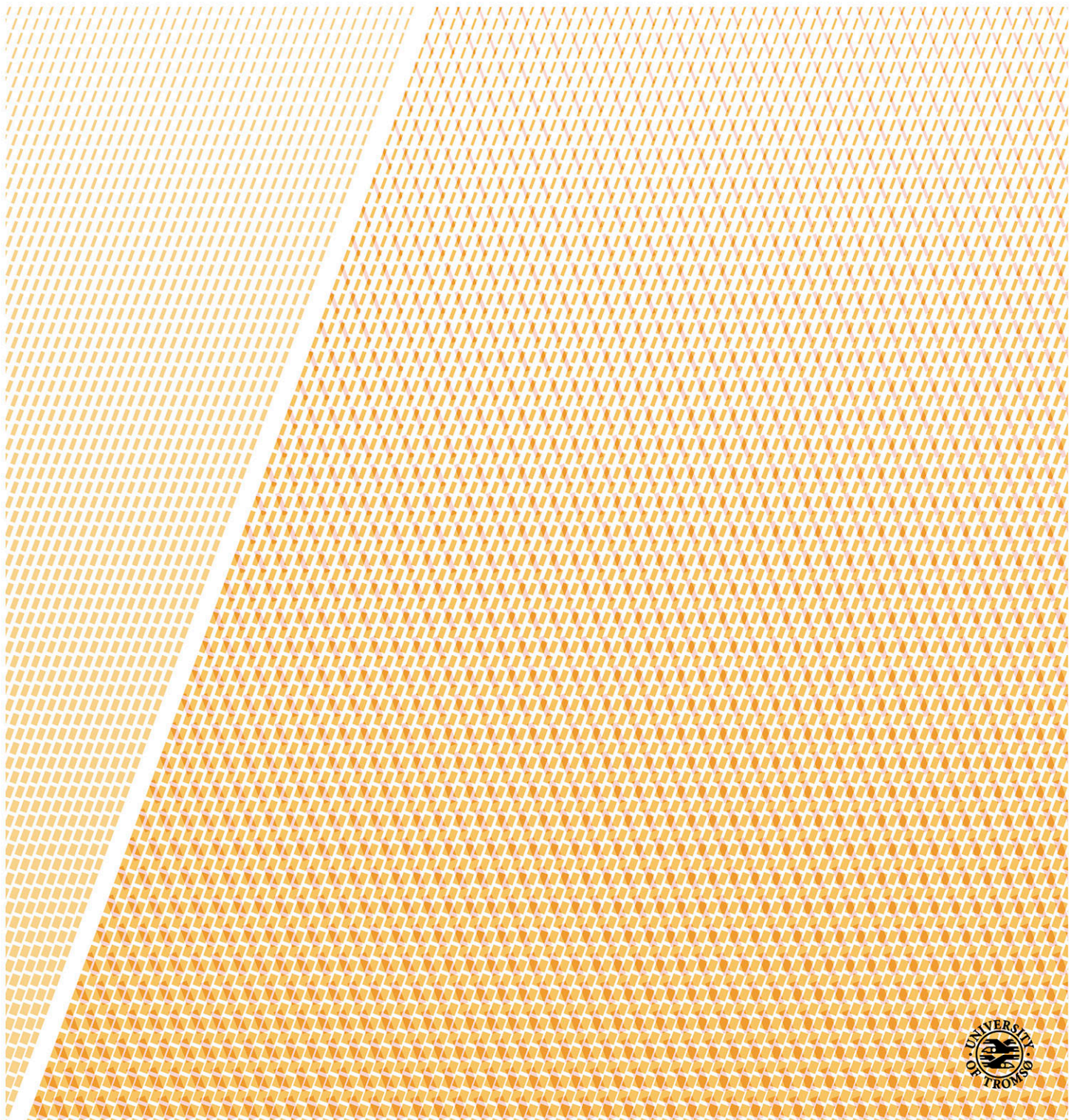


Modern Reading

Swedish Book Consumption during the Late Nineteenth Century

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MODERN READING

SWEDISH BOOK CONSUMPTION
DURING THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The past is a foreign country
– L. P. Hartley

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Lund, December 2017

Henning Hansen

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Dear Mr Sjöblom! I am sorry to trouble you again! This time, I want to borrow a few good, preferably new books for one or two months, perhaps 8 or 10, or 12 of them. We are staying here in Ryd for the summer. My husband will take the train here early next week, could you perhaps have a porter bring the books to the station?

Anna Printzen, Ryd, 29 June 1893.

Mr Sjöblom! My wife has probably already sent [you] a request to borrow a few books. I write to inform you that I will take the train from Malmö at 08:10 on Tuesday morning [4 July] and it will stop by Lund at 08:40, and I am wondering if [you] would be so kind as to send a few books to the train, so I can take them with me.

Erikus Printzen, Malmö, 2 July 1893.¹

We have no way of knowing what books Jacob Albert Sjöblom, the proprietor in Lund of an antiquarian bookshop doubling as commercial lending library, sent to the railway station on the morning of 4 July 1893.² Nor did his customers Mrs and Mr Printzen know what to expect. Anna Printzen only stated that she wanted some “good, preferably new” books, and it would probably be safe to assume that she was expecting to get something that would be entertaining, since Sjöblom’s library specialised in fiction. Anna Printzen seems to have had confidence in the library proprietor and his literary choices. Sjöblom, on his part, had to be familiar with contemporary literature and the reading tastes of his customers to be able to satisfy requests like this one.

From what we know, Anna Printzen was a returning customer, and she

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1. Frantz Erikus “Erik” (von) Printzen (1862–1939) and Anna Charlotta Printzen, born Andersson (1868–1942). The archive of Jacob Albert Sjöblom, Lund University Library. Any translations from Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian are my own, unless otherwise stated.
 2. In this study, the term “commercial lending library” refers to a profit-driven library that rents out books to the public, corresponding to *circulating library* in an Anglo-Saxon context, *cabinets de lecture* in a French context, and *Leihbibliothek* in a German context. The Swedish term is *kommersiellt lånebibliotek*.

seems to have been pleased with Sjöblom's services. Erikus Printzen, an assistant professor and one of the founding members of Malmö Velocipede Club, and his wife Anna, were respectively thirty and twenty-five years old at the time, and they were expecting their third child. Like many others of the more well to do classes, the couple left the city in order to spend the summer in the countryside, and it is easy to imagine that the eight to twelve books Anna Printzen required were going to serve as her summer reading.

The letters from Mrs and Mr Printzen give us glimpses from a bygone era. Thanks to both cheaper and quicker postal services, letters were written by the tens of millions each year in Sweden by the end of the nineteenth century.³ The rather informal tone in the letters from the Printzen couple and the fact that they were written within short notice point to the spontaneity and efficiency made possible by a transforming media landscape.⁴ These particular letters also bear witness to how the relation between text and readers had undergone fundamental change. In the course of the nineteenth century, books had increasingly become an everyday object within reach of all but the very poorest, via for example libraries, bookshops, peddlers, railway kiosks, antiquarian bookshops, book auctions, and reading societies. The material preconditions for a democratised literary consumption were in place.

The Swedish book market during the late-nineteenth century has been mapped in a number of studies, not least when it comes to the production and distribution of books. But when it comes to the actual consumption of the books – the focal point of this study – we have only limited knowledge. The development of the literary market was without doubt underpinned by an increasing demand for reading materials and growing numbers of readers, but our knowledge about the actual consumers is very sparse. This is the starting point for this study. The new and widespread access to books must surely have had a great impact on society as a whole as well as on individuals' lives. Thus, if we really want to understand the culture of the nineteenth century, we should, as the Swedish media historian Gunnar Hallingberg points out, “uncondition-

3. David Gedin, *Fältets herrar: framväxten av en modern författarroll: artonhundraåttiotalet* (Stockholm/Stehag: Brutus Östlings bokförlag Symposion, 2004), 70.

4. Jonas Harvard and Patrik Lundell, "1800-talets medier: System, landskap, nätverk" in *1800-talets mediasystem* edited by Jonas Harvard and Patrik Lundell (Stockholm: Kungliga biblioteket, 2010), 7–25 (7–8).

ally ask questions about the literature, about *what people read ...*⁵

There has always been a lack of conformity between the kind of books that were canonized into the history of literature and the books that most people actually read.⁶ An example from the early 1890s highlights the discrepancy between what the “common people” read and what was regarded as quality literature: A librarian once asked Henrik Schück, one of the foremost Swedish literary scholars of the nineteenth century, which Swedish book he believed was most widely read. Coming up with numerous suggestions, mentioning many of the great authors of the time, Schück failed to identify the correct one. To his great surprise, the most popular book was *Brukspatron Adamsson, eller Hvar bor du?* (1863; *Squire Adamsson, or, Where do you live?*), an allegoric novel with religious undertones, by vicar Paul Peter Waldenström. Schück had not even heard of the book, or of its author. In his memoirs, Schück reflected that it made him realise that there were in fact two “separate and quite different literatures ... each with its own audience.”⁷

Reading and book consumption in the era of the Modern Breakthrough: Aims and research questions

The main aim of this empirical study is to determine how book consumption and reading habits varied in different segments of the Swedish society during the late nineteenth century, with special emphasis on the 1880s. My main sources consist of borrowers’ and sales’ records from a bookshop, a commercial lending library, and a parish library in southern Sweden.

