 1997. Before that, no legislation had dealt specifically with public libraries, apart from generic regulations concerning government expenditure. As of 2014, a new, revised Library Act (SFS 2013:801) is in effect. However, there are no detailed provisions in either Act about how local authorities should organize and manage library services. This adheres to a long-established principle in Swedish cultural policy, which dictates that the state should support, not govern, the cultural sector.¹⁰

There is reason to consider some aspects of the Swedish Library Act. Article 2 stipulates that the public library system should promote literature and the interest in knowledge, information, education, and research, as well as other cultural activities in general.¹¹ This Article also spells out that the purpose of a public library system is to promote a democratic, constitutional state by the mediation of knowledge and freedom of opinion. The legislative history of the Act also states that libraries are to ‘contribute to a desirable societal development in general’.¹² A fundamental tenet of Article 2 is that well-informed

citizens with freedom of opinion as well as freedom of expression will further democracy. This requires that the library system itself should have a neutral position as to which information citizens can access. Article 6 sets down that all local authorities are required by law to uphold public libraries, and that the supply and range of books and other media products should be based on ‘comprehensiveness and quality’. The legislative history of the Act explains that the libraries’ supply and range are of particular importance since accessibility of information is a necessary prerequisite for public discourse and every citizen’s fundamental right to freedom of information.¹³ Article 9 regulates that public libraries are to allow the public to borrow printed works, regardless of format, for a certain length of time or otherwise make them available free of charge. Articles 14 and 15 stipulate that regional libraries, book depositories, university libraries, research libraries, and other libraries financed by the state are required to make printed works from their collections available to public libraries free of charge. These institutions are furthermore required to cooperate with public libraries and school libraries, and assist them in their provision of good library services.

The former Chancellor of Justice and one of Sweden’s foremost experts on freedom of speech and freedom of the press, Johan Hirschfeldt, has on several occasions commented upon the legal underpinnings of the Swedish library system. He stresses the democratic and constitutional context of the Swedish Library Act.¹⁴ The key words in the Act—freedom of opinion, neutrality, comprehensiveness, public accessibility—are closely linked to the Swedish Constitution, meaning the Instrument of Government (*Regeringsformen*, *RF*), the Freedom of the Press Act (*Tryckfrihetsförordningen*, *TF*), and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression (*Yttrandefrihetsgrundlagen*, *YGL*). The Library Act’s emphasis on ‘freedom of opinion’ is defined as the ‘positive freedoms of opinion’, encompassing freedom of expression, freedom of information, freedom of assembly, freedom to demonstrate, freedom of association, and freedom of worship, listed in *RF* Ch 2 Art 1(1–6) ‘Fundamental rights and freedoms.’¹⁵ The constitutional laws are superordinate to other laws.

The right to refuse

Case 1, from 1996, concerns whether a public library has the right to refuse to lend an individual certain books because of the reason for wanting to borrow them. The case was taken to the Parliamentary Ombudsmen (JO). One of JO's main tasks, under Article 3 of the 1986 Act with Instructions for the Parliamentary Ombudsmen, is to ensure that courts and administrative agencies comply with the constitutional requirements of objectivity and impartiality, and that the fundamental rights and liberties of citizens are not encroached on by the state.¹⁶ In this particular instance, the complaint to JO pertained to a formal request by an individual, V, who questioned the lending policy of Västerås public library. V had requested an interlibrary loan of two of Martin Luther's anti-Semitic works, *Vom Schem Hamphoras und vom Geschlecht Christi (Of the Unknowable Name and the Generations of Christ)* and *Von den letzten Worten Davids (On the Last Words of David)*, both first published in 1543. When applying for the interlibrary loan, V felt the librarian took a 'negative and adverse stance' to his request. V was told that anti-Semitic works such as the books in question could not be borrowed, whereupon V requested the explanation for this decision in writing, referring to the fact that he had had similar requests granted by the same library on previous occasions, resulting in at least one scholarly publication written by V.¹⁷ A few days later, V received a letter signed by the head librarian as well as the librarian in question. The letter said that V in fact could borrow the publications requested, since he was able to document the scholarly purpose of his request. The letter also said that the initial refusal on the library's part 'might seem incompatible with freedom of expression and the public library system's free distribution of media, but limitations are sometimes necessary in order to prevent abuse of said freedoms'.

At the time of the complaint the 1996 Library Act had not yet come into force, and no other legislation directly governed the activities of public libraries. However, even since the Act came into force (and this is also the case with the revised Act of 2013),

there is nothing in it that regulates in detail the activities of public libraries. Furthermore, neither Act obliges a public library to provide written works of a specific nature or to arrange interlibrary loans.

In what follows, I trace JO's line of reasoning in his official decision, with particular regard to the legal arguments, since they have direct bearing on the other cases discussed in this study. JO begins his decision by referring to the previously mentioned *RF Ch 2* pertaining to the fundamental rights and liberties of citizens. He stresses that the tenor of *RF Ch 2 Art 1* is 'that the state is to guarantee each citizen freedom of information, described here as the freedom to obtain and receive information and otherwise acquaint oneself with the utterances of others'.¹⁸ On the other hand, JO concludes, this does not imply any obligation on the state to provide information. This means that the provisions for freedom of information do not support the conclusion that a public library is obliged to make all of its books available to the public. JO also refers to the regulations under *TF Ch 2* concerning the right of every citizen to access public documents, and he concludes that printed works or similar records that are part of a library's collection cannot be regarded public documents.¹⁹ This means that there is in fact no constitutional support for an individual claim for access to any item whatsoever in the collection of a public library.

The legal grounds for JO's criticism of the library, however, were mainly the so-called 'principle of objectivity' in *RF Ch 1 Art 9*: 'Courts of law, administrative authorities and others performing public administration functions shall pay regard in their work to the equality of all before the law and shall observe objectivity and impartiality.' The importance of the principle of objectivity in this case derives from the fact that it becomes operational when the principle of *nulla poena sine lege* (no penalty without a law) is not applicable.

Hirschfeldt has commented on the principle of objectivity, describing it as a general principle of public law that dictates that public authorities, such as a library (including its staff) should not be affected by other interests than those pertaining to the public

authority's own mandate, nor should they take extraneous circumstances into consideration when pursuing their duties.²⁰ Not only should public authorities observe objectivity and impartiality in their work, they should also act in a manner that does not suggest that they are subjective or partial. Hirschfeldt explains that the requirement of objectivity applies to both the decision-making and the content of the actions by the authority. In turn, the requirement of impartiality applies to how the decision-making process and the actions of the authority are perceived by the individual in question as well as by the public.²¹

The letter signed by the head librarian contained an admission that the staff had asked V what his purpose was for his loan request. The stated reason for this enquiry was that library staff were 'vigilant where anti-Semitic works are concerned'. JO concludes his decision that:

In my opinion, the principles of objectivity and impartial treatment apply in situations where a public library is dealing with a request from an individual to be allowed access to a printed work that forms part of the library's collection or for an interlibrary loan. In this context, it would be acceptable to establish a principle denying children or young people access to some types of works. Similarly, it would be acceptable for a library to restrict public access to some books in its collection, or to refuse to arrange interlibrary loans, or to arrange such loans only for those involved in research. In the same way it is, of course, totally acceptable for a library not to buy works of a certain type. On the other hand, I cannot find it acceptable to differentiate between adult borrowers so that available works are only provided to those who can show that they have the 'correct' opinions or that they are well-enough informed about certain subjects. Nor do I consider it acceptable to base the decision whether or not to arrange an interlibrary loan on such differentiation.²²

JO finds it was an aggravating circumstance that the library enquired as to the purpose of the loan request, and only acceded to the request (from, as it turned out, the library's own collection) after a 'serious purpose' could be ascertained. By trying to establish the nature of V's purpose and referring to that as grounds for approving the loan, the library had in fact admitted that V's political and religious standpoints were taken into account in their decision-making. Analogously, had V expressed a point of view considered by the staff to be unsuitable, his request would not have been granted. JO finds, in light of the application of the principle of objectivity, that it is unacceptable to differentiate in this way between individuals applying to borrow library books.

Values and opinions

The two more recent cases, both from 2016, are here described back-to-back since they are very similar. In fact, so similar that JO summarizes both cases separately but with identical headings: 'With the exception of criminal statements, a public library is not allowed to take into account values and opinions expressed in a printed work when the library decides whether to accede or not to accede to a request for an acquisition or an interlibrary loan.'²³

In Case 2, H complained of the handling by the Botkyrka Culture Council (the municipality of Botkyrka being part of the greater Stockholm area) of his request to borrow two works of (purported) non-fiction. The works in question were *Invandring och mörkläggning: En saklig rapport från en förryckt tid* ('Immigration and cover-up: An objective report from an age of insanity') and *Muhammads flickor: Våld, mord och våldtäkter i Islams hus* ('Mohammad's Girls: Violence, murder and rape in the House of Islam').²⁴ In his complaint, H questioned whether the handling met RF's requirements. The other, similar case, Case 3, involves a complaint made by T, criticizing the Falköping Culture Council for its handling of his request to borrow the (purported) non-fiction book *Världsmästarna: När Sverige blev mångkulturellt* ('World champions: When Sweden

became multicultural').²⁵ In his complaint, T said that both the library and the Culture Council had failed to comply with the *RF*'s requirements regarding objectivity and impartiality. T also commented on the disparity that the book was available in many other public libraries in Sweden.

