

# Poison, literary vermin, and misguided youths

Descriptions of immoral reading  
in early twentieth-century Sweden

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> Conservative actors

throughout Scandinavia and Europe argued strongly against the violent, erotic, and decadent themes of contemporary literature.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup>

### 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.<sup>14</sup> The article garnered a great deal of attention and a heated debate ensued.<sup>15</sup>

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.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup>

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.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> These three strands are in alignment not only with the history of ideas presented by Belfiore and Bennett, but also with post-Enlightenment traditions.<sup>21</sup> 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’).<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup>

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.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup>

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.<sup>27</sup> This perception has then been used to shame, scare, and discipline the reader into more proper reading behaviour.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup>

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.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> 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'.<sup>32</sup>

### 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.<sup>33</sup>

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.<sup>34</sup>

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.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup>

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's good business sense, likening the publication of Mann's books with a charcuterie

selling rotten meat.<sup>37</sup> 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!<sup>38</sup>

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.<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup>

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.<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup> To understand the reorientation away from literature it is important to know that Teodor was very active in nationalist politics.<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup> 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'.<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup>

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.<sup>48</sup> 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.<sup>49</sup> 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.<sup>50</sup> 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.<sup>51</sup> 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.<sup>52</sup> 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.<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup> 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.<sup>55</sup>

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.<sup>56</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup>

## 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.<sup>58</sup> 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 countermovement 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).