The 1880s, often described simply as *åttioalet* (the eighties), is part of what is widely known as the Modern Breakthrough, referring to the sharp shift from romanticism to social realism and naturalism within the Scandinavian

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5. Gunnar Hallingberg, *Läsarna: 1800-talets folkväckelse och det moderna genombrottet* (Stockholm: Atlantis AB, 2010), 343.
 6. Kristina Lundblad, *Bound to be Modern: Publishers’ Cloth Bindings and the Material Culture of the Book, 1840–1914* (Newcastle: Oak Knoll Press, 2015), 61.
 7. Henrik Schück, *Ur gamla papper: populära kulturhistoriska uppsatser. Ser. 6* (Stockholm: Geber, 1904), 132–33.

literary context. This literary and cultural movement encompassed change, new debate and even international fame. Authors and critics like the Swedish August Strindberg, the Norwegian Henrik Ibsen, and the Danish Georg Brandes were leading figures of the movement. But the “eighties” were much more than that. The Modern Breakthrough coincided with a profound expansion of the reading public and a modernisation of the book trade in general. This was an era when both book production and consumption skyrocketed.

But who were the readers of the time, how did they access literature, and what did they prefer reading? While the Modern Breakthrough and the Swedish book market in general of the time have been the subject of numerous studies, the important question of the readers has eluded research. This study, which is partly a social history study and partly a study of genres and books, is an attempt to write a history of books and readers from the consumers’ point of view. My overarching questions concern, firstly, who the book consumers were, and how readers of different social standing acquired their reading materials; secondly, what books/authors/genres were most in demand, how consumption and popularity changed over time and; thirdly and lastly, which mechanisms affected what was read.

Special attention will also be paid to the Modern Breakthrough as a phenomenon and its role in the contemporaneous Swedish book market. In a Scandinavian historical context, the entire period of the late nineteenth century is sometimes simply referred to as the Modern Breakthrough era.⁸ One pertinent question is therefore how relevant this designation really is, considering what people actually read at the time. Was the Modern Breakthrough a breakthrough on every level, or did it remain a literature for the elites? Relative to its proportion of the literature produced in Scandinavia during the late nineteenth century, the Modern Breakthrough literature has clearly been given a disproportionate amount of attention. It is therefore important to contextualise the role of the literary movement on the contemporaneous literary marketplace. The famous literary critic Klara Johanson reminds that “[t]he history of literature ... is only partial as long as it is not completed with the history of the audience.”⁹ Thought provoking as it is, the vast majority of the

8. For example Gro Hagemann’s *Det moderne gjennombrudd 1870–1905 in Aschehougs Norge-shistorie* vol. 9, edited by Knut Helle (Oslo: H. Aschehoug & Co, 1997).

9. Letter to the theologian and author Emilia Fogelklou, 5 January 1920. Klara Johanson,

literature of the nineteenth century arguably belongs to what the Italian literary scholar Franco Moretti has called the “forgotten 99 per cent.”¹⁰ This study will hopefully help us to get a well-needed peek into actual book consumption of the late nineteenth century, which in turn can help determine which books were actually acquired – and by whom. Combining the literary historical narrative with a consumer perspective may contribute to our understanding not only of the Modern Breakthrough per se, but also of reading in general in late-nineteenth-century Sweden.

The Modern Breakthrough in Scandinavia

In an international perspective, the Modern Breakthrough is today probably most well known for being the literary breeding ground of some of the world’s most famous playwrights and literary critics. The late nineteenth century was a dynamic era of progressive ideas and ideals, and the radical writings of the Modern Breakthrough marked a paradigm shift in Scandinavian literary history. This literature addressed issues such as women’s rights, social criticism, and secularisation, and started a debate that still continues to this day.¹¹ Some of the topics presented in the works of the Modern Breakthrough authors faced fierce opposition from the contemporary establishment, which led to deep conflicts and strong condemnations from some quarters, and in a handful of cases even to legal measures. Several of the literary movement’s proclaimed themes were audacious and perhaps even somewhat ahead of their time.

It is important to remember that “modern” is a word with strong connotations. The French anthropologist Bruno Latour argues that the notion of “modern” implies that there is a fight between two sides – the “moderns” and the “ancients” – and that one of these sides is winning and the other is losing.¹² As William H. Sewell Jr. points out, labelling a movement as “modern,”

Brev (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1953), 113.

10. Franco Moretti, *Distant reading* (London: Verso, 2013), 63–65.

11. Karl-Erik Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital: om åttitalslitteraturen och Heidenstams debut och program* (Uddevalla: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1953), 56–67.

12. Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Uni-

encompasses an understanding of it as to be “doing the work of the future in some present.”¹³ As late as 1963, Alrik Gustafson claimed that the “Sweden of today is to a great extent a product of the ideas boldly proclaimed as a literary program in the early 1880s,”¹⁴ and in some ways the Modern Breakthrough can be seen as a start of a modern paradigm in which we still live. As Susan Brantly has pointed out, “the spirit of Modern Breakthrough has never totally disappeared in Sweden.”¹⁵

It is not easy to pinpoint the era of the Modern Breakthrough in a certain timeframe, as it was part of an ongoing political, cultural, and technical modernisation process. In 1870, the influential Danish literary critic Georg Brandes, a key figure of the movement, embarked on his famous lecture series on contemporary literature at the University of Copenhagen, which heralded a transformation of Scandinavian literature. Brandes’ lectures constituted an important part of the process of establishing a homegrown, Scandinavian, modern and radical literature. The actual term *Det moderne Gjennembrud* (The Modern Breakthrough) was made famous by Brandes’ literary study *Det moderne Gjennembruds Mænd* (1883; The Men of the Modern Breakthrough).

Starting out primarily as a Danish-Norwegian literary movement, the authors included in *Det moderne Gjennembruds Mænd* consisted solely of Norwegians and Danes: Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Henrik Ibsen, J. P. Jacobsen, Holger Drachmann, Edvard Brandes, Sophus Schandorph, and Erik Skram.¹⁶ In an international context, though, the Modern Breakthrough has been seen as more of a pan-Scandinavian movement inspired by French naturalism, including authors not only from Denmark and Norway, but also from Sweden and Finland. A number of Finnish authors wrote books in the style of the Modern Breakthrough, notably Karl August Tavaststjerna and Minna Canth. Furthermore, since many Finns read and wrote Swedish – the Swedish-speaking

versity Press, 1993), 10.

13. William Hamilton Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 84.
14. Alrik Gustafson, *Den svenska litteraturens historia före 1900* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1963), 237–38.
15. Susan Brantly, *The Historical Novel, Transnationalism, and the Postmodern Era: Presenting the Past* (New York and London: Routledge, 2017), 50.
16. Georg Brandes, *Det moderne Gjennembruds Mænd: en Række Portræter* (Kjøbenhavn: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag, 1883), (5).

population of Finland not the least – Finland and Sweden were able to have an extensive cultural exchange.

In his dissertation, literary scholar Gunnar Ahlström also identified, apart from the above-mentioned authors, the Danish authors Herman Bang, Georg Brandes himself, Sophus Schandorph, Karl Gjellerup, and Erik Skram, the Swedish authors Victoria Benedictsson, Gustaf af Geijerstam, Ann Charlotte Leffler, Ola Hansson, Axel Lundegård, Oscar Levertin, and August Strindberg, as well as the Norwegian authors Kristian Elster, Arne Garborg, Alexander Kielland, Jonas Lie, and Amalie Skram as Modern Breakthrough authors. In her study of the ideas of the Modern Breakthrough, Ann-Lis Jeppsson included an even wider circle of Swedish authors as members of the literary movement, many of them little known today (see Appendix 2). Jeppsson's list of authors, in turn, was based on Karl-Erik Lundevall's study of the 1880s literature. In this study, I follow Ahlström's and Jeppsson's categorisation of Modern Breakthrough authors.

Sweden developed a Modern Breakthrough literature of its own later than its neighbouring countries, and was, for quite some time, dependent on foreign influences, not least from Brandes and Ibsen.¹⁷ Traditionally, August Strindberg's influential *Röda rummet* (1879; *The Red Room*) has been seen as instigating the new direction of Swedish literature. Per Arne Tjäder though, stresses the importance of "Unga Sverige" – a loose grouping of Swedish authors, including Strindberg, writing radical literature in the spirit of the Modern Breakthrough, appearing during the 1880s. With this group, the new literary ideals took hold in Sweden, according to Tjäder. The modern Swedish literature seemed to distance itself from the old literary school and appropriated new literary and philosophical ideals.¹⁸ But already during the late 1880s, new currents of ideas entered the Swedish literary field, and the literary ideals of the "eighties" were challenged. In 1889, Verner von Heidenstam heralded the transition from the naturalism of the 1880s to the emerging romanticism and symbolism of the 1890s, and concluded that "most likely an idealistic counterforce is already establishing itself as a reaction against naturalism."¹⁹ A new

17. Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 136.

18. Per Arne Tjäder, 'Det unga Sverige': *Åttitalrörelse och genombrottsepok* (Lund: Arkiv avhandlingsserie 15, 1982), 25–36.

19. Verner von Heidenstam, *Renässans. Några ord om en annalkande ny brytningstid inom*

generation of writers were taking the stage. As the literary scholars Bernt Olsson and Ingemar Algulin describe it, little by little, the Brandesian ideals of social criticism and debate lost their foothold and were replaced by “worship of art, *joie de vivre* and National Romanticism ... [and] a *fin de siècle* atmosphere of aestheticism, symbolism, mysticism, decadence and illusion...”²⁰

A number of magazines offered a forum for the modern literary movement, among them *Ur dagens krönika*, (1881–91; From Today’s Chronicle), edited by Arvid Ahnfelt, *Revy i litterära och sociala frågor*, (1885–86; Review of Literary and Social issues), edited by Gustaf af Geijerstam, and *Framåt* (1886–89; Forward), edited by Alma Åkermark.²¹ Several of the Modern Breakthrough authors published articles or excerpts from their books in these magazines, in which some of the contemporary literary debates also took place.²² During the 1880s, around 80 new works of fiction by Swedish authors were published annually; only a minority of these consisted of what Lundevall defines as Modern Breakthrough literature. All in all, Lundevall lists around 150 Swedish books published between 1880 and 1889 as Modern Breakthrough literature.²³

The radical literature of the “eighties” has often been regarded as a separate literary movement, as opposed to the emerging romanticism and symbolism of the 1890s, called *nittitalismen* (the nineties’ literature), and the term *åttioalet* (the eighties) has – as mentioned before – been used alongside *The Modern Breakthrough*. The present study focuses mainly on the 1879–90 time-span, which coincides largely with the “eighties”.²⁴ Following the tradition of Gunnar Ahlström, Lars Furuland, and Ingeborg Nordin Hennel, the literature of the “eighties” is referred to in this dissertation as a part of the Modern Breakthrough.

litteraturen (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1889), 27.