The reason for the two complaints was in both cases that the libraries in question refused to comply with the borrowers' requests. When prompted by JO to explain their handling of the cases, in particular in the light of *RF* Ch 1 Art 9 and the Library Act Art 2 & 6, their responses were similar. As regards Case 2, Botkyrka Culture Council responded with a twofold reason: it found that the requirement of 'quality' expressed in Library Act Art 6 justifies an active selection regarding acquisitions, deselections, and interlibrary loans, as well as other library services. The Culture Council justified this selection on grounds of quality by referring to JO's decision from 1996 (on Case 1 in the present study); with regards to the particularities of the case, it stated that the works in question failed to meet the quality demanded by the library, and that this assessment could be shown to have been made in a professional manner.²⁶ However, the Culture Council recognized, and indeed regretted, the lack of clearly formulated guidelines and quality criteria, as well as the written reasons for the library's decision, originally addressed to H, which listed the various reasons why the works were found to be lacking in quality. Among other things, the written reasons said that the works in question failed to comply with the city of Botkyrka's general 'Intercultural Action Plan.'²⁷ The Culture Council, in its statement to JO, acknowledged that these particular grounds were 'sub-optimal', possibly amounting to a violation of the principle of objectivity, particularly since the library's letter did not explain how the works in question violated the Intercultural Action Plan.²⁸ The Culture Council's conclusion was that the library had broadly speaking proceeded in accordance with the law, particularly as regards the requirement for quality under the Library Act Art 6. The Council acknowledged, nonetheless, the need for better, more transparent guidelines and routines regarding 'quality' as a screening tool.²⁹

In a similar vein, Falköping library in Case 3 gave as its stated reasons to JO that back in 2011, at the time of its original publication, the library had decided not to acquire the work in question, because it was found ‘lacking in quality’—according to the quality criteria expressed in Falköping library’s ‘Media Plan.’³⁰ When T asked the library to acquire or arrange an interlibrary loan of the work in 2016, the library’s original decision was formally reconsidered, but the conclusion was ultimately, yet again, that the work did not meet the quality criteria set in the Media Plan. The Media Plan in fact explicitly states that the library reserves the right to decline requests for acquisitions and interlibrary loans for printed works that do not meet the quality criteria.³¹

JO’s decisions in both these cases were in most respects identical. The decisions were also somewhat more detailed than for Case 1 in 1996, with a summary of the general legal principles pertaining to the cases, as well as of the principle of objectivity and a description of the Library Act. Suffice to say, in both Cases 2 and 3 the grounds for JO’s criticism was based not on the application of ‘quality’ per se under the Library Act, unless, as JO put it, ‘quality is used as a pretext to deselect a printed work due to opinions expressed in the work,’ but on how the libraries and Cultural Councils, by referring respectively to an Intercultural Action Plan and a Media Plan, justified their handling and decision-making regarding the requests. In regards to Cases 2 and 3, I wish to focus on other aspects of JO’s stated ‘Vantage Points’—which are identical for both cases and contain some interesting and thought-provoking interpretations of the legal principles.

JO begins his decision by stating that a ‘public library cannot—and should not—provide all books,’ and concludes that the Library Act postulates that a selection must in fact take place.³² The legislative history of the Library Act furthermore describes a selection based on the democratic function of the public library system, and its objectives to promote knowledge and freedom of opinion by means of a comprehensive and qualitative selection. The legislative history also stresses that public libraries must remain neutral vis-à-vis

the information they provide, and that they may not in any way limit their selection criteria on ideological, political, or religious grounds. JO concludes that the principles for selection stated in the Library Act 'are to be regarded as an emanation of the general requirements of public authorities in accordance with the principle of objectivity (1.9 of the Instrument of Government) as well as with the principles of freedom of expression and freedom of information in the Instrument of Government'. JO furthermore states that the duties of his (or her) office do not stretch to quality judgements about printed works, nor to opinions on what selection of printed works a single library ought or ought not to provide, 'unless', as JO puts it, 'special requirements should warrant such an action'.³³

Interestingly, JO's legal opinion contains a literary distinction of sorts. When reminding the reader of the public library system's fundamental function to promote knowledge, JO concludes that the operationalization of this function will need to differ 'depending on the kind of literature in question'. JO continues:

It seems natural that the demands on literary fiction should differ from the demands on other kinds of literature. When it comes to other forms of literature than literary fiction, the scrutiny conducted by the libraries regarding the reliability of a printed work constitutes an important aspect of the fulfilment of their obligation to promote knowledge. In my opinion, it is obvious that the public libraries' task to promote freedom of opinion does not oblige them to remain neutral to deficiencies in scholarly quality or outright errors in a non-fiction work.³⁴

In addition, JO's legal opinion constitutes a form of epistemological disquisition when he concludes that in the case of polemics 'and books of that ilk', it is in many instances hard to ascertain whether a statement constitutes a factual statement, which in itself can be either correct or false, or if it constitutes an opinion. According to JO, this difficulty increases when the author 'weaves facts and opinions together'. JO comes to the, perhaps questionable, conclusion

that it should be possible for libraries to gauge the factual qualities of a text, regardless of whether the text in fact promotes the opinions of the author. By way of clarification, JO states that ‘a printed work may contain utterances and expressions that are criminal (for example hate speech, slander, or incitement)’, and though such utterances can be expressed as opinions, JO states that ‘To abstain from acquiring a printed work because it contains criminal utterances is not in conflict with the principle of objectivity, even if it is expressed as an opinion.’³⁵

Truth, power, and socially structured silences

JO’s decisions, particularly concerning Case 3, the Falköping case, contain some interesting deliberations on the distinction between fiction and non-fiction, as well as on factual statement versus personal opinion.

The express purpose of Falköping’s Media Plan was to enable the library to work more strategically and methodically with acquisitions, weeding its collections, and an active, curated showcasing of select contents of the library (e.g. by means of presenting thematic selections or active presentations of works correlating to current affairs). When it comes to what literature the library should provide, the Media Plan states under the heading ‘Quality’ that the library should provide a selection of both popular, much-requested literature and more select, less-sought-after literature. When it comes to acquisitions, the Media Plan explains that quality can be assessed in three different ways, with a brief explanation of each criteria: *literary quality* is about character portrayal, narration, and language; *value*, gender roles, xenophobia, racism, and similar matters; and *trustworthiness*, reliability and timeliness.³⁶ The Media Plan furthermore establishes a hierarchy by stating that ‘we consider values to be the most important’, and it concludes that a public library cannot make media available ‘that glorify or propagate violence, racism, sexism, or other things that go against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights’. This principle seems to apply equally to fiction

as to non-fiction. Under the same heading, the Media Plan also states that the quality criteria may be used to justify the library's rejection of suggested acquisitions if the works in question do not meet the demands of the criteria. Again, later in the document under the heading 'Interlibrary Loans,' the Media Plan states that requests for interlibrary loans will not be honoured for books that fail to meet the quality criteria.

In the local authority's reply to JO's inquiry about the Falköping case, it stated that for lack of time and resources, the assessment of literature is generally not conducted at the library, but by subscribing to the services of BTJ (formerly Bibliotekstjänst), a company that specializes in delivering media and information services to professional customers, mainly libraries and universities.³⁷ It should be noted that most, if not all, Swedish public libraries use BTJ's services and rely heavily on their reviews when making acquisitions. The written assessments or reviews (120 to 150 words long) published by BTJ are written by commissioned, professional readers, thus guaranteeing—so Falköping argued—a certain level of objectivity and impartiality.

That said, BTJ's instructions for its readers are fairly generic. There are separate checklists for fiction and non-fiction, as well as for children's and young adult literature and other media forms. The instructions contain general information as well as a thirteen-point checklist for what a non-fiction review should address. Apart from basic information such as a brief author presentation, a precis, and a description of 'style and language,' the memo also asks the reader to provide an 'account of the thrust of the book in respect to politics, ethics and similar matters.'³⁸ The rubric states that reviews must be objective and impartial, and explicitly states that 'the opinions expressed in the book/media should not be reviewed, but should always be described.'³⁹ Also, when it comes to works of non-fiction, the reader is asked to give an assessment of the 'professional reliability of the work'.

All three cases included works of purported non-fiction, and what was at stake can be found at the intersection of the quality

criterion expressed in the Library Act, JO's differentiation between factual statement and personal opinion, the categories of 'Value' and 'Trustworthiness' found in the Falköping Media Plan, and the assessment of 'professional reliability' as required by BTJ. It is not too much of a stretch to conclude that the heart of the matter is 'knowledge', or perhaps even 'truth'. This is in fact no coincidence. 'Truth', defined as a function of facts and fact-based analysis, is one of the primary battlefields of the twenty-first century, where trust and reliance on facts and analytical interpretations of facts and data *versus* opinions and personal attitudes seem to have shifted in favour of the latter in contemporary public discourse. The research report *Truth Decay* (2018) addresses these issues by identifying the four trends driving 'truth decay':

an increasing disagreement about facts and analytical interpretations of facts and data; a blurring of the line between opinion and fact; an increase in the relative volume, and resulting influence, of opinion and personal experience over fact; and declining trust in formerly respected sources of factual information.⁴⁰

Whereas I have deliberately adopted a neutral stance vis-à-vis the works in the three cases outlined above, it is sufficient to say that the cases exemplify these trends. Instead of regarding the division between 'truth' and 'opinion' as absolute, I deem it necessary to regard it as a non-trivial continuum—illustrating to some extent Sue Curry Jansen's concept of 'socially structured silences', where the concept of truth and knowledge is intertwined with power.⁴¹ As Jansen stated in her seminal study of censorship, 'knowledge and power are still bound together in an inextricable knot'.⁴² She recognizes that knowledge in its modern understanding is not simply conceived of as an instrument of power, but rather that power secures knowledge, while at the same time it is equally true that knowledge secures power. It is precisely this 'knot', irrespective of the factual content of the three works in question, that the cases of this study illustrate.