20. Helena Forsås-Scott, *Swedish Women’s Writing 1850–1995* (London: Athlone, 1997), 29; see also Bernt Olsson and Ingemar Algulin, *Litteraturens historia i Sverige* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 2009), 291–92.
21. Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 68.
22. Tjäder, ‘*Det unga Sverige*’, 53–59.
23. Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 151, 346.
24. For a more nuanced definition of the temporal and literary periodisation of *åttioalet*, see Tjäder, ‘*Det unga Sverige*’, 9–38 and Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 33–43.

Nineteenth-century readers

A number of contemporaneous accounts, as well as later research, add to our knowledge of the changing literary conditions of the nineteenth century and the evolving reading practices of the period. The Swedish book market of the early nineteenth century catered to a very limited part of the population, mainly consisting of the clergy, teachers, civil servants and other members of the bourgeoisie and the upper classes.²⁵ Only one of the renowned writers of the time, the national poet Esaias Tegnér, was able to attract readers beyond “the thin layer, which otherwise concerned themselves with literature.”²⁶ The subsequent decades saw a slowly growing literary interest among new groups of society, a development that traditionally has been attributed to the popular education movement and the establishment of public schools in 1842. Yet for a long time it was economic limitations, rather than levels of literacy or literary interest, that restricted the widening of the audience. They led to a gap between the number of actual and potential readers, which created something of a literary vacuum in the market.²⁷

The industrious publishing pioneers Lars Johan Hierta and Niklas H. Thomson were some of the first to make a serious attempt at satisfying the recently aroused literary needs of the general reading public. In the 1830s, the two rivals launched their competing series of cheap serialised fiction, *Läsebibliotheket* (The Reading Library) and *Kabinetsbibliotheket* (The Cabinet Library), which opened up a whole new “literary universe” for new cohorts of readers. Thus, stories from foreign countries on exotic topics spread to a much wider readership. Eventually, the books trickled down to libraries and to the second-hand market, and came within reach of an audience that hitherto mainly

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25. Claes Krantz, *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn: 150 års bokhandelshistoria* (Göteborg: Gumperts tryckeri, 1958), 7; Sven Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel: svenska bokförläggareföreningen 1843–1887* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & söner, 1951), 448.
26. Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 17.
27. *Bidrag till Sveriges officiella statistik: sammandrag. Kungl. Maj:ts befallningshafvandes femårsberättelser. Ny följd. III. Jemte sammandrag för åren 1866–1870* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & söner, 1873), 14; Johan Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle: Svenska bokförläggareföreningen och svensk bokmarknad 1887–1943* (Stockholm: Svenska bokförläggareföreningen, 1993), 35; Eric Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen: Familjetidskriften i Sverige 1850–1880* (Uddevalla: Nordiska museets handlingar, 1980), 145.

had had limited access to other books than the literary staples, i.e. hymnbooks, the catechism, and schoolbooks.

Focusing on keeping prices low, Hierta and Thomson managed to publish editions by the thousands, rather than hundreds, which had so far been the standard print run for novels.²⁸ Owing to the newspaper stamp act introduced in 1824, the instalments of *Läsebibliotheket* and *Kabinettsbibliotheket* were registered as newspapers and were exempt from postage. Thereby texts by authors such as the English Edward Bulwer-Lytton and Frederick Marryat, the French Alexandre Dumas, and the Swedish Emilie Flygare-Carlén made their way to people's homes at a fixed cost, regardless of distance.²⁹ The literary series published by Hierta, Thomson, and other pioneering publishers, catered to a new "book-craving but hardly particularly picky audience" and aroused a widespread thirst for reading – fiction in particular – which was not easily quenched.³⁰ However, as Gunnel Furuland points out in her study of these literary series, initially, the serialized fiction primarily reached the higher layers of society.³¹ The book-buying audience was still very small. In 1851, the bookseller Carl Gustaf Södergren in Växjö offered a pessimistic description of the reading public in a letter to Svenska Förläggareföreningen (the Swedish Publishers' association):

*The reading audience mainly consists of crude peasants, of which two thirds cannot read properly ... How about the gentry, then ...? They prefer growing potatoes and distilling alcohol and playing cards. ... Among [the clergy], the curates buy a few books, but mainly on credit. ... The vicars do not buy any books ... They rather enjoy the tranquillity and prefer to gobble down ... roast veal, leg of lamb, cheese pancakes etc. to reading books.*³²

The same impression is created in Abraham Wilhelm af Sillén's novel *En Theoreticus i en praktisk tid*, published in 1867 but set in the 1830s. The main

28. Lundblad, *Bound to be Modern*, 60.

29. Gunnel Furuland, *Romanen som vardagsvara: förläggare, författare och skönlitterära häfteserier i Sverige 1833–1851 från Lars Johan Hierta till Albert Bonnier* (Stockholm: LaGun, 2007), 92–96, 182, 238.

30. Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 47, 249.

31. Furuland, *Romanen som vardagsvara*, 117.

32. *Festskrift med anledning af Svenska Bokförläggareföreningens femtiårs-jubileum* (Stockholm: Svenska Bokförläggareföreningen, 1893), 88–89.

character, a nineteen-year-old private tutor, arrives at an estate in the countryside where he is supposed to educate the children of a country squire. A maid shows him around the premises, but he is surprised not to find any books during the tour: “Is there a bookcase here?’ the tutor asked. ‘A bookcase, what is that? The country squire does not have one, so the tutor won’t need one either,’ the maid answered and then left.”³³

Notwithstanding testimonies such as these, the times were slowly changing. The democratisation of reading can be seen for example in the success of the magazines. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the periodical subscribers primarily consisted of well-educated officials, but by the mid-1800s, their numbers were surpassed by middle-class subscribers, such as merchants and master craftsmen.³⁴ Strong economic growth during the second half of the nineteenth century went hand in hand with the modernisation of the Swedish book market.

Books were printed in larger and cheaper editions and the increasing numbers of libraries and newspapers made printed materials available for large parts of the population. Little by little, as society was becoming industrialised and households started leaning towards consumption rather than production, the book was becoming more and more of an everyday object.³⁵ The boundaries between different groups of readers were gradually dissolving and the reading public eventually transformed into an expanding, socially inclusive body of readers: a “mass reading public” was emerging.³⁶

The expansion of the Swedish reading public is perhaps best characterised by Sven Rinman. He describes how the cultural traditions that once formed a bond between the old reading classes (mainly consisting of a small but stable audience of academics, civil servants and landowners), began to dissolve after the mid-1800s, when social conditions changed. Economic and social expansion brought about an injection of new readers, who, according to Rinman, “lacked a character of their own,” and did not bring about any real change,

33. Abraham Wilhelm af Sillén, *En theoreticus i en praktisk tid* (Stockholm: Sigfrid Flodins förlag, 1867), 2.

34. Ingemar Oscarsson, “Fortsättning följer”: *följetong och fortsättningsroman i dagspressen till ca 1850* (Lund: LiberLäromedel, 1980), 55.

35. Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 24.

36. Furuland, *Romanen som vardagsvara*, 117–18; Martyn Lyons, *A History of Reading and Writing In the Western World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 153.

and that, in turn, rather helped preserve the old ideals. In the meantime, "the old cultural elite lived on, although weakened and watered down." However, Rinman points out, it was these combined groups of readers, and their Danish and Norwegian counterparts, who provided support to the great Nordic literature of the 1860s and 1870s, like the writings of Henrik Ibsen and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. Later on, the nature of this writing eventually changed, and evolved into a literature critical of the society, the "Modern Breakthrough." This, Rinman states, would have led to structural changes in the reading public itself; changes that he would like to find out more about. "... [T]hat would be a very difficult but tempting task," he says.³⁷

In his book *Modern realism: en psykologisk litteraturstudie* (1884; *Modern Realism: a Psychological Literary Study*), Nils Erdmann also highlights the dividing line between the old romanticist wave and the emerging naturalist literature as characteristic of the fundamental change of the reading audience: "Literature has, during the past twenty or thirty years, undergone a transformation. The generation that reads Zola is not the generation that sang with Hugo and fantasised with George Sand. Life changes, as do the ideals. ... *Our* time is the era of industry."³⁸

By the 1880s, the social broadening of the audience can be noted in the increased demand for Swedish fiction.³⁹ The provincial governors' five-year report for 1876–80 stated that "with regards to the activities in the homes, from all parts of the country a significant growth in the desire to read is reported."⁴⁰ In the subsequent five-year report, for the years 1881–85, it was noted that *läslusten* – the desire to read – had become commonplace.⁴¹ The expansion of the reading public was also noticeable for the publishers of newspapers and magazines. Between 1865 and 1880 the number of newspapers almost doubled

37. Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 448.

38. Nils Erdmann, *Modern realism: en psykologisk litteraturstudie* (Stockholm: Jos. Seligmann & cis förlag, 1884), 1.

39. Hallingberg, *Läsarna*, 339.

40. *Bidrag till Sveriges officiella statistik: sammandrag. Kungl. Maj:ts befallningshafvandes femårsberättelser. Ny följd. V. Jemte sammandrag för åren 1876–1880* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & söner, 1884), 15.

41. *Bidrag till Sveriges officiella statistik: sammandrag. Kungl. Maj:ts befallningshafvandes femårsberättelser. Ny följd. VI. Jemte sammandrag för åren 1881–1885* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & söner, 1890), 17

from just over 100 to 200, owing largely to their ability to attract new groups of readers.⁴² Åke Åberg has referred to the transformation of the relationship of the Swedish population to texts in general and fiction in particular during the late nineteenth century, “possibly the most profound change in centuries.”⁴³

Newspapers and other periodicals often offered their readers a steady access to light reading, such as serialized fiction. Already by the mid-1800s, 80 per cent of the Swedish newspapers published serialised fiction.⁴⁴ Eric Johannesson’s study of the subscribers of one of the most successful Swedish magazines of the day, *Svenska Familj-Journalen*, has shown that a decisive change occurred between 1868 and 1880. During this timespan the proportion of estate owners, noblemen, and officials among the subscribers declined, and increasingly the magazine reached readers further down the social ladder. The number of small business owners, artisans and farmers increased substantially, making up almost 90 per cent of subscribers by 1880.⁴⁵ In the governors’ five-year report for 1886–90 it was stated that newspapers found their way to “the most remote areas, and in many parts of the country they can be encountered in as good as every cottage.”⁴⁶

Sources, limitations, and methodology

Tracing the reading of individuals who lived nearly 150 years ago is challenging, to say the least, and has been deemed altogether impossible by several scholars. The main obstacle has been a lack of relevant and/or sufficiently comprehensive sources and, embarking on this dissertation project, I was unsure of which sources I could turn to. Early on in the project, publishers’ archives

42. *En svensk presshistoria*, edited by Claes-Göran Holmberg, Ingemar Oscarsson and Per Rydén (Stockholm: Esselte studium, 1983), 86–88.

43. Åke Åberg, “Det moderna genombrottet’ i svensk landsort: bokköp och tidningspress i Västerås 1870–1895,” *Sammlaren* 1995, 52–74 (52).

44. Oscarsson, “Fortsättning följer,” 52.

45. Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 137, 210.

46. *Bidrag till Sveriges officiella statistik: sammandrag. Kungl. Maj:ts befallningshafvandes femårsberättelser. Ny följd. VI. Jemte sammandrag för åren 1886–1890* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & söner, 1895), 21

and preserved correspondence between authors, publishers, and booksellers appeared as an option, but wanting to target the individual reader, I dug further. The Swedish book-consuming public of the late nineteenth century was still segmented, and far from everyone could afford buying books on a regular basis. A fundamental requirement for the present study has therefore been to gain access to various elements of the Swedish book market in order to capture the book consumption of both the book-borrowing and the book-buying audiences. As early as in 1942, Elisabeth Tykesson outlined how such a study should be conducted. She highlighted the importance of commercial lending libraries, and stated that they are crucial to the study of what the great masses read. In order to find out what was read by a clientele that bought books, but whose book collections were not of sufficient quality to be sold at book auctions, one has to turn to the bookshops' accounts, Tykesson stated.⁴⁷

Following these guidelines, I was able to uncover sources which would eventually form the basis of the study: preserved borrowers' and sales' records from three institutions; the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, J. A. Sjöblom's commercial lending library in Lund, and N. J. Gumpert's bookshop in Gothenburg – institutions that represent key elements of the Swedish book market during the late nineteenth century. Taken together, they can even be said to constitute a crude cross-section of the Swedish book market of the time. The records from the bookshop and the commercial lending library provide insights into the reading habits of the urban population, whereas the borrowers' ledgers from the parish library provide information about the reading habits of the rural population.

The three archives are particularly valuable resources since their records list the customers' loans or purchases, allowing us to link the consumption of specific books to specific individuals during a period that stands out as one of the most dynamic and decisive in Scandinavian cultural history. There is a very limited number of surviving Swedish archives in which individuals' consumption of books can be discerned, a fact that has shaped the orientation and conditions of the study. None of my three main sources have ever before been the object of academic research.⁴⁸

47. Elisabeth Tykesson, *Rövarromanen och dess hjälte i 1800-talets svenska folkläsning* (Lund: Gleerup, 1942), 216.

48. Some of the findings of this study were first published in an article in *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada*. Henning Hansen, "Buying and Borrowing Books: Book

The present study is a quantitative empirical investigation, based on tens of thousands of loans and sales. It is a comparative history of reading, covering a cross-section of Swedish book consumption during the 1880s. The social and literary contexts as well as the book consumption findings from the three literary institutions are described systematically, and based on the same parameters, to facilitate comparison. In concrete terms, I have transcribed the loans or sales of books from the archival records into spreadsheets to get an overview and to simplify analysis of the consumption. Each purchase or loan has been classified according to a number of categories, including title, author, genre, price, date, etc. The members or customers of the investigated libraries and bookshops have been categorised according to gender, age, profession/titles, and residence location. When depicting the book consumption of individuals, I have made use of public data from Swedish regional and national archives, including censuses and parish registers, as well as printed materials or digitised sources, in order to get hold of as many details as possible about these individuals.

The two libraries and the bookshop were by no means equal literary institutions. Gumpert's bookshop was among the most prominent businesses in Gothenburg, Sweden's second largest city, and one of the largest bookshops outside the capital. It was a demand-driven business, catering to the literary needs of a primarily bourgeois clientele. By contrast, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby was situated in a small village in the countryside, and was frequented primarily by agricultural workers and peasants. The library in Munka-Ljungby was one of well over a thousand parish libraries in Sweden, spread all over the country. Essentially, parish libraries were a political tool intended to provide for the public school's needs in literature, explicitly promoting a "true Christian education."⁴⁹ Sjöblom's commercial lending library in Lund, finally, was also demand-driven, just like the bookshop.

In a way, the term "library" is an imperfect way of describing commercial

Consumption In Late Nineteenth-Century Sweden," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada/Cahiers de la Société bibliographique du Canada* (54/1-2: Spring-Fall 2016), 121-53.

49. Nils-Åke Sjösten, *Sockenbiblioteket – ett folkbildningsinstrument i 1870-talets Sverige: En studie av folkskoleinspektionens bildningssyn i relation till sockenbiblioteken och den tillgängliga litteraturen* (Linköping: Linköping University, 1993), 23; Knut Tynell, *Folkbiblioteken i Sverige*, (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag, 1931), 9-15.

lending libraries. They were operated like any other business, arguably sharing more commonalities with a movie rental store than a library. Books were not borrowed from the lending libraries as much as they were rented out. Lending libraries focused on acquiring books they knew were in high demand, rather than useful literature for example. Unlike the bookshop, the lending library was more whole-heartedly devoted to entertaining literature, and most lending libraries offered solely fiction. These aspects need to be taken into account when comparing book consumption from the three institutions.

The sources, rich in detail as they are, offer numerous methodological challenges. In the case of the two libraries, all the available data have been analysed. When it comes to the vast material from Gumpert's bookshop, I analyse the purchases of a selection of around ten per cent of the customers. Each annual volume listing the credit-buying customers' purchases consists of approximately one thousand pages. Each page lists the purchases of one or several customers. One hundred pages from each volume have been selected, using a random number generator, to obtain fair samples. Some pages list as much as fifty titles purchased by a single customer while others contain the purchase of only a couple of titles, made by a handful of different customers. Yet other pages remain blank. Hence, the number of purchases analysed for each year will differ accordingly. Since the same number of pages from each year have been analysed, the ups and downs of the bookshop's sales are only partially visible.

Scope and limitations of the study

The study is focused on the 1880s. Although the three institutions provide detailed information regarding the period, it is important to remember that we are only able to study a section of the book market, even at a local level. Each of the three literary communities studied here, Gothenburg, Lund, and Munka-Ljungby also had their individual cultural frameworks and local spheres of influence, which has implications for the findings of this study. Even in a rural setting such as Munka-Ljungby, there were other ways of acquiring books, like book auctions, peddlers, etc.

In addition to the preserved sales' or borrowers' records, I use other sources such as letters, memoirs, and public records, including parish registers, but the transactions from the libraries and the bookshops constitute the core of the

study. Book consumption is the focal point; thus, the consumption of newspapers and other periodicals are only included to the extent that they were available at the three institutions. The consumption of newspaper and other ephemera is a fascinating topic in and of itself, but it represents a different set of media, which would require source materials of a different nature and separate methodological approaches in order to be studied. As for the actual reading experiences of individual book consumers, they are not the focus of the present study; the objective is rather to reconstruct patterns of consumption from the three institutions on a general and – when possible – also on an individual level.

The scope of the study has to a large extent been predicated upon the literary goods available in these three particular institutions. The lion's share of the literature on offer at the two libraries and the bookshop consisted of books in Swedish, a large proportion of which were translated from foreign languages. The Swedish book market was highly dependent on translations, not least when it came to fiction. As Sten Torgerson has shown, a majority of the fiction published in Sweden consisted of translations, mainly from English, French, and German.⁵⁰ When it comes to Gumpert's bookshop, it had close ties to booksellers and publishers in other parts of Scandinavia as well as in Continental Europe. Here, Swedish originals and translations were sold in abundance, alongside a considerable proportion of books in foreign languages.

Source material

Each of the three main source materials used in this study – the sales' and borrowers' ledgers – are rare and contain a wealth of information. Taken together, they represent a unique set of sources, which provide detailed information on reading and readers in different echelons of society.