What comes to light in this three-part case study is a paradox of sorts. The ‘enlightened’, liberal state that upholds the key principle of freedom of speech must also somehow retain the capacity to uphold its stability by being able to respond to the conceivable threats that this same freedom generates, in order to preserve its status as a liberal society. Innate in every modern democracy, until now at least, are the means to exercise a form of intellectual domination that is ‘constitutive’ in nature—in other words, it is manifested in invisible (or hegemonic) restrictions, since they arise spontaneously out of ordinary social forces. And whereas ‘truth’ is an area of contention in modern liberal democracies, it is questionable whether it can be resolved while maintaining the ‘operationally effective fiction’ of liberal democracies, to use Habermas’s term, of an unrestricted freedom of speech.⁴³

Notes

- 1 Karolides 2006, 12; the other books in the Banned Book series are Bald 2006 and Sova 2006a–b.
- 2 See Savolainen in this volume for an investigation of the restricted access of children to the collections of public libraries in Finland.
- 3 See the introduction to this volume; see also Johansson in this volume for a historical example of conservative struggle against perceived decadent literature in Sweden.
- 4 This study was part of the project ‘The Welfare Regime of Literature: The Function of Literature in Sweden 1937–1976’, funded by the Swedish Research Council, 2019–2021 (ref. 2018-01078).
- 5 Rosenfeld 2001, 140.
- 6 SOU 2016:5 *Låt fler forma framtiden!*, 75.
- 7 See also Erlanson and Henning’s contribution in this volume.
- 8 Fichtelius et al. 2017, 465–75. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.
- 9 Fichtelius et al. 2017, 465.
- 10 Frenander 2012, 74.
- 11 SFS 2013:801 *Bibliotekslag*.
- 12 Hirschfeldt 2017, 70.
- 13 *Ibid.* 73.
- 14 *Ibid. passim.*

- 15 SFS 1974:152 *Regeringsformen* (RF).
- 16 SFS 1986:765 *Instruktion: Lag* (1986:765) med instruktion för Riksdagens ombudsman.
- 17 Dnr 3622-1996, *Justitieombudsmännens ämbetsberättelse 1998–99* (1998/99:JO1), 534: 'Fråga om ett folkbibliotek ägt vägra låna ut vissa böcker till en person med hänsyn till dennas syfte med lånet.'
- 18 *Justitieombudsmännens ämbetsberättelse 1998–99* (1998/99:JO1), appendix 5, 641, in the official English translation of the summary of JO's criticism: 'Whether a public library had the right to refuse to lend an individual certain books because of his reason for wanting to borrow them.'
- 19 SFS 1949:105 *Tryckfrihetsförordning* (TF) Ch 2. Art 11.3.1.
- 20 Hirschfeldt 2017, 75.
- 21 *Ibid.* 75.
- 22 *Justitieombudsmännens ämbetsberättelse 1998–99* (1998/99:JO1), appendix 5, 641–2: 'Whether a public library had the right to refuse to lend an individual certain books because of his reason for wanting to borrow them.'
- 23 *Justitieombudsmännens ämbetsberättelse 2017–18* (2017/18:JO1), 560, 569: 'Med undantag för brottsliga yttranden får ett folkbibliotek inte ta hänsyn till de värderingar och åsikter som förs fram i en bok när biblioteket tar ställning till om boken ska köpas in eller fjärlånas.'
- 24 Karl-Olov Arnstberg & Gunnar Sandelin (2013), *Invandring och mörkläggnig: En saklig rapport från en förryckt tid* (Skärholmen: Debattförlaget); Lars Hedegaard (2014), *Muhammeds flickor: Våld, mord och våldtäkter i Islams hus*, tr. Maria Celander (Fredriksberg: Free Speech Library/Tryckefrihedsselskabets bibliotek).
- 25 Julia Caesar (pseudonym) (2010), *Världsmästarna: När Sverige blev mångkulturellt* (Visby: Nomen).
- 26 Dnr 2654-2016, *Justitieombudsmännens ämbetsberättelse 2017–18* (2017/18:JO1), 563.
- 27 *Ibid.* 562.
- 28 *Ibid.* 563.
- 29 *Ibid.* 564.
- 30 Dnr 4650-2016, *Justitieombudsmännens ämbetsberättelse 2017–18* (2017/18:JO1), 572.
- 31 Falköpings bibliotek 2004.
- 32 Dnr 4650-2016, *Justitieombudsmännens ämbetsberättelse 2017–18* (2017/18:JO1), 574 ff.
- 33 *Ibid.* 575.
- 34 *Ibid.* 575.
- 35 *Ibid.* 576.
- 36 Falköpings bibliotek 2004.
- 37 Formerly Bibliotekstjänst (Library Services), BTJ was founded on the initiative of the Association of Swedish Public Libraries (SAB), and became a limited

company in 1960. With the assistance of a large number of lecturers, BTJ is able to provide (brief) reviews of many, but not all, publications in Sweden; however, the number of BTJ reviews far exceeds the number of publications reviewed in daily newspapers and other media.

- 38 Personal communication, 'Lektörs-PM, Bibliotekstjänst' [internal memo].
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Kavanagh & Rich 2018, x–xi, also https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2314.html, accessed 31 Oct. 2019. The RAND Corporation (the name stands for 'Research ANd Development') is an American non-profit organization that promotes a wide variety of scientific and educational projects, for example the world's largest PhD programme on policy analysis. Among its clients and funders are several US government agencies and US universities, as well as several EU agencies and international organizations such as the OECD and WHO. For further funders, see https://www.rand.org/about/clients_grantors.html#international-organizations, accessed 30 October 2019.
- 41 Jansen 1991, 9.
- 42 Ibid. 4.
- 43 The term used by Habermas 1973, 258—'operationally effective fiction'—has been used in various contexts. Originally, it referred to a form of ideal, which despite being fictitious nonetheless determined people's patterns of thought or their approach to certain phenomena; see also the introduction to this volume.

References

- Adolphson, Jeremy V. (2013), 'Creative Expression or Compulsive Exploitation in Underground Commix: The Scapegoating of Mike Diana's Boiled Angel', *Journal of Graphic Novels & Comics*, 4/2, 297–308.
- Åkerlund, Thord (1967), 'Vacker men skräm'd', *Personligt*, 1–2, 23–48.
- Åman, Johannes (1990), 'Det sluttande planet', *Dagens Nyheter*, 19 Jan.
- Anderberg, Bengt (1965) (ed.), *Kärlek I*, (Malmö: Corniche).
- Anderson, Benedict (2006), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (rev. edn, London: Verso).
- Anon. (1749), *The History of Tom Jones the Foundling, in His Married State* (Dublin).
- Arnberg, Klara (2010), *Motsättningarnas marknad: Den pornografiska pressens kommersiella genombrott och regleringen av pornografi i Sverige 1950–1980* (Umeå: Umeå universitet).
- (2012), 'Under the Counter, Under the Radar? The Business and Regulation of the Pornographic Press in Sweden 1950–1971', *Enterprise & Society*, 13/2, 350–77.
- (2013), 'Serietidningspaniken 1952–1956', in Tommy Gustafsson & Klara Arnberg (eds), *Moralpanik och lågkultur: Genus- och mediehistoriska analyser 1900–2012* (Stockholm: Atlas akademi), 95–132.
- (2017), 'Before the Scandinavian "Porn Wave": The Business and Regulations of Magazines considered Obscene in Sweden, 1910–1950', *Porn Studies*, 4/1, 4–22.
- (2018), 'The Gentlemen's Paradise? Stockholm's Porn Street as a Commercial and Gendered Space, 1960–1980', paper presented at the media history seminar, Lund University, Lund, 25 October.
- Arvidsson, Lars (2005), 'Bildningsrevolutionen—hur gick den till?', in Ann-Marie Laginder & Inger Landström (eds), *Folkbildning—samtidig eller tidlös? Om innebörder över tid* (Linköping: Mimer, Institutionen för beteendevetenskap, Linköpings universitet), 13–34.
- Atterbom, Daniel (1990), 'Samarbete inför 90-talet', *Bild & Bubbla*, 1.
- Avellaneda, Alonso Fernández de (1614), *Segundo tomo del ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha, que contiene su tercera salida y es la quinta parte de sus aventuras*.
- Axelsson, Rolf (1967), 'Porr-förläggaren som givit ut de beslagtagna böckerna Sadistiskt övergrepp I och II träder fram i GT: Vi är tillbaka på 1800-talet!', *Göteborgstidningen*, 15 July.
- Bååth-Holmberg, Cecilia (1908), 'Den kulturella dyfloden', *Stockholms Dagblad*, 28 Nov.

- Bacchi, Carol Lee & Susan Goodwin (2016), *Poststructural Policy Analysis: A Guide to Practice* (New York: Palgrave Pivot).
- Bald, Margaret (2006), *Banned Books: Literature Suppressed on Religious Grounds* (rev. edn, New York: Facts on File).
- Band, Jonathan & Jonathan Gerafi (2015), *Fair Use/Fair Dealing Handbook*, infojustice.org (10 March), <http://infojustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/fair-use-handbook-march-2015.pdf>, accessed 8 Nov. 2019.
- Becker, Howard S. (2018), *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Simon & Schuster).
- Bedford, Sibylle (2016), *The Trial of Lady Chatterley's Lover* (London: Daunt).
- Belfiore, Eleonora & Oliver Bennett (2008), *The Social Impact of the Arts: An Intellectual History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Beltzén, Nils & Lars Beltzén (1973), *Arthur Engberg—publicist och politiker* (Arbetarrörelsens årsbok 1973; Stockholm: Prisma).
- Berggren, Henrik (1995), *Seklets ungdom: Retorik, politik och modernitet 1900–1939* (Stockholm: Stockholms universitet).
- Bild & Bubbla* (1990), 'Läsaromröstningar—dubbelt upp', *Bild & Bubbla*, 1, 16–20.
- Björck, Staffan (1946), *Heidenstam och sekelskiftets Sverige: Studier i hans nationella och sociala författarskap* (Stockholm: Natur och kultur).
- Björklund, Elisabet (2012), *The Most Delicate Subject: A History of Sex Education Films in Sweden* (Lund: Lunds universitet).
- & Maria Larsson (2016) (eds), *Swedish Cinema and the Sexual Revolution: Critical Essays* (Jefferson: McFarland).
- Björklund, Jenny (2014), *Lesbianism in Swedish Literature: An Ambiguous Affair* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Blanca, Cia (1992), 'Petición de arresto para el editor del álbum "Hitler=SS"', *El País*, 22 Jan.
- Blomgren, Roger (2019), 'Social Engineering and Cultural Policy: Theoretical and Empirical Reflexions from Swedish Cultural Policy in a Historical Perspective', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 25/3, 322–36.
- Blomqvist, Håkan (2006), *Nation, ras och civilisation i svensk arbetarrörelse före nazismen* (Södertörn: Carlsson).
- Boëthius, Carl Gustaf, written statement, JK Dnr 1233-89 (1990).
- Boëthius, Ulf (1989), *När Nick Carter drevs på flykten: Kampen mot 'smutslitteraturen' i Sverige 1908–1909* (Stockholm: Gidlund).
- Borgström, Eva (2016), *Berättelser om det förbjudna: Begär mellan kvinnor i svensk litteratur 1900–1935* (Gothenburg: Makadam).
- Bottéro, Jean (1992), *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1996), *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Cambridge: Polity).
- Bradshaw, David (2013), 'American Beastliness, the Great Purge and its Aftermath