The archive from Munka-Ljungby is not one of a kind. Numerous parish library archives have been preserved, containing more or less extensive information on library loans. Only a handful have, however, been studied in detail. Most parish libraries were shut down by the turn of the nineteenth century, but quite a few survived as public libraries, and some parish library

50. Sten Torgerson, *Översättningar till svenska av skönlitterär prosa 1866–70, 1896–1900 och 1926–1930* (Kungälv: Göteborgs universitet, 1981), 33.

archives subsequently ended up in municipal and regional archives. Although the archives from only a very small proportion of the parish libraries have been preserved, the large number of parish libraries means that it is possible to reconstruct borrowing patterns from a range of different parish libraries scattered across the country. The choice of studying the library in Munka-Ljungby rather than any other parish library is connected to the size of the book collection, the extensive borrowing activity, and the fact that it was established as a local initiative. Furthermore, it has not been the subject of any study before, and may therefore further the knowledge of the parish libraries as a whole.

There were only about a tenth as many bookshops as parish libraries during the 1860s. Although many of these bookshops survived well into the twentieth century, some becoming big businesses, regrettably only a handful of archives have been preserved to this day, mostly in rather fragmentary condition. Apart from the archive of Gumpert's bookshop in Gothenburg, the archive from C. W. K. Glerup in Lund, Södergren's bookshop in Växjö, Deleen & Co in Stockholm, and Sjöberg's bookshop in Västerås have been preserved to some extent. Not all of these archives contain sales ledgers.⁵¹

The number of commercial lending libraries, finally, was similar to the number of bookshops. Unlike bookshops, however, almost all lending libraries succumbed to the new book market developments during the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. Most lending libraries were small-scale businesses, and were in general rather short-lived. Seemingly, in most cases the lending libraries' borrowers' or members' ledgers as well as any other archival sources have been dispersed.⁵² It has therefore been excruciatingly difficult to study late-nineteenth-century lending libraries. But fortunately, there is at least one notable exception.

The fate of the archival material from Sjöblom's lending library is quite remarkable. After the lending library closed in 1904, Sjöblom's ancillary business, his antiquarian bookshop, lived on and eventually became Sweden's oldest an-

51. Furuland, *Romanen som vardagsvara*, 39; Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 250n; Sven Ola Swärd, "Ett bokhandelsarkiv – C. G. Södergren, 1800-talsbokhandlare i Växjö," *Landsbibliotekets gamla samlingar: om handskrifter och böcker ur Landsbibliotekets i Växjö gamla samlingar*, edited by Jonas Barck (Växjö: Kronobergs läns hembygdsförbund i samarbete med Smålands Museum, 1994) 147–61.

52. Ann-Lis Jeppsson, *Tänkar till salu: Genombrottsidéerna och de kommersiella länbiblioteken* (Göteborg: AB Lundequistska bokhandeln, 1981), 11.

tiquarian bookshop. As a teenager, I worked as a part-time assistant at the antiquarian bookshop, and it was during this time that the archival sources from the lending library came to light. I was emptying an attic storage belonging to the old antiquarian bookshop when I found a number of small stacks with borrowers' receipts. They had remained untouched there for nearly a century, alongside letters and customer catalogues from the lending library. Merely fourteen years old at the time, I did not immediately realise the full potential of the receipts. When the bookshop vacated its original premises in central Lund a few years later, a majority of the stacks of receipts sadly vanished. Out of the original dozen or more that were found in the attic, only three stacks are left. Perhaps, the remaining stacks of receipts have ended up in private hands, but they may just as well have been destroyed. Hopefully, similar sources from other lending libraries will emerge in the future, but as of today, the receipts from Sjöblom's lending library stand out as possibly entirely unique.

The archives from Sjöblom's lending library, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby and Gumpert's bookshop all contain some or all of the following details, including transaction dates: title, name, and address of the customer, and author, title, and price of the book. As the titles or professions of the customers were generally recorded, it has been possible to identify the social strata, and in most cases it has also been possible to classify the books, using Hjalmar Linnström's *Svenskt Boklexikon*, *Svensk Bok-Katalog*, and the National Bibliography Database, Libris.⁵³ When possible, the libraries' and bookshops' sales' and borrowers' records are supplemented by other sources such as memoirs, printed library catalogues and historical accounts. In some cases, I have retrieved data from other publishers and booksellers' archives, e.g. the archives of the publisher C. W. K. Gleerup in Lund and the archive of the Danish publisher Gyldendal in Copenhagen. I have also used information available through public records, for example censuses, estate records, and parish registers.

53. Hjalmar Linnström, *Svenskt boklexikon åren 1830–1865* (Stockholm: Hjalmar Linnströms förlag, 1883–1884); *Svensk bok-katalog för åren 1866–1900* (Stockholm: Svenska bokförläggarföreningen, 1878–1904); libris.kb.se

The Gumpert sales' ledgers

		Colliander, C. A. Företag			
				DEBIT	CREDIT
1886					
Jan	14	1	Julquarten	Prof	1
Sept	13	1	Bod. Familjebok 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103	0-75	7.50
Nov	23	1	Hjertskåden, Boerijes Låg	0-75	7.50
April	6	1	Fyskt Sv. Lelicon	"	3.25
Maj	31	1	Resning och besvärskunnatörel	"	7.-
			1 Sv. Kommunika tioner	"	10.-
Jul	22	1	Lutensk. Allges. m. fi. 1854.	"	6.-
Aug.	9	1	Tidskrift f. hist. No 1886.	"	3.-
	17	1	Lönnegrens Framförbok	"	1.25
					50

Figure 1.1: Excerpt from the sales' ledgers from Gumpert's bookshop listing some of vicar Carl August Colliander's purchases in 1886

Like most major bookshops at the time, Gumpert's bookshop primarily sold books on commission, a system in which publishers would send their new publications to the commissioning bookshop and receive a share of the profit only once the books had been sold. The books remained the property of the publisher until they had been sold, and the publishers set all the prices. Unsold books could be returned to the publisher.⁵⁴

Since most bookshop customers bought books on credit, the bookshop had to keep a record detailing all the purchases. The clerks at Gumpert's bookshop kept the books in meticulous order. In most cases, the purchases were listed in chronological order and each customer had his or her own page in the sales ledgers. The customers' name, profession or title, and residence location were scribbled on top of the page. The Gumpert ledgers are comprised of 48 volumes, one volume per year from 1870 to 1917, each containing between 900 and

54. Bo Peterson, *Brödrarfolk och syskonfejder. Förlag och bokhandel i Norden 1750–2000* (Stockholm: Stockholms universitetsbibliotek, 2002), 7–9; Johan Svedjedal, *Biblioteken och bokmarknaden – från folkskola till e-böcker: Rapport från Svenska Förläggareföreningen* (Vingåker: Svenska Förläggare AB, 2012), 13.

1,200 pages.⁵⁵ They record nearly a million purchases during this period. For the 1879–90 period alone, they total close to 200,000 book purchases, of which around ten per cent have been used in the present study. Any sales figures from Gumpert's bookshop referred to in this study are based on this sample.

Apart from the sales' records, vital parts of the Gumpert archive have been lost. The cashbooks, for example, which chronologically recorded all the day-to-day purchases, including purchases made by cash-paying customers, have unfortunately not been preserved. As Åke Åberg notes, however, it seems to have been the rule that "all of the more serious and frequent book buyers" made their purchases on credit and accordingly had a permanent credit account at the bookshop.⁵⁶ Occasionally, customers with credit accounts also paid in cash, but these purchases were registered alongside their credit purchases. There was no minimum purchase to be given a credit account. Seemingly, all that was required was that one was a returning customer. If a customer stopped making purchases, his or her account was normally cancelled a year later.

Most of the sources preserved from Gumpert's bookshop date from the twentieth century: a large proportion of the older sources seem to have been culled, i.e. destroyed. The surviving archival material from the nineteenth century consists of a few meters of shelving, including accounts detailing transactions, verifications and some correspondence, which in some cases supplement the sales' records. A particularly interesting resource is the private diary of Johan Lundgren, one of the bookshop's most long-standing employees. Lundgren worked at Gumpert's bookshop for over sixty years, starting in 1887, and his diary covers the period from 1883, when he started working as an apprentice at a bookshop in Norrköping, to his death in 1957. Although Lundgren only had a couple of lines at his disposal to capture every day, it still offers valuable glimpses and insights as to the day-to-day atmosphere of the bookshop.

55. The archive of N. J. Gumpert, GLA/C0038:1, Regional State Archives in Gothenburg.

56. Åberg, "Det moderna genombrottet," 54.

The Munka-Ljungby ledgers

14.