- (1946–1959)’, in David Bradshaw & Rachel Potter (eds), *Prudes on the Prowl: Fiction and Obscenity in England, 1850 to the Present Day* (Oxford: OUP), 138–58.
- Brewer, David A. (2005), *The Afterlife of Character, 1726–1825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press).
- Bringéus, Nils-Arvid (1967), ‘Västbopprästens svartkonstböcker’, *Svenska Landsmål & Svenskt Folkliv*, 13–27.
- (1991), ‘Röda boken’ påträffad: Ett meddelande’, *Svenska Landsmål & Svenskt Folkliv*, 89–91.
- (1995), ‘Antikvitetsrannsakingarna som folkloristisk källa’, in Evert Baudou & Jon Moen (eds), *Rannsakingar efter antikviteter—Ett symposium om 1600-talets Sverige: Konferenser 30* (Stockholm: Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien), 79–96.
- Brioude, Mireille (2007), ‘Violette Leduc écrivaine et lesbienne: Du mythe à la mystification’, in Renate Günther & Wendy Michallat (eds), *Lesbian Inscriptions in Francophone Society and Culture* (Durham: DUP), 103–21.
- Brooker, Will (2004), *Alice’s Adventures: Lewis Carroll in Popular Culture* (London: Continuum).
- Brooks, Cleanth (1951), ‘The Formalist Critics’, *Kenyon Review*, 1, 72–81.
- (1975), *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).
- Brylla, Eva (2004), *Förnamn i Sverige: Kortfattat namnlexikon* (Stockholm: Liber).
- Burke, Peter (1978), *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper & Row).
- Burt, Richard (1994), ‘Introduction: The “New” Censorship’, in Richard Burt (ed.), *The Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political Criticism, and the Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), xi–xxx.
- Butler, Judith (1998), ‘Ruled out: Vocabularies of the Censor’, in Robert C. Post (ed.), *Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art & the Humanities), 247–59.
- Caravale, Giorgio (2011), *Forbidden Prayer: Church Censorship and Devotional Literature in Renaissance Italy* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate).
- Carrell, Emmy (1921a), *Kan Mænd undværes?* (Thisted: Galsters).
- (1921b), *Hugo fra Paris* (Thisted: Galsters).
- (1924) ‘Hotelrotten’, *Kriminaltidende*, 24.
- Carlsson, Carl Oscar (1901), ‘Burseryds pastorat: Beskrifning öfver Burseryds, Bosebo och Sandviks församlingar’, *Nya Vexiolbladet* (Vexjö: Nya Vexiolbladets Tryckeri), 3–124.
- Carulla, Damián (1989), ‘Fe’, *Pox*, 1, 27–8.
- Castaldi, Simone (2010), *Drawn and Dangerous: Italian Comics of the 1970s and 1980s* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi).
- Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de (2003), *Don Quixote*, tr. Edith Grossman (New York: HarperCollins).

- Cohen, Nick (2012), *You Can't Read This Book: Censorship in an Age of Freedom* (London: Fourth Estate).
- Collijn, Isak (1942–4), *Sveriges bibliografi 1600-talet: Bidrag till en bibliografisk förteckning*, 2 vols (Stockholm: A & W).
- Comic Book Legal Defence Fund (2018), *History of Comics Censorship Part 4*, <http://cblidf.org/resources/history-of-comics-censorship/history-of-comics-censorship-part-4/>, accessed 13 Nov. 2019.
- Coombe, Rosemary J. (1998), *The Cultural Life of Intellectual Properties: Authorship, Appropriation, and the Law* (Durham: Duke University Press).
- Cunningham, Hugh (2005), *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (2nd edn, Harlow: Pearson Longman).
- Dagens Nyheter* (1967), 'JK vill åtala fler porrutgivare', *Dagens Nyheter*, 6 July, 26.
- Dahl, Peter (1990), 'Därför måste skiten frias', *Aftonbladet*, 18 Jan.
- Dalquist, Ulf (1998), *Större våld än nöden kräver? Medieväldsdebatten i Sverige 1980–1995* (Lund: Boréa).
- Damsholt, Tine (2013), 'How Academic Bodies Matter: On Material-Discursive Enactments of Gender in Academia', *Ethnologia Scandinavica*, 43, 68–83.
- D'Amico, Karen & Michael Terry Gilbert (1980), 'Vegetable lover', *Bizarre Sex*, 8.
- (1989), 'Älskade kollo', *Pox*, 1, 55–62.
- Darnton, Robert (1986), 'First Steps Toward a History of Reading', *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 23/1, 5–30.
- (2014), *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature* (London: British Library).
- Davies, Owen (2009), *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (Oxford: OUP).
- De Grazia, Edward (1993), *Girls Lean Back Everywhere: The Law of Obscenity and the Assault on Genius* (New York: Vintage).
- Decherney, Peter (2011), 'Gag Orders: Comedy, Chaplin, and Copyright', in Paul K. Saint-Amour (ed.), *Modernism and Copyright* (Oxford: OUP), 135–54.
- Dégh, Linda & Andrew Vázsonyi (1983), 'Does the Word "Dog" bite? Ostensive Action: A Means of Legend-Telling', *Journal of Folklore Research*, 20, 5–30.
- Drotner, Kirsten (1999), 'Dangerous media? Panic discourses and Dilemmas of Modernity', *Paedagogica Historica*, 35/3, 593–619.
- Duflo, Colas (2009), 'Diderot and the Publicizing of Censorship', in Mogens Lærke (ed.), *The Use of Censorship in the Enlightenment* (Leiden: Brill), 121–35.
- Eagleton, Terry (1996), *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell).
- (2000), *The Idea of Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell).
- Edsman, Carl-Martin (1962), 'Sjätte och sjunde Mosebok', *Saga & sed*, 63–102.
- Einhorn, Lena (2013), *Blekingegatan 32* (Stockholm: Norstedts).
- Elvsén, Jan (1990), 'Horst frikändes', *Bild & Bubbla*, 1.
- Eman, Greger (1999), 'Café Frisk Luft: Den homosexuella infrastrukturen i Stockholm 1880–1920', in Göran Söderström et al. (eds), *Sympatiens hemlighetsfulla makt: Stockholms homosexuella 1860–1960* (Stockholm: Stockholmia förlag), 104–27.
- Engberg, Arthur (1936), 'Vid invigningen av Ystad konstmuseum den 7 mars 1936', *Särtryck ur Svenska Museer*, 1.

REFERENCES

- (1938a), *Demokratisk kulturpolitik* (Stockholm: Tidens förlag).
- (1938b), ‘Staten och andelivet: Tal på Skansen den 29 augusti 1937’, *Fataburen: Nordiska museets och Skansens årsbok*.
- (1945), *Tal och skrifter*, ed. Rolf Edberg, 3 vols (Stockholm: Tiden, 1945).
- Ernst, Nina (2017), *Att teckna sitt jag: Grafiska självbiografier i Sverige* (Lund: Lunds universitet).
- Expressen* (1967a), ‘Porråtalad sagotant: “Jag skriver ju bara för min man”’, *Expressen*, 6 December.
- Expressen* (1967b), ‘Fängelse krävdes för “råhet och tarvlighet”: Porrförfattarinnan fälld’, *Expressen*, 8 December.
- Expressen* (1967c), ‘Porrförfattarinnan chockad av domen’, *Expressen*, 9 December.
- Expressen* (1990), ‘Pox frikänd’, *Expressen*, 20 January.
- Eskola, Eija (2001), ‘Finnish Public Libraries between the World Wars’, in Ilkka Mäkinen (ed.), *Finnish Public Libraries in the 20th Century* (Tampere: TUP), 73–87.
- Falköpings bibliotek (2004), ‘Medieplan för Falköpings bibliotek’, revised August, <http://80.78.212.10/lansbibl/z-ny/medieplan/fardiga.htm>, accessed 15 Feb. 2019.
- Faubert, Michelle (2016), ‘Werther Goes Viral: Suicidal Contagion, Anti-Vaccination, and Infectious Sympathy’, *Literature & Medicine*, 34/2, 389–417.
- Featherstone, Mike (2007), *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (2nd edn, London: SAGE).
- Fellion, Matthew & Katherine Inglis (2017), *Censored: A Literary History of Subversion and Control* (London: British Library).
- Fichtelius, Erik, Eva Enarson, Krister Hansson, Jesper Klein & Christina Persson (2017), ‘Sammanfattning och slutsatser’, in Erik Fichtelius, Eva Enarson, Krister Hansson, Jesper Klein & Christina Persson (eds), *Den femte statsmakten: Bibliotekens roll för demokrati, utbildning, tillgänglighet och digitalisering* (Stockholm: Kungliga biblioteket), 465–72.
- Fielding, Henry (1741), *An Apology for the Life of Mrs Shamela Andrews* (London).
- Fors, Hjalmar (2015), *The Limits of Matter: Chemistry, Mining & Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Foucault, Michel (1976/1990), *Histoire de la sexualité*, i: *La volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard), tr. as *The History of Sexuality*, i: *The Will to Knowledge* (Harmondsworth: Penguin).
- (1991), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Harmondsworth: Penguin).
- (1998), ‘What is an Author?’, in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, ii: *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: New Press), 205–222.
- (2008), *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978–1979*, ed. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
- (2009), *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–78*, ed. Michel Senellart (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Frappier-Mazur, Lucienne (1988), ‘Marginal Canons: Rewriting the Erotic’, *Yale French Studies*, 75, 112–28.