66		67		68		69		70	
Menaza 2 delar		Menaza 3 häftet		En fattig Träkens dagbok		Svenska Lyrnen, nio små och Svenska äfventyr (hvar del)		Svenska Lyrnen	
Utg.	Ink.	Utg.	Ink.	Utg.	Ink.	Utg.	Ink.	Utg.	Ink.
117 2/4 78	30 1/2 78	83 2/4 78	24 1/2 78	10 1/2 78	11 1/2 78	22 1/2 78	21 1/2 78	87 1/2 78	33 1/2 78
86 1/2 79	25 1/2 78	84 2 78	28 1/2 78	55 1/2 77	23 1/2 77	36 1/2 77	36 1/2 77	39 1/2 77	13 1/2 77
122 1/2 78	17 1/2 78	117 1/2 78	17 1/2 78	122 1/2 78	17 1/2 78	32 1/2 77	34 1/2 77	5 1/2 77	11 1/2 77
105 3/4 80	13 1/2 78	97 1/2 79	13 1/2 79	128 1/2 79	14 1/2 79	91 1/2 77	14 1/2 77	14 1/2 77	12 1/2 78
34 1/2 80	28 1/2 78	57 1/2 79	22 1/2 79	88 3/4 80	13 1/2 80	12 1/2 78	24 1/2 78	35 1/2 78	14 1/2 78
65 1/2 81	14 1/2 79	7 1/2 79	14 1/2 79	15 1/2 80	17 1/2 80	12 1/2 78	22 1/2 78	22 1/2 78	22 1/2 78
		18 1/2 79	14 1/2 79	41 1/2 80	27 1/2 81	12 1/2 78	3 1/2 78	32 1/2 78	11 1/2 78
		12 1/2 80	17 1/2 80	13 1/2 80	24 1/2 81	11 1/2 78	11 1/2 78	11 1/2 78	11 1/2 79
		12 1/2 80	17 1/2 80	12 1/2 80	24 1/2 81	12 1/2 78	11 1/2 78	76 1/2 79	8 1/2 79
		36 1/2 80	17 1/2 80	22 1/2 80	24 1/2 81	12 1/2 78	11 1/2 78	11 1/2 79	17 1/2 79
		5 1/2 81	26 1/2 81			12 1/2 78	11 1/2 78	11 1/2 79	17 1/2 79

Figure 1.2: Excerpt from a borrowers' ledger from the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, listing the loans of books number 66 to 70, c. 1876–81

The ledgers from the parish library in Munka-Ljungby record some 25,000 loans, covering the years 1870 to 1888 and 1899 to 1903.⁵⁷ The ledger for the years 1889 to 1898 has unfortunately been lost. The library's ledgers are arranged in columns, each book being assigned a column. All loans and returns, including dates, are scribbled below the title. Every loan is recorded with the individual borrower's number rather than his or her name. Although several undated membership lists have been preserved, the fact that most members were given new borrower's numbers a few times in the course of the years has sometimes made it difficult to trace the exact loans of individuals. Hence, the study of this archive has focused primarily on the popularity of books and

57. The archive of the library board of Munka-Ljungby municipality, SE/L018/KA2_108-1, Central Archive of Ängelholm.

genres, based on all available loans in the parish library.

In addition to the ledgers and membership lists, the parish library's minutes of proceedings covering the years 1859 to 1905 have been preserved, as well as a few handwritten and printed catalogues listing the library holdings. The day-to-day events of the library are recorded in the minutes, including the purchase or culling of books, the registration of new library members' and any financial transactions.

The borrowers' receipts from Sjöblom's lending library



Figure 1.3: Two of the remaining stacks with borrowers' receipts from Jacob Albert Sjöblom's commercial lending library in Lund, c. 1882–83

The surviving receipts from Sjöblom's commercial lending library consist of three small stacks with hundreds of small pieces of scrap paper upon which the details of individual loans are scribbled.⁵⁸ The receipts record altogether over 2,800 loans. They span from 1875 to 1885, but the vast majority are from 1882 and 1883. Two thirds of the loans, i.e. about 2,000, are from 1882. The receipts record loans made by borrowers whose surnames start with the letters B, O, P, or S. According to the directory of Lund for 1889, around a fourth of the town's population had surnames starting with one of these letters, which indicates

58. The archive of Jacob Albert Sjöblom, Lund University Library. Additional borrower's receipts are privately owned.

that the total number of loans in 1882 was probably around 8,000.⁵⁹ Given its limited size, all available material has been incorporated into the study.

The popularity of individual titles as well as the reading preferences of individual borrowers have been studied. In addition to the borrowers' receipts, there are a number of supplementary sources. Two customer catalogues from the lending library have been preserved, both of them probably dating from around the mid-to-late 1890s, based on the titles of a few identified customers. One is probably slightly older than the other, but given the fact that there is practically no overlap between them, they have most likely been in use at the same time. Each of the two catalogues lists around 500 customers, and the names are arranged in alphabetical order. It is not possible to determine how many of these customers who were active borrowers. Correspondence to Sjöblom from his customers and family members, consisting of around 200 letters mainly from the late 1880s and the 1890s, also provide a valuable resource. Three acquisitions catalogues detailing who sold books to Sjöblom between 1873 and 1888 as well as in 1895, in addition to which books were sold by Sjöblom, also constitute a useful resource.

Social categorisation model

In most cases, the borrowers' and sales' records as well as the members' records from the two libraries and the bookshop contain the name as well as the title or occupation of the book consumer. We can therefore compare how people acquired reading materials according to their social status. Sometimes details regarding residence location have also been noted, such as street addresses or the names of villages.

In the ledgers from Gumpert's bookshop, the accounts of isolated craftsmen and farmers can be found alongside the accounts of noblemen and wealthy wholesale dealers. In most cases, the titles of the customers have been carefully recorded and nonspecific titles such as *Herr* (Mister) only rarely come up. Nonetheless, the categorisation of customers remains problematic. Apart from the fact that a categorisation may reinforce structures of power, the titles recorded in the ledgers may at times also be misleading or even inaccurate.

59. *Adress-Kalender med fullständig kalender-afdelning för Lunds Stad 1889*, edited by August Collin (Lund: Collin & Rietz, 1889).

When the records are analysed, a picture of a class-based society with strong hierarchies emerges. One aggravating circumstance is that some of the titles gained new meanings over the years. One such example is the frequently used title *fröken*, which refers to an unmarried woman. Until the mid-nineteenth century the term was used primarily to describe unmarried noble women, but over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century the title was no longer reserved for members of the nobility. By 1866, the *fröken*-reform suggested that the term should be used for all unmarried women of the “better classes.” Not until the early twentieth century was the title used for all unmarried women.⁶⁰

The accuracy of the titles varies from archive to archive. In the ledgers from Gumpert’s bookshop, for example, the customers seem to have provided the exact titles themselves, and there are numerous corrections (of misspelled names, etc.) and updated titles, when the customers received a promotion or got married for instance. In the records from the two libraries, the titles were recorded with less accuracy. The library records seem to have been used solely by the management, with the objective of simply identifying who borrowed what. Sometimes a range of different titles are used for one and the same person, for example *yngling* (young man) and *student*, and in a few cases other characteristics are used, for example *juden* (the Jew), or in some cases only a name, presumably for a well-known person.

When we compare the titles listed in the libraries’ and the bookshop’s records with the censuses and parish registers, it is evident that the titles, primarily those from the two libraries, are sometimes inaccurate. In most cases the titles conform rather well to the official records, but they can be quite unspecific. Most customers in the parish library in Munka-Ljungby are only called *bonde* or *lantbrukare* (peasant or farmer) in the library records, but when we locate the same individuals in the censuses, we find titles such as *dräng* (farmhand), *åbo* (copyholder), *torpare* (crofter), *statare* (agricultural worker receiving payment in kind), etc. In most cases I stick to the titles noted in the libraries’ and bookshops’ records, but I use the censuses and other public records to verify the titles, not least when going into detail about a specific book consumer.

60. Catharina Grünbaum, “Jungfruns uppgång och fall,” *Dagens Nyheter*, 19 April 2009.

The standard tripartite social segmentation into working classes, middle classes, and upper classes has been refined and specialised over the years. Some sociological models are based on profession, others on education. Most models have been developed to study a specific part of society, often at a given time. In a Swedish context, the recent decades have seen an increasing interest in society's lower classes, in stark contrast to earlier times, when the focus was rather on the elites. Donald Broady and Mikael Palme developed one of the most recent models for Swedish conditions. It is quite sophisticated and contains 33 different social categories.⁶¹ However, in the present study, in which the number of titles and professions is rather limited, a modified version of Sten Carlsson's model provides a better fit for the available data.⁶²

Table 1.1: Modified version of Sten Carlsson's model of social classification
Segments marked by () have been added in order to accommodate the needs of the present study*

Customer group	Definition	Profession / title / institution
The top echelon	Those who hold the best financial position	Directors, businessmen, wholesalers, factory owners, ship-owners, estate owners, large property owners
Officials	Academically educated officials in the private or public sector	Clergymen, law clerks, university teachers, engineers, farm foremen, forest officers, commissioned officers
Civil servants/clerks	Professionals in the public or private sector	Post-office employees, customs officers, elementary school teachers, non-commissioned officers, bailiffs, bank clerks, bookkeepers, office workers, shop assistants
Students/youth*		University students, upper secondary school pupils, schoolchildren, unemployed youth

61. Mikael Börjesson, "Om att klassificera sociala grupper. Några exempel," in *Fältanteckningar: Utbildnings- och kultursociologiska texter tillägnade Donald Broady*, edited by Mikael Börjesson, Ingrid Heyman, Monica Langerth Zetterman, Esbjörn Larsson, Ida Lidegran, and Mikael Palme (Uppsala: Forskningsgruppen för utbildnings- och kultursociologi, 2006), 249–258 (255).

62. Sten Carlsson, *Svensk ståndscirkulation 1680–1950* (Uppsala: J. A. Lindblads förlag: Uppsala 1950), 113–15.

Small business owners		Retailers, master craftsmen
Peasantry		Land-owning peasants, land owners
Landless peasants		Crofters, cottars, soldiers, lodgers, farmhands, <i>statare</i>
Labourers		Industrial workers, craftsmen
Women*		Married and unmarried women as well as professionally working women
Institutions*	Private and public institutions	Schools, companies, authorities

Carlsson studied social mobility in Sweden from 1680 to 1950 and developed a model that could be applied on a temporally and socially wide spectrum.⁶³ The structure is relatively uncomplicated and flexible, which makes it equally suitable for studying bourgeoisie as well as peasants.

The standard model consists of seven different categories, stretching from large business owners to landless peasants and industrial workers. In relation to the size of these groups, the lower classes are defined with rather broad strokes, but the basic division of peasants into landowning and landless peasants is particularly useful, not least when studying the clientele of the parish library. While Carlsson's model is based chiefly on the profession of working men, it has been necessary to supplement it with a number of additional categories: firstly, a category consisting of students, youth and children; secondly, a category for female customers; and thirdly and lastly, a category for companies, schools, and other institutions (see table above). The ambition of my categorisation of the customers is to bring together groups of people that are "characterized by a certain amount of homogeneity"⁶⁴ in order to clarify the results and to facilitate comparison with other studies.