- Frenander, Anders (2012), 'Statens förhållande till folkbiblioteken 1912–2012', in Anders Frenander & Jenny Lindberg (eds), *Styra eller stödja? Svensk folkbibliotekspolitik under hundra år* (Borås: Valfrid), 15–88.
- (2014), *Kulturen som kulturpolitikens största problem: Diskussion om svensk kulturpolitik fram till 2010* (rev. edn, Möklinta: Gidlund).
- Freshwater, Helen (2004), 'Towards a Redefinition of Censorship', in Beate Müller (ed.), *Censorship and Cultural Regulation in the Modern Age* (Amsterdam: Rodopi), 225–45.
- Fuller, John (1985), 'Lewis Carroll is Still Dead', *New York Times*, 5 May.
- Gaiman, Neil & Steve Gibson (1987), 'Journey to Bethlehem', in Carol Bennett & Tony Bennett (ed.), *Outrageous Tales from the Old Testament* (London: Knockabout).
- (1989), 'Ett anspråklöst förslag', *Åtalad! Ett specialnummer av Pox om censur*, 1, 18–19.
- & Steve Gibson (1989), 'Resan till Betlehem', *Pox*, 1, 17–25.
- (1999), 'Introduction', in Don Donahue & Kate Kane (eds), *Dori Stories: The Complete Dori Seda* (San Francisco: Last Gasp).
- (2008), 'Why defend freedom of icky speech?', Neil Gaiman, Journal (1 Dec.), <http://journal.neilgaiman.com/2008/12/why-defend-freedom-of-icky-speech.html>, accessed 13 Nov. 2019.
- Gasslander [Petrus or Johannes] (1774), *Beskrifning, om swenska allmogens sinnelag, seder wid de årliga högtider, frierier, bröllop, barn dop, begrafningar, widskeppelser, lefnads sätt i mat och dryck, klädedrägt, sjukdomar och läkemedel, orternas läge och beskaffenhet m.m.*, ed. Frans Westerdahl (Stockholm: Lars Wennberg).
- Goma, Paul (2010), *Scrisuri*, i: 1971–1989, *Bio-Bibliografie, interviuri, dialoguri, articole* (Bucharest: Editura Curtea Veche).
- Gram, Magdalena (2008), *Ellen Key om böcker och läsning: En studie* (Ödeshög: Alvastra).
- Gray, David Elton (2004), 'On the Christianity of Incantations', in Jonathan Roper (ed.), *Charms and Charming in Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 32–46.
- Gullov, Eva (2003), 'Creating a Natural Place for Children: An Ethnographic Study of Danish Kindergartens', in Karen Fog Olwig & Eva Gullov (eds), *Children's Places: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (London: Routledge), 32–48.
- Gunneflo, Markus (2015), 'Rudolf Kjellén: Nordic Biopolitics before the Welfare State', *Retfærd*, 3, 24–39.
- Gunnell, Terry (1998), 'The Return of Sæmundur: Origins and Analogues', in Jón Jónsson (ed.), *Þjóðlíf og þjóðtrú: Ritgerðir helgaðar Jóni Hnefli Aðalsteinssyni* (Reykjavík: Þjóðsaga), 87–111.
- Gustafsson Reinius, Lotten (2013), 'Där karbunkelstenarna en gång satt: Om hur föremål går förlorade och återvinnns', in Owe Ronström, Georg Drakos & Jonas Engman (eds), *Folkloristikens aktuella utmaningar: Vänbok till Ulf Palménfelt* (Visby: Höskolan på Gotland), 135–53.
- Gustavsson, Bernt (1991), *Bildningens väg: Tre bildningsideal i svensk arbetarrörelse 1880–1930* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand).

- Habermas, Jürgen (1973), 'Wahrheitstheorien', in Helmut Fahrenbach (ed.), *Wirklichkeit und Reflexion: Festschrift für Walter Schulz* (Pfullingen: Neske), 211–263.
- Hall Williams, J. E. (1955), 'Obscenity in Modern English Law', *Law & Contemporary Problems*, 20/4, 630–47.
- (1960), 'The Obscene Publications Act, 1959', *Modern Law Review*, 23/3, 285–90.
- Hall, Patrik (2000), *Den svenskaste historien: Nationalism i Sverige under sex sekler* (Stockholm: Carlsson).
- Harding, Tobias (2015), 'Bildning as a Central Concept in the Cultural Policy of the Swedish Government: From Arthur Engberg to Alice Bah Kuhnke', *Nordisk kulturpolitisk tidskrift*, 18/2, 161–81.
- Hedenborg, Susanna & Lars Kvarnström (2009), *Det svenska samhället 1720–2010: Böndernas och arbetarnas tid* (Lund: Studentlitteratur).
- Heede, Dag (2017), "'Det er Liv eller Død!' Homoseksuelle i dansk og norsk litteratur 1880–1941: En bioetisk undersøgelse af heteronarrativitet', *Norsk Litteraturvitenskapelig Tidsskrift*, 20/1, 50–76.
- Heikkinen, Merja (2008), 'Government Policy and Definitions of Art: The Case of Comics', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 14/1, 79–93.
- Helgason, Jon (2010), 'Why ABC Matters: Lexicography and Literary History', *Culture Unbound*, 2, 515–27.
- Hendrick, Harry (1997), 'Constructions and reconstructions of British childhood: An interpretative survey, 1800 to the present', in Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood. Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (London: Falmer Press), 34–62.
- Hirdman, Yvonne (2010), *Att lägga livet tillrätta: Studier i svensk folkhemspolitik* (2nd edn, Stockholm: Carlssons).
- Hirschfeldt, Johan (2017), 'Biblioteken: En femte funktion i den demokratiska rättsstaten', in Erik Fichtelius, Eva Enarson, Krister Hansson, Jesper Klein & Christina Persson (eds), *Den femte statsmakten: Bibliotekens roll för demokrati, utbildning, tillgänglighet och digitalisering* (Stockholm: Kungliga biblioteket), 67–85.
- Högström, Jesper (2018), *Lusten och ensamheten: En biografi över Hjalmar Söderberg* (Stockholm: Weyler).
- Höjer, Johan, Joakim Pirinen, Gunna Grähs & Ola Lindahl (1990), 'Upprop av svenska serieskapare!', JK Dnr 1233-89.
- Holmberg, Teodor (1914), 'Ellen Key om kristendom och sedlighet', *Skriftserie* (Svenska riksförbundet för sedlig kultur), 9.
- Holquist, Michael (1994), 'Introduction: Corrupt Originals: The Paradox of Censorship', *PMLA*, 109/1, 14–25.
- Houston, Rab (1983), 'Literacy and Society in the West, 1500–1850', *Social History*, 8/3, 269–93.
- Hudiksvallstidningen* (1967), 'Razzia bland porr', *Hudiksvallstidningen*, 6 July, 1.
- Hylland, Ole Marius & Erling Bjurström (2018), 'The Relational Politics of Aesthetics: An Introduction', in eid. (eds), *Aesthetics and Politics: A Nordic Perspective*

- on how Cultural Policy Negotiates the Agency of Music and Arts (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan), 1–24.
- Ibrahimović, Zlatan with David Lagercrantz (2011), *Jag är Zlatan Ibrahimović: Min historia* (Stockholm: Bonnier).
- Israel, Jonathan (2009), 'French Royal Censorship and the Battle to Suppress the Encyclopédie of Diderot and D'Alembert, 1751–1759', in Mogens Lærke (ed.), *The Use of Censorship in the Enlightenment* (Leiden: Brill), 61–76.
- Jalakas, Inger (1980), *Smockor och smek: Hotande läsning: Om ungdomstidningar* (Stockholm: Liber).
- Jansen, Sue Curry (1991), *Censorship: The Knot That Binds Power and Knowledge* (New York: OUP).
- Jenkins, Roy (1959), 'Obscenity, Censorship, and the Law: The Story of a Bill', *Encounter*, 8/4, 62–6.
- JK Dnr 1233-89 (1990).
- JK Dnr 3163-89-30, *Ifrågasatt tryckfrihetsbrott* (1989).
- JK Dnr 3722-91-30, *Ifrågasatt tryckfrihetsbrott* (1991).
- Johannisson, Karin (1990), *Medicinens öga: Sjukdom, medicin och samhälle—historiska erfarenheter* (Stockholm: Norstedts).
- Johansson, Dayton (1990), 'Frikänn!', *Expressen*, 19 January.
- Jönsson, Dan (2012), *Estetisk rensning: Bildstrider i 2000-talets Sverige* (Stockholm: 1otal/Pomona).
- Jörngården, Anna (2012), *Tidens tröskel: Uppbrott och nostalgi i skandinavisk litteratur kring sekelskiftet 1900* (Höör: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion).
- Judge, Elizabeth F. (2009), 'Kidnapped and Counterfeit Characters: Eighteenth-Century Fan Fiction, Copyright Law, and the Custody of Fictional Characters', in Reginald McGinnis (ed.), *Originality and Intellectual Property in the French and English Enlightenment* (London: Routledge), 22–68.
- Justitieombudsmännens ämbetsberättelse 1998–99* (1998/99:JO1).
- Justitieombudsmännens ämbetsberättelse 2017–18* (2017/18:JO1).
- Källström, Staffan (1998), 'Massan, eliten och civilisationens framtid', in Nils Runeby (ed.), *Europas idéhistoria 1900-talet: Framstegets arvtagare* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur).
- Kamagurka (pseudonym) (1989), 'Cowboyn Sven–Bertil', *Epix*, 12.
- Karlsson, Erwo (1968), 'Porrkungen i Sveriges porrstad tror inte på samlagsscener', *Göteborgstidningen*, 1 May, 14.
- Karlsson, Lisette (2013), 'Copyright and the Parody Problem: An examination between the UK, Sweden and Canada' (Graduate diss., Master of Laws, Lund University).
- Karlsson, Sten O. (2001), *Det intelligenta samhället: En omtolkning av socialdemokratis idéhistoria* (Stockholm: Carlsson).
- Karolides, Nicholas J. (2006), *Banned Books: Literature Suppressed on Political Grounds* (rev. edn, New York: Facts on File).
- Kavanagh, Jennifer & Michael D. Rich (2018), *Truth Decay: An Initial Exploration*