Genre classification and book title identification

The titles noted in the library catalogues, particularly the handwritten lists, are often incomplete, illegible or at times deceptive. Sometimes, only the name of the author has been noted. Hence, some books have remained unidentified.

63. Börjesson, "Om att klassificera sociala grupper," 254–55.

64. Ingvar Elmroth, *Nyrekrytering till de högre ämbetena 1720–1809: En socialhistorisk studie* (Lund: Gleerups förlag, 1962), 226.

Throughout the dissertation, numerous book titles are listed. A majority of the books referred to consist of literary works originally published in Swedish, or of Swedish translations of foreign books. When applicable, the English title is written after the Swedish title in italics, within parentheses, but only the first time the book is mentioned, after the year of publication. For example: *Röda rummet* (1879; *The Red Room*). In the cases in which no English translation has been published, when the argument draws upon the wording of the title, I have translated the title myself, and added the translated English title within parentheses. For example: *Framåt* (1886–89; Forward). The titles of reference literature have normally not been translated. When it comes to books originally published in English, French, or German, the title of the Swedish translation is written first, followed by the original title within parentheses, unless it is a copy in the original language that it refers to, or if the Swedish translation bears the same title as the original version.

Categorising books into genres is challenging. One and the same book may fit into several categories, and the boundaries between genres may be vague or fluid. A rudimentary categorisation of the books in the three literary institutions is nevertheless necessary. In the case of the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, a library catalogue was printed in 1883, and here the books are sorted into a number of categories, entitled “Religious works,” “Agriculture,” “History,” “Geography,” “Nature-Study,” “Housekeeping and Economics,” “Biographies and Stories,” “Somewhat Romanticised Stories,” “Periodicals,” and “Miscellanies.” I have corrected obvious errors but, as far as possible, I have tried to keep to the libraries’ original categorisation, as it gives hints about the library authorities’ intentions. As for Sjöblom, he also issued library catalogues, and here he had the books divided into only two categories: novels, and miscellanies. The latter section was very small, and the library held nearly exclusively fiction. Hence, it has not been necessary to categorise the books in Sjöblom’s library.

Categorising the books sold from Gumpert’s bookshop is far more complex. Here the number of titles is much greater than at the libraries, and the literature is more diverse. Just like any other classification of empirical findings, the categorisation employed in the present study has its inevitable shortcomings

and is arbitrary to a certain extent.⁶⁵ The purpose of categorising is simply to give an overview of the books sold at the bookshop. The genre classification I have employed is loosely built on the categorisation in *Svensk Bok-Katalog*. The genre categorisation used in Libris has been used as a supplementary source. The classification used in the Swedish National Bibliography is quite sophisticated and more specialised than what has been deemed necessary for the present study. Hence, my categorisation of the books sold in Gumpert's bookshop is coarser. It consists of fifteen categories of books, for example "Fiction," "Magazines," "Textbooks," "Professional literature," etc. In some cases it has been more convenient to merge adjacent genres, especially when sales were limited. Hence I have used the combined categories of "Religion and Philosophy," "Children's books and Picture books," and "Travel books, Geography, and Maps."

The book and the reader: Theoretical approaches

Book history and the sociology of literature

Leslie Howsam has mapped the relation between the various academic disciplines studying the history of books and print culture in a disciplinary triangle, where the principal subjects, History, Bibliography, and Literature occupy the three corners. Studies of readers and books can be placed somewhere along the lines between these three main points of departure. Most studies of readers, readership, and the sociology of texts would for example be situated somewhere between Literature and Bibliography, while the better part of studies of the book trade and publishing history would reside between History and Bibliography.⁶⁶ In a Swedish context, this division somewhat resembles the positioning of the two main academic disciplines studying the history of books and reading: book history and the sociology of literature. The present study, which aspires to address readers and book consumption as well as the

65. Mikael Börjesson, *Diskurser och konstruktioner: en sorts metodbok* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2003), 103–04.

66. Leslie Howsam, *An Orientation to Studies in Book and Print Culture* (Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 16–27.

development of the book market during the late nineteenth century, sits at the intersection of these two traditions.

In Sweden, the sociology of literature has a particularly strong foothold, with a long-standing tradition of studying groups of readers and the connection between literature and societal changes.⁶⁷ In the words of Lars Furuland, one of the pioneers in the field of the sociology of literature in Sweden, literary sociologists should aspire to “study the interaction between society and literature and to put literature in its reception context.”⁶⁸ According to Johan Svedjedal, “[t]he aim of sociology of literature is to analyse the whole ‘literary process,’” and more specifically the “relationship between fiction and society.” Studies within the field of sociology of literature should engage in the following three areas of research: society in literature, literature in society, or the field of literature itself. The first category includes studies of how society is depicted within literature; the second category includes studies of novels that influence opinions or bring about political change or development; the third category includes studies of the book market, history of publishing or individual authors, etc.⁶⁹ To a large extent, book history and the sociology of literature address similar research areas, and the amount of overlap is considerable. Arguably, much of book history scholarship fits rather nicely within the last category of the sociology of literature, consisting of studies of the literary society.

It is nonetheless possible to make some distinctions between the two disciplines. Book history focuses primarily on issues such as the book market and the materiality of books, whereas the sociology of literature often engages in literary analysis.⁷⁰ In terms of genre, the two fields also have different approaches. Traditionally, studies conducted within the sociology of literature have had an inclination to focus on the role of fiction more than any other

67. Magdalena Gram, “Bokhistoria som forskningsfält: var står vi och vart går vi?,” *Biblis* 45 (2009) 32–38 (33).

68. Lars Furuland, “Litteratur och samhälle: Om litteratursociologin och dess forskningsfält” in *Litteratursociologi: Texter om litteratur och samhälle*, edited by Johan Svedjedal (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2012), 18.

69. Johan Svedjedal, “Det litteratursociologiska perspektivet. Om en forskningstradition och dess grundantaganden” in *Litteratursociologi: Texter om litteratur och samhälle*, edited by Johan Svedjedal (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2012), 78–80.

70. Furuland, “Litteratur och samhälle,” 20.

genre.⁷¹ In contrast, book history has a somewhat wider scope in the genres it studies, which is more in line with the present study. I consider it crucial to put the consumption of fiction into perspective. It is important to see fiction as one of several parts of a literary spectrum, consisting of multiple genres, all of which are equally deserving of our attention. It was not until the nineteenth century that fiction came within the reach of most members of society and even by the end of the century it was associated with a certain level of exclusivity, unlike, for example, textbooks or religious writings. If we want to achieve a broad view of book consumption, encompassing all segments of society, we cannot afford to limit ourselves to certain genres.

Book history is a vigorously interdisciplinary field. Robert Darnton has described it somewhat loosely as “the social and cultural history of communication by print.”⁷² By proposing a model for studying the history of the book, Darnton has helped to define and unify the academic discipline of book history.⁷³ The model, entitled the “communications circuit,” outlines the processes by which books are produced, disseminated, and consumed while mapping the relationship between texts and the literary marketplace.⁷⁴ For a book historian, the book as a physical object is the natural point of departure, and the material aspects of the book are considered essential to achieve a proper understanding of reading and the reception of literature. Texts, regardless of format, shape and media, are historically, socially, and materially conditioned, and their physical appearances affect how they are perceived and understood.⁷⁵ “[W]hen we read books, ... we read the physicality or materiality of the book as well as and in relation to the text itself.”⁷⁶ In addressing issues regarding the physical aspects of the books that were available in the libraries and in the bookshop, it is important to always keep these aspects in mind. Even a seemingly insignificant

71. Gram, “Bokhistoria som forskningsfält,” 33.

72. Robert Darnton, “What is the history of books?” in *Daedalus*, vol. III, no 3, 1982, 65–83 (65).

73. Tore Rem, “Innledning” in *Bokhistorie*, edited by Tore Rem (Trondheim: Gyldendal 2003) 11–42 (17).

74. Darnton, “What is the history of books?,” 67–69.

75. D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 12–13; Rem, “Innledning,” 30–31.

76. Michele Moylan and Lane Stiles, “Introduction” in *Reading Books: Essays on the Material Text and Literature in America*, edited by Michele Moylan and Lane Stiles (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 1–15 (2).

material aspect such as the choice of type for an edition of a certain book, be it blackletter or antiqua, may have had far-reaching implications for its reception, and can reveal details about its intended audience, as shown by Tore Rem.⁷⁷

The history of reading

The present study focuses mainly on the final stage of Darnton's communications circuit: the reader.⁷⁸ For centuries, reading has constituted an intimate and important part of our lives, and it has affected, and affects, the ways we encounter and perceive the world and our fellow humans. As William St Clair argues in his study of reading in Britain during the Romantic period, it could even help "to shape mentalities and to determine the fate of the nation."⁷⁹ For people who lived and died without seeing much of the world, books could act as a gateway to an unknown universe, allowing them to see and experience places, characters, and events they would otherwise only have dreamt of; reading could, in the words of Jonathan Rose, "expand the range of [their] imagination."⁸⁰ Apart from what we can learn from censuses, parish registers, and other official records, we know only very little regarding the lives of ordinary people of times past. Information about what people read may however, as historians of American reading Frank Felsenstein and James J. Connolly have put it, "recover a small but significant part of [their] intellectual lives."⁸¹

The history of reading is one of the most compelling and vibrant branches of book history, but also one of the most challenging.⁸² By its very nature, read-