- of the *Diminishing Role of Facts and Analysis in American Public Life* (Santa Monica: Rand).
- Kendrick, Walter M. (1996), *The Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press).
- Kennaway, James & Anita O'Connell (2016), 'Introduction: Pathological Reading,' *Literature & Medicine*, 34/2, 242–51.
- Key, Ellen (1897), *Bildning: Några synpunkter* (Stockholm: Bonnier).
- Keymer, Thomas & Peter Sabor (2005), *Pamela in the Marketplace* (New York: CUP).
- Kjellén, Rudolf (1916), *Staten som livsform* (Stockholm: Hugo Gebers).
- Klintberg, Bengt af (1965), *Svenska trollformler* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand).
- Klockar Linder, My (2014), *Kulturpolitik: Formeringen av en modern kategori* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet).
- Krieger, Murray (1994), *The Institution of Theory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).
- Kropp, Göran with David Lagercrantz (1997), *Göran Kropp: 8000 +* (Stockholm: Dagens Nyheter).
- Kutchinsky, Berl & Annika Snare (1999), *Scandinavian Studies in Criminology*, xvi: *Law, Pornography and Crime: The Danish Experience* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget).
- Lærke, Mogens (2009) (ed.), *The Use of Censorship in the Enlightenment* (Leiden: Brill).
- Lamm, Martin (1918–1920), *Upplysningstidens romantik: Den mystiskt sentimentala strömningen i svensk litteratur*, 2 vols (Stockholm: Geber).
- Larsson, Mariah (2007), 'Drömmen om den goda pornografin: Om sextio- och sjuttiotalsfilmen och gränsen mellan konst och pornografi,' *Tidskrift för genusvetenskap*, 1/2, 93–111.
- (2010), 'Contested pleasures,' in Mariah Larsson & Anders Marklund (eds), *Swedish Film: An Introduction and Reader* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press), 205–213.
- (2017), *The Swedish Porn Scene: Exhibition Contexts, 8mm Pornography and the Sex Film* (Bristol: Intellect L & D E F A E).
- Larsson, Mats J. (1989), 'JK begär utredning om åtal mot våld och porr i serier,' *Expressen*, 11 May.
- Law, John (2004), *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (London: Routledge).
- Lawrence, D. H. (2000), *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, ed. Michael Squires (London: Penguin).
- Ledger, Sally & Roger Luckhurst (2000) (eds), *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History 1880–1900* (Oxford: OUP).
- (2007), 'Wilde Women and The Yellow Book: The Sexual Politics of Aestheticism and Decadence,' *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920*, 50/1, 5–26.
- Leith, Sam (2013), 'Jeeves and The Wedding Bells by Sebastian Faulks—review,' *The Guardian*, 10 November.
- Lennerhed, Lena (1994), *Frihet att njuta: Sexualdebatten i Sverige på 1960-talet* (Stockholm: Norstedts).
- (2016), '491 and the Censorship Controversy: Swedish Cinema and the Sexual

- Revolution', in Elisabet Björklund & Mariah Larsson (eds), *Swedish Cinema and the Sexual Revolution: Critical Essays* (Jefferson: McFarland), 116–25.
- Levy, Leonard W. (1985), *Emergence of a Free Press* (New York: OUP).
- Liedman, Sven-Eric (1999), *I skuggan av framtiden: Modernitetens idéhistoria* (Stockholm: Bonnier).
- Lindén, Claudia (2002), *Om kärlek: Litteratur, sexualitet och politik hos Ellen Key* (Eslöv: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion).
- Lindgren, Asta (pseudonym) (1967a–b), *Sadistiskt övergrepp*, 2 vols (Vänersborg: Vänerförlaget).
- Lindsköld, Linnéa (2012), 'Svensk litteraturpolitik i förändring: Debatterna om *En bok för alla* 1992 och 2007', *Nordisk tidsskrift för Informationsvetenskap och Kulturformidling*, 1–2, 43–53.
- (2013), *Betydelsen av kvalitet: En studie av diskursen om statens stöd till ny, svensk skönlitteratur 1975–2009* (Borås: Valfrid, Högskolan i Borås).
- (2020), Mats Dolatkhan & Anna Lundh, 'Aesthetic Reading as a Problem in Mid-twentieth-century Swedish Educational Policy', *Nordisk kulturpolitisk tidskrift*, 1.
- (forthcoming), Åse Hedemark & Anna Lundh, 'Constructing the Desirable Reader in Swedish Contemporary Literature Policy'.
- Lisinski, Thomas (1990a), 'Sexuellt våld i serietidning inför rätta', *Dagens Nyheter*, 18 January.
- (1990b), 'Serieläsning i tingsrätten', *Dagens Nyheter*, 19 January.
- (1990c), 'Sex i Pox friat av juryn', *Dagens Nyheter*, 20 January.
- Ljungström, Åsa (2014a), 'The Missing Books of Magic from Sandvik: In search for hidden books and secret knowledge', *Approaching Religion*, 4/1, 73–9.
- (2014b), 'Svartkonstböcker från Sandvik—och ett bortglömt häfte: Om hemlig kunskap, gömt och glömt i handskrifter och berättande', in Katarina Ek-Nilsson & Birgitta Meurling (eds), *Talande ting: Berättelser och materialitet* (Uppsala: Institutet för språk- och folkminnen), 161–73.
- (2014c), 'The Lost Book of Charms and an Overlooked Notebook', in *Narratives Across Space and Time: Transmissions and Adaptations: Proceedings of the 15th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (June 21–27, 2009) Athens* (Publications of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre, 31; Athens: Academy of Athens), ii, 373–86.
- (2014d), 'Material Artefacts in Oral Tradition: Notes and Family Lore on the Owners of the Sandvik Manor Magic Art Manuscripts', *Incantatio: An International Journal on Charms, Charmers and Charming*, 4, 9–33.
- Locey, Elizabeth (2002), *The Pleasures of the Text: Violette Leduc and Reader Seduction* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield).
- Lovinescu, Monica (1990), *Unde scurte* (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas).
- Lundevall, Karl-Erik (1958a), 'Dikt och sedlighet', *Dagens Nyheter*, 11 October.
- (1958b), 'Nordisk debatt om tryckfrihet och sedlighet', in Karl-Erik Lundevall

- (ed.), *Förbjudna böcker och nordisk debatt om tryckfrihet och sedlighet* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand), 151–324.
- Lyons, Chris (2007), “Children Who Read Good Books Usually Behave Better, and Have Good Manners”: The Founding of the Notre Dame de Grace Library for Boys and Girls, Montreal, 1943’, *Library Trends*, 55/3, 597–608.
- Lyons, Martyn (1999), ‘New Readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children, Workers’, in Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (eds), *A History of Reading in the West* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press), 313–44.
- Macrea-Toma, Ioana (2009), *Privilighenția: Instituții literare în comunismul românesc* (Cluj: Casa Cărții de Știință).
- Magnus (pseudonym) (1990), ‘Letter to the Editor: Hej Horst’, *Pox*, 1.
- Mäkinen, Ilkka (1997), *Nödvändighet af LainaKirjasto: Modernin lukuhaluun tulo Suomeen ja lukemisen instituutiot* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura).
- (2015), ‘From Literacy to Love of Reading. The Fennomanian Ideology of Reading in the 19th-century Finland’, *Journal of Social History*, 49/2, 287–99.
- Malita, Liviu (2016), *Cenzura pe înțelesul cenzuraților* (Bucharest: Editura Tracus Arte).
- (2019), ‘Arguing for Art, Debating Censorship’, *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies & Theory*, 5/1, 5–35.
- Marcus, Steven (1966), *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-nineteenth Century England* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson).
- Marshik, Celia (2006), *British Modernism and Censorship* (Cambridge: CUP).
- Marx, Karl & Friedrich Engels (1970), *The German Ideology: Student’s edition*, ed. C. J. Arthur (London: Lawrence Wishart).
- (1972), *The Grundrisse*, ed. David McLellan (New York: Harper & Row).
- Medley, Mark (2011), ‘You can go Holmes again’, *National Post* (25 November) <https://nationalpost.com/afterword/you-can-go-holmes-again>, accessed 8 Oct. 2019.
- Michanek, K. G. (1967), ‘Kling: När upplagorna sjönk gick man ännu längre i sadism’, *Expressen*, 8 July.
- McRobbie, Angela (1994), *Postmodernism and Popular Culture* (London: Routledge).
- Mengham, Rod (2013), ‘Bollocks to Respectability: British Fiction after the Trial of Lady Chatterley’s Lover (1960–1970)’, in David Bradshaw & Rachel Potter (eds), *Prudes on the Prowl: Fiction and Obscenity in England, 1850 to the Present Day* (Oxford: OUP), 159–78.
- Moore, Nicola (2016), ‘Censorship and Literature’, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*, December. doi: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.013.71
- Moore, Robert Ian (2007), *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950–1250* (2nd edn, Malden: Blackwell).
- Moliterno, Gino (2000) (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Italian Culture* (London: Routledge).
- Müller, Beate (2004), ‘Censorship and Cultural Regulation: Mapping the Territory’, in ead. (ed.), *Censorship and Cultural Regulation in the Modern Age* (Amsterdam: Rodopi), 1–31.

- Mullin, Katherine (2013), 'Poison More Deadly than Prussic Acid: Defining Obscenity after the 1857 Obscene Publications Act (1850–1885)', in David Bradshaw & Rachel Potter (eds), *Prudes on the Prowl: Fiction and Obscenity in England, 1850 to the Present Day* (Oxford: OUP), 11–29.
- Myndigheten för kulturanalys (2016a), *Hotad kultur? En undersökning om hot, trakasserier och våld mot konstnärer och författare i Sverige* (Rapport 2016:3; Stockholm: Myndigheten för kulturanalys).
- (2016b), *Vårdar eller väktare? Uppdragsgivare om hot och våld mot konstnärer och författare* (Rapport 2016:4; Stockholm: Myndigheten för kulturanalys).
- Nilson, Tomas (2009), 'Att skriva om detta kallas pornografi': Kärlek och den goda porrens exempel, 1965–1970', in Christer Ahlberger, Henric Bagerius, Carl Holmberg, Ulrika Lagerlöf Nilsson, Pia Lundqvist, Tomas Nilson & Brita Planck (eds), *Historier: Arton- och nittonhundredatalens skönlitteratur som historisk källa* (Gothenburg: Institutionen för historiska studier, Göteborgs universitet), 210–18.
- Norberg, Kathryn (1993), 'The Libertine Whore: Prostitution in French Pornography from Margot to Juliette', in Lynn Avery Hunt (ed.), *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity 1500–1800* (New York: Zone Books), 225–52.
- Norum Resløkken, Åmund (2012), 'Da Lucifers lenke ble Åsamøyens bånd: Om endring av forståelsen av magiske kunster fra bruk til forskningsobjekt, sett gjennom en svartebok fra Jeløya (NFS M.M. 106 l)' (MA diss., KULH 4990 60 Sp., Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo).
- Nyberg, Amy Kiste (1998), *Seal of Approval: The History of the Comics Code* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi).
- Nydahl, Erik & Jonas Harvard (2016), 'Den nya statens ansikten', in Erik Nydahl & Jonas Harvard (eds), *Den nya staten: Ideologi och samhällsförändring kring sekelskiftet 1900* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press), 9–23.
- Nyegaard, Niels (2018), *Perverse forbrydere og gode borgere: Homoseksualitet, heteronormativitet og medborgerskab i Københavns offentlighed, 1906–11* (University of Aarhus).
- Nylén, Leif (1989), 'Stryk punkt 13', *Dagens Nyheter*, 29 November.
- (1990), 'En dag i smakdomstolen', *Dagens Nyheter*, 20 January.
- Obscene Publications Act 1959 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1959/66/pdfs/ukpga_19590066_en.pdf, accessed 13 Dec. 2019.
- Ohlsson, Kristina (2013), 'Svineri, Lagercrantz!', *Aftonbladet*, 19 December.
- Oja, Linda (1999), *Varken Gud eller natur: Synen på magi i 1600- och 1700-talets Sverige* (Eslöv: B. Östlings bokförl. Symposion).
- Ojakangas, Mika (1998), *Lapsuus ja auktoriteetti: Pedagogisen vallan historia Snellmanista Koskenniemeen* (Helsinki: Tutkijaliitto).
- Olwig, Karen Fog & Eva Gulløv (2003), 'Toward an Anthropology of Children and Place', in ead. (eds), *Children's Places: Cross-cultural Perspectives* (London: Routledge), 1–19.

- Ong, Walter J. (2002), *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge).
- Örebro läns museum (1918), 'Salomoniska magiska konster: Utdrag ur en Westboprests svartkonstböcker: Ur friherre Gabriel Djurklous till Örebro läns museum donerade handskriftsamling', *Meddelanden från Föreningen Örebro läns museum*, 7, 7–112.
- På Vakt* (Stockholm: Styrelsen för Svenska riksförbundet för sedlig kultur, 1915–1930).
- Palmenfelt, Ulf (2010), 'Once upon a time there was a Genre', *Folklore Fellows' Network*, 38, 8–17.
- Parkin, Jonathan (2015), 'Thomas Hobbes and the Problem of Self-Censorship', in Han Baltussen & Peter J. Davis (eds), *The Art of Veiled Speech: Self-Censorship from Aristophanes to Hobbes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 293–317.
- Pazienza, Andrea (1986), 'Cuore di Mamma', *Comic Art*, 28, 25–39.
- (1989), 'Modershjärtat!', *Pox*, 1, 39–46.
- Persson, Magnus (2002), *Kampen om högt och lågt: Studier i den sena nittonhundratalets romanens förhållande till masskulturen och moderniteten* (Eslöv: B. Östlings bokförlag Symposion).
- (2012), *Den goda boken: Samtida föreställningar om litteratur och läsning* (Lund: Studentlitteratur).
- Petcu, Marian (2005), *Cenzura în spațiul cultural românesc* (Bucharest: Editura Comunicare.ro).
- Pettersson, Hubert (1967), 'Porrförläggare hotas av fängelse för sårande bok', *Aftonbladet* 20 July.
- Pirinen, Joakim & Rolf Classon (1989), 'Åtalet mot Pox: Galagos konstnärliga ledning kommenterar', *Pox*, 8.
- Pox* (1989a), *Åtalad! Ett specialnummer av Pox om censur*, 1.
- Pox* (1989b), *Pox*, 8.
- Prado, Svante (2010), 'Nominal and real wages of manufacturing workers, 1860–2007', in Rodney Edvinsson, Tor Jacobson & Daniel Waldenström (eds), *Historical Monetary and Financial Statistics for Sweden, Volume I: Exchange rates, prices, and wages, 1277–2008* (Stockholm: Sveriges Riksbank and Ekerlids).
- Proctor, Robert N. (2008), 'Agnatology: A Missing Term to Describe the Cultural Production of Ignorance (and Its Study)', in Robert N. Proctor & Londa Schiebinger (eds), *Agnatology: The Making and Unmaking of Ignorance* (Stanford: SUP), i–xxxiii.
- Rääf, Leonhard Fredrik (1957), *Svenska skrock och signierier, samlade av Leonhard Fredrik Rääf, med inledning och anmärkningar*, ed. K. Rob. V. Wikman (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell).
- Ralph, Bo (1992), 'The Older Dictionaries as Sources for Nordic Language History', *The Nordic Languages and Modern Linguistics 7 Proceedings for the Seventh International Conference of Nordic and General Linguistics in Tórshavn, 7–11 August 1989*, *Annales Societatis Scientiarum Færoensis Supplementum* 17, ii. 493–509.

- Ranby, Henrik (2009), 'Stadsplanering och bostäder', in Jakob Christensson (ed.), *Signums svenska kulturhistoria 1900-talet* (Stockholm: Signum), 235–77.
- Rapp, Birgitta (1978), *Richard Bergh: Konstnär och kulturpolitiker 1890–1915* (Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren).
- Regeringens proposition 1986/87:151, *Om ändringar i tryckfrihetsförordningen m.m.* (1987).
- Riksarkivet (RA) (National Archives of Sweden), Stockholm, Justitiekanslern (JK) (Office of the Chancellor of Justice), Akter till allmänna diariet (Files for the public register), 1967–1969.
- Roberts, Jessica (2016), 'Radical Contagion and Healthy Literature in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine', *Literature & Medicine*, 34/2, 418–39.
- Rolph, C. H. (1990) (ed.), *The Trial of Lady Chatterley: Regina v. Penguin Books Limited* (London: Penguin).
- Roper, Jonathan (2004), 'Introduction', in id. (ed.), *Charms and Charming in Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 1–7.
- Rose, Nikolas (1999), *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (2nd edn, London: Free Association Books).
- Rosen, Wilhelm von (1993), *Månens kulør: Studier i dansk bøssehistorie 1628–1912* (Copenhagen: Rhodos).
- Rosenfeld, Sophia (2001), 'Writing the History of Censorship in the Age of the Enlightenment', in Daniel Gordon (ed.), *Postmodernism and the Enlightenment. New Perspectives on Eighteenth-Century French Intellectual History* (New York: Routledge).
- Rosengren, Josef et al. (1914), *Ny Smålands beskrifning*, vol. 4 (Vexjö: Nya Vexjö-bladets Tryckeri).
- Rubin, Gayle (2008), 'Thinking Sex: Notes Towards a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality', in Neil Badmington & Julia Thomas (eds), *The Routledge Critical and Cultural Theory Reader* (London: Routledge), 281–323.
- Rydström, Jens (2007), 'Introduction: Same-Sex Sexuality and the Law in Scandinavia 1842–1999', Jens Rydström & Kati Mustola (eds), *Criminally Queer: Homosexuality and Criminal Law in Scandinavia 1842–1999* (Amsterdam: Aksant).
- Sabin, Roger (1993), *Adult Comics: An Introduction* (London: Routledge).
- Salinger v. Colting*, 641 F. Supp. 2d 250 (S.D.N.Y. 2009) (No. 09 CIV 5059), 1 July 2009.
- Salinger v. Colting*, Complaint (S.D.N.Y. 2009) (No. 09 CIV 5095), 6 June 2009.
- Samson, Ian (2011), 'The House of Silk by Anthony Horowitz—review', *The Guardian*, 27 October.
- Sapiro, Gisèle (2011), *La Responsabilité de l'écrivain: Littérature, droit et morale en France (XIXe–XXIe siècle)* (Paris: Seuil).
- Savolainen, Ilona, 'Building Spaces for/of Children's Reading: The Finnish State Efforts to Promote Children's Library Services, 1922–1962', forthcoming.
- Schiller, Friedrich (1962), 'Ueber die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer

REFERENCES

- Reihe von Briefen, in *Schillers Werke, Nationalausgabe*, xx: *Philosophische Schriften*, ed. Benno von Wiese (Weimar), 413–503.
- Schjødt, Annæus (1958) (ed.), *Saken om den røde rubin: En hvitbok* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1958).
- Schröder, Horst (n.d.), 'Om förlaget', *Epix*, <http://www.epix.se/content/om-förlaget>, accessed 13 Nov. 2019.
- (1989a), 'Porren fri men konsten åtalas', *Aftonbladet*, 9 September.
- (1989b), 'Detta är inte konst...', *Åtalad! Ett specialnummer av Pox om censur*, 1.
- (1989c), 'Fyrtionio', *Pox*, 2.
- (1989d), 'Pox 55', *Pox*, 8.
- (1990), 'Visstja... boka in mig för en avsugning eller—debatten som inte blev av', *Pox*, 2.
- Seda, Dori (1987), 'Office Tops and Bottoms', *Weird Smut Comics*, 2.
- (1989), 'Hor på kontor', *Pox*, 1.
- Sevänen, Erkki (1994), *Vapauden rajat: Kirjallisuuden tuotannon ja välityksen yhteiskunnallinen sääntely Suomessa vuosina 1918–1939* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura).
- SFS 1949:105 *Tryckfrihetsförordning (TF)* (Freedom of the Press Act).
- SFS 1974:152 *Regeringsformen (RF)* (Instrument of Government), in translation <https://www.riksdagen.se/globalassets/07.-dokument--lagar/the-instrument-of-government-2015.pdf>, accessed 15 Feb. 2019.
- SFS 1986:765 *Instruktion: Lag (1986:765) med instruktion för Riksdagens ombudsman*.
- SFS 1991:1469 *Yttrandefrihetsgrundlag (YGL)* (Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression).
- SFS 1996:1596 *Bibliotekslag* (Library Act).
- SFS 2013:801 *Bibliotekslag* (Library Act).
- Sheldrick Ross, Catherine (1987), 'Metaphors of Reading', *Journal of Library History*, 22/2, 147–63.
- Shuman, Amy (2006), 'Entitlement and empathy in personal narrative', *Narrative Inquiry*, 16/1, 149–62.
- Sigel, Lisa Z. (2011), 'Censorship in Inter-War Britain: Obscenity, Spectacle, and the Workings of the Liberal State', *Journal of Social History*, 45/1, 67–71.
- Silbersky, Leif & Carlösten Nordmark (1969), *Såra tukt och sedlighet: En debattbok om pornografen* (Stockholm: Prisma).
- Skriftserie* (Stockholm: Svenska riksförbundet mot osedlighet i litteratur, press och bild/Svenska riksförbundet för sedlig kultur, 1909–1914).
- Skriftserie* (Stockholm: Svenska riksförbundet för sedlig kultur, 1927–1930).
- SKS KRA. Kirjasto elämässäni (The Library in my Life), 2000, The Finnish Literature Society.
- SKS KRA. Kirjastoperinne (Library Tradition), 1984, The Finnish Literature Society.
- Söderberg, Johan (2000), 'Controversial Consumption in Sweden, 1914–1945', *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 48/3, 5–21.

- Söderhjelm, Simone (1990), 'Idag är serierna i rätten', *Aftonbladet*, 18 January.
- Sørensen, Knud (2008), 'Om Galster og hans forlag', <http://www.arxivth.dk/images/Aarbog/2008/Om%20Galster%20og%20hans%20forlag%20os.%2015-164.pdf>, accessed 9 Nov. 2019.
- SOU 1924:27 *Betänkande med förslag till ett systematiskt utforskande av den svenska allmogekulturen* (Stockholm: Petterson, 1924).
- SOU 1969:38 *Yttrandefrihetens gränser sårande av tukt och sedlighet: Brott mot trosfrid: Betänkande* (Stockholm: Beckman, 1969).
- SOU 2016:5, *Låt fler forma framtiden!*
- Sova, Dawn B. (2006a), *Banned Books: Literature Suppressed on Sexual Grounds* (New York: Facts on File).
- (2006b), *Banned Books: Literature Suppressed on Social Grounds* (New York: Facts on File).
- Stavans, Ilan & Verónica Albin (2008), *Knowledge and Censorship* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Stenberg, Lisbeth (1999), 'Sexualmoral och driftsfixering: Förnuft och kön i 1880-talets skandinaviska sedlighetsdebatt', in Barbro Kvist Dahlstedt & Sten Dahlstedt (eds), *Nationell hängivenhet och europeisk klarhet. Aspekter på den europeiska identiteten kring sekelskiftet 1900* (Eslöv: B. Östlings bokförlag Symposion), 173–225.
- Stevenson, Jack (2010), *Scandinavian Blue: The Erotic Cinema of Sweden and Denmark in the 1960s and 1970s* (Jefferson: McFarland).
- Sundgren, Per (2007), *Kulturen och arbetarrörelsen: Kulturpolitiska strävanden från August Palm till Tage Erlander* (Stockholm: Stockholms universitet).
- Sundkvist, Maria (1990), 'Moralisk panik kring Pox', *Bild & Bubbla*, 1, 33–5.
- Sutherland, John (1983), *Offensive Literature: Decensorship in Britain, 1960–1982* (Totowa: Barnes & Noble Books).
- Svenska Dagbladet* (1967), 'JK begär snabbutredning om pornografiska böcker', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 6 July, 8.
- Swedish television (1967), TV1, 'Pressfönstret', 24 August.
- Tänase, Virgil (1977) (ed.), *Le Dossier Paul Goma: L'Écrivain face au socialisme du silence* (Paris: Editions Albatros, 1977).
- Thing, Morten (1999), *Pornografiens historie i Danmark* (Copenhagen: Aschehoug). *Tidningar utgifne i Upsala*, 13 (1776).
- Tornbjer, Charlotte (2002), *Den nationella modern: Moderskap i konstruktioner av svensk nationell gemenskap under 1900-talets första hälft* (Lund: Lund University).
- Törner, Johan J. (1946), *Johan J. Törners samling af Widskeppelser med inledning och anmärkningar*, ed. K. Rob. V. Wikman (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell).
- 'TT' (1990), 'Sexserier i tryckfrihetsmål', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 19 January.
- Tuomaala, Saara (2004), *Työtätekevästä käsistä puhtaiksi ja kirjoittaviksi: Suomalaisen oppivelvollisuuskoulun ja maalaislasten kohtaaminen 1921–1939* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura).
- Vaidhyanathan, Siva (2001), *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How it Threatens Creativity* (New York: NYUP).

REFERENCES

- Van Dijck, José, Thomas Poell & Martijn de Waal (2018), *The Platform Society: Public Values in a Connective World* (New York: OUP).
- Vatanen, Pirjo (2001), 'From the Society of Estates to the Society of Citizens: Finnish Public Libraries Become American', in Ilkka Mäkinen (ed.), *Finnish Public Libraries in the 20th Century* (Tampere: TUP), 23–72.
- Vestheim, Geir (2014), 'Arthur Engbergs syn på kunst, kultur og kulturpolitikk: Eit ideologisk paradoks eller eit uttrykk for borgarliggjerung av sosialdemokratiet', *Nordisk kulturpolitisk tidskrift*, 17/1, 27–53.
- Vianu, Lidia (1998), *Censorship in Romania* (Budapest: CEU Press).
- Virstedam, Gotthard (1931), 'Burseryds pastorat', in *Växjö stifts herdaminne*, v (Växjö: Herdaminneskommittén).
- Wagner, Darren N. (2016), 'Leaky Bodies, Bawdy Books: Gonorrhoea and Reading in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Literature & Medicine*, 34/2, 320–40.
- Wallenstein, Sven-Olov (2010), 'A Family Affair: Swedish Modernism and the Administering of Life', in Helena Mattsson & Sven-Olov Wallenstein (eds), *Swedish Modernism. Architecture, Consumption, and the Welfare State* (London: Black Dog), 188–99.
- Warner, William B. (1998), *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684–1750* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press).
- Waterhouse, Alan (1994), 'The Dissolving Boundaries of Modernism', in *Boundaries of the City: The Architecture of Western Urbanism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 276–98.
- Weigl, Kerstin (1990), 'Borde Goya åtalas för sexvåld', *Aftonbladet*, 19 January.
- Werner, Nils (1923), "'Beskrifningen" om Allmogen i Wästbo, dess författare och utgivare', in id. (ed.), *Småländska hembygdsböcker*, iii: *Allmogens i Wästbo sinnelag, seder av J. Gaslander år 1774* (Stockholm: Björck & Börjessons förlag), 7–91.
- Westerstahl Stenport, Anna & Eszter Szalczer (2012), 'Strindberg and Radicalism: Strindberg and the Avant-Garde: A Hundred-Year Legacy', *Scandinavian Studies*, 84/3, 235–47.
- Williams, Linda (1999), *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the 'Frenzy of the Visible'* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press).
- Williams, Raymond (1988), *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana).
- Wimsatt, William K. (1967), *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press).
- Zuboff, Shoshana (2019), *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for the Future at the New Frontier of Power* (London: Profile).

About the authors

Klara Arnberg, PhD, Associate Professor of Economic History at Stockholm University. She has published extensively on Swedish pornography and advertising history. She has also co-edited two volumes of key historical sources for Swedish gender and sexuality politics. She is currently working on a project about advertising, gender, and citizenship in Sweden during the Second World War.

Erik Erlanson, PhD, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Film and Literature at Linnaeus University. In his thesis, he investigated the arts of existence developed by a number of twentieth-century American, French, and Scandinavian poets. Presently he is working on a project investigating the function of literature in the Swedish welfare state apparatus and on the relationship between economics, technology, and aesthetics. He is also editor of the Swedish journal *Subaltern* and translator of works by, among others, Pierre Klossowski, Max Loreau, and Luce Irigaray.

Dag Heede, PhD, Associate Professor of Danish Literature at the Department for the Study of Culture at the University of Southern Denmark. He has published an introduction to Michel Foucault and queered canonized works in *Danish Literature: Karen Blixen (2001), Herman Bang (2003) and Hans Christian Andersen (2005)*. He is currently writing a literary history of Danish and Nordic homosexual literature.

Jon Helgason, PhD, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Lecturer in Icelandic at Linnaeus University. His most recent works include two co-authored monographs (2015, 2017) on literary value and value regimes in Sweden's contemporary literary and cultural sphere, and two co-edited volumes on bestseller phenomena (2014) and performativity and performance theory

(2016). Helgason is former chairman of the Swedish Art Council's Literature Committee (2016–2019).

Peter Henning, PhD, Senior Lecturer in Comparative Literature at Umeå University. His thesis (2015) dealt with memory and writing in nineteenth-century Sweden. As a postdoc, he has researched the tension between materiality and aesthetics in European Romanticism with special regard to the work of John Keats. Currently, he is studying the function of art and literature in the Swedish welfare state.

Kristin Johansson, doctoral student of Library and Information Science at the University of Borås. Her main research interests are the history of reading, literary values, and cultural policy, and her ongoing thesis project explores the governing of reading as a civilizing mission by studying the ideas about reading and literature among non-profit organizations in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Kenneth Lindegren, PhD, Affiliated Researcher in Comparative Literature at Lund University. His thesis (2016) dealt with improbable events in the realistic novel. His most recent work is a monograph on literary hoaxes as a genre (2016). He is currently researching the uses of historical figures as protagonists in contemporary Swedish fiction.

Linnéa Lindsköld, PhD, Senior Lecturer in Library and Information Science at the University of Borås. She has conducted several discourse-oriented studies of cultural and literature policy focusing on quality and diversity, as well as radical right cultural policy. She is currently working on two research projects financed by the Swedish Research Council: 'The making of the reading citizen: Public debate and policy, 1945–2017' and 'The Welfare Regime of Literature: The Function of Literature in Sweden, 1937–1976'. She is on the editorial board of the *Nordic Journal of Cultural Policy* and a member of the scientific committee for the Nordic Conference on Cultural Policy Research.

Åsa Ljungström, PhD, Associate Professor of Ethnology at Mid Sweden University. Her research interests are primarily material culture, folklore studies, and narrativity. She has recently published on narrativity, small stories, long-distance rural trade, women's history, contraception, folk medicine, folk legends, and eighteenth-century magic. Presently, she is studying emotions in a housewife's journal in 1890–1914.

Liviu Malita, Senior Researcher and Professor of Aesthetics, Literary and Performative Studies at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj, Romania, and Dean of the Faculty of Theatre and Film. His research interests include Romanian and European theatre and literature; sociology and the theory of art; and aesthetics and the history of ideas and mentalities. Currently, he is coordinating a national research group on film and performative and visual studies which will result in an encyclopedia of Romanian artistic and cultural imaginaries over the last four centuries.

Ilona Savolainen, doctoral student at the University of Tampere. In her doctoral thesis, she examines attitudes towards children's reading in Finland, 1900–1959. Her research interests include the history of reading, childhood studies, and library history.

Claus Schatz-Jakobsen, MA, Associate Professor of English at the University of Southern Denmark, and Director of English Studies. He has published on a variety of topics in British literary history and literary theory, film studies, hymnology, and is currently finalizing a dissertation on constructions of British Romanticism in Anglo-American literary criticism.