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77. Tore Rem, "Bjørnson, bønder og lesning: Om gotiske meningsdannelser," *Edda* vol. 92, no. 3 (2005), 245–255.
78. When focusing on a single stage of the communication circuit it is, however, important not to lose sight of the other stages of the book's life cycle, as Altick points out. Richard D. Altick, *A Little Bit of Luck: The Making of an Adventurous Scholar* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2002), 168.
79. William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1.
80. Jonathan Rose, "Rereading the English Common Reader: A Preface to History of Audiences," in *Journal of the History of Ideas* vol. 53:1 (Jan–Mar 1992), 47–70 (61).
81. Frank Felsenstein and James J. Connolly, *What Middletown Read: Print Culture in an American Small City* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015), 1.
82. Gunilla Törnqvall, *Botaniska bilder till allmänheten: om utgivningen av Carl Lindmans bilder ur Nordens flora* (Stockholm: Bokförlaget Atlantis, 2013), 217–18; Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker, "A New Model for the Study of the Book" in *The Book History Reader*, edited by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (London and New York:

ing is elusive, and the consumption of the books “remains the most difficult stage to study in the circuit,” as Darnton has pointed out.⁸³ In the vast majority of cases we are unable to know if the experience of reading a certain book evoked feelings of inspiration, curiosity or dislike, or if the book remained unopened on a shelf: most traces of reading have been lost. “The modern reading public is extremely difficult to define. Sources of information much better than the reports on public libraries are unavailable; authors and their texts are easier to document than their anonymous readers,” as James Smith Allen remarks.⁸⁴ Darnton argues that we simply have to make the most of the sources we have.⁸⁵ Influential texts by Richard Altick, Rudolf Schenda,⁸⁶ Rolf Engelsing,⁸⁷ Alberto Manguel,⁸⁸ Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier,⁸⁹ and William St Clair,⁹⁰ to name but a few, have addressed reading during the nineteenth century and outlined the field in a predominantly European perspective. Darnton’s article “First Steps Toward a History of Reading” (1986) was something of a stepping-stone for a new generation of historians of reading, focusing increasingly on the process of reading and, since then, the subject has seen great development and specialisation. Almost thirty years later, when a revised edition of his article was published, Darnton pointed out that the “first steps” had turned into “something of a stampede.”⁹¹

As Martyn Lyons has shown in his inspiring *A History of Reading and Writing*, it is both possible and desirable to write history “from the standpoint of

Routledge, 2006), 47–65 (58–60); Robert Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourette* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 154–87.

83. Darnton, “What is the history of books?,” 74.
84. James Smith Allen, *In The Public Eye: A History of Reading in Modern France 1800–1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 70.
85. Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourette*, 177.
86. Rudolf Schenda, *Volk ohne Buch: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte der populären Lesestoffe* (Nördlingen: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1977).
87. Rolf Engelsing, *Der Bürger als Leser* (Stuttgart: Metzlersche Verlagsbuchh., 1974).
88. Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading* (London: Harper Collins, 1996).
89. *A History of Reading in the West*, edited by Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Cambridge: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).
90. St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
91. Robert Darnton, “First Steps Toward a History of Reading: Preface” in *Australian Journal of French Studies*, vol. 51, No. 2/3 (2014), 152–177 (152).

the reader,” without necessarily neglecting contextual and underlying factors.⁹² Jonathan Rose has presented an approach to the history of reading which he coined a “history of audiences.” A history of audiences would “first define a mass audience, then determine its cultural diet, and ultimately measure the collective response of that audience.”⁹³ The history of audiences also encompasses a shift of focus from that of the professional reader to the common reader.⁹⁴ To some extent, the history of audiences can be seen as a response to the theoretical reader-response approaches to the history of reading, promoted by Wolfgang Iser and others.⁹⁵ As Heidi Brayman Hackel has pointed out, literary scholars and other theorists “often ignore actual readers in favour of theoretical constructs.”⁹⁶ Rather than speculating in terms of potential or implied readers, Rose advocates for cautiousness and recommends balancing results from different kinds of sources: the history of reading should first and foremost be based on studies of actual, historical readers, using solid empirical evidence. Marginalia, diaries, memoirs and interviews are examples of sources that can sometimes reveal individual readers’ experiences of a certain text.

Over the years, numerous studies have ventured into the field outlined by Darnton and Rose. Using source materials that have been overseen or were thought to have been lost, these studies may address questions regarding readers and reading, which previously have been “considered unanswerable.”⁹⁷ Studies such as these can also be seen as part of a general increase of the interest in the history of reading, not least thanks to award-winning authors like Alberto Manguel and Steven Roger Fischer, who have helped in popularising the field.⁹⁸

92. Lyons, *A History of Reading and Writing*, 1.

93. Rose, “Rereading the English Common Reader,” 51. The article was written as a follow-up on Richard D. Altick’s pioneering *The English Common Reader* (1957)

94. Rem, “Innledning,” 37–38.

95. Jonathan Rose, “Altick’s Map: The New Historiography of the Common Reader” in *The History of Reading volume 3 Methods, Strategies, Tactics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 18.

96. Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge, New York et. al.: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6. Quoted from Rose, “Altick’s Map,” 18.

97. Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 1.

98. Rose, “Altick’s Map,” 19–22; Pamela Schultz Nybacka, *Bookonomy: The Consumption Prac-*

Today, interest in the history of reading is arguably greater than ever before. *The History of Reading* (2011) in three volumes, edited by Shafquat Towheed, W. R. Owens, and Rosalind Crone, offers an excellent overview of the scholarly development of the field, including theoretical and methodological approaches and challenges. In recent years, several large-scale digital projects have been launched. The *Reading Experience Database 1450–1945*, hosted by the Open University, is a particularly valuable resource, containing tens of thousands of searchable entries of reading experiences.⁹⁹ The *What Middletown Read* project is another remarkable resource.¹⁰⁰ The database consists of digitised borrowers' records from the public library in Muncie, Indiana. The records cover the years 1891–92 and 1894–1902 and contain over 180,000 loans. A third example is the *City Readers* project based on the New York Society Library.¹⁰¹ This database contains around 100,000 loans from the years 1789 to 1805, all made fully accessible.

Book consumption and the history of literature

In recent years, studies conducted within the history of reading have moved increasingly towards addressing the very act and process of reading.¹⁰² Although I will briefly touch upon issues such as reading experiences, the present study is not as much a study of individuals' interactions with certain texts as it is a study of book consumption on a more general level.

The main sources consist of borrowing and sales ledgers and receipts, which record book consumption at a great level of detail. They list sales or loans of books, but they do not cover the act of reading. Indeed, it is often hard to prove exactly who read the books, or even if the books were read at all. I am therefore deliberately cautious when using the terms “book consumption” and “book consumers” and not only “reading” and “readers.” By “book consumption” I

tice and Value of Book Reading (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2011), 23.

99. <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/RED/>

100. <http://www.bsu.edu/libraries/wmr/> The database is supplemented by Felsenstein and Connolly's book, *What Middletown Read* (2015).

101. <http://cityreaders.nysoclib.org/>

102. James Raven, “New reading histories, print culture and the identification of change: the case of eighteenth-century England,” in *Social History* vol. 23:3 (1998) 268–87 (268); Rose, “Rereading the English Common Reader,” 47; Mats Dolatkah, *Det läsande barnet: Minnen av läspraktiker, 1900–1940* (Borås: Valfrid, 2011) 32–34.

refer to the act of buying, borrowing and/or reading a book, and my intention is not to enter into discussions regarding consumption in a wider sense, or to see the consumption of books merely through “economical lenses,” as Paula Schultz Nybacka puts it.¹⁰³

The use of “book consumption” should serve as a reminder that our knowledge of the actual reading experience has its limits. Sometimes it is beyond doubt that the books really were read, for example when we see clear consumption patterns, with several books by a certain author, or books of a certain genre, or multiple parts in a series, being borrowed or bought by the same customer or via the same account. Occasionally, I also make use of sources that allow a glimpse into certain readers’ relation to specific texts, such as letters and memoirs – what Jacques Presser has called “egodocuments.”¹⁰⁴ When tracing reading, it is important to take all sources into account, and the analysis of borrowers’ and sales’ ledgers can provide valuable clues as to how books were consumed and by whom, and further allow the study of past audiences and the reconstruction of general patterns of book consumption.¹⁰⁵

Gunnar Hansson has challenged and criticised literary history formation and the canonization process in Sweden. Although the present work has only very modest aspirations of revising established literary history, Hansson’s theories and perspectives have constituted an important source of inspiration. Hansson studied how literary history is created, specifically in connection to the reader. Can we create a credible literary history, while at the same time dismissing the role of reader, Hansson asks. The answer, of course, is no. Based on the ideas of for example Hans Robert Jauss, I. A. Richards, and David Perkins, Hansson showed that every history of literature is just one of many possible versions, and that the reception of literature is a vital but often overseen part of history of literature.¹⁰⁶ By comparing the print runs and sales figures for certain authors to the amount of attention they are given in literary reference works, Hansson was able to show that there is often a severe discrepancy be-

103. Schultz Nybacka, *Bookonomy*, 26.

104. *Egodocuments and History: Autobiographical Writing in its social context since the Middle Ages*, edited by Rudolf Dekker (Hilversum: Publicaties van de Faculteit der Historische en Kunstwetenschappen, 2002), 7, 62–63.

105. Rose, “Altick’s Map,” 19; Allen, *In the Public Eye*, 17.

106. Gunnar Hansson, *Den möjliga litteraturhistorien* (Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag, 1995),

tween the notion of a popular writer, and a future literary canonization. Some of the best-selling authors receive no recognition at all. The reader, Hansson concluded, is the appropriate point of departure for conducting a study of the history of literature. Any history of literature neglecting the role of the reader will inevitably remain imperfect.¹⁰⁷ Hallingberg is of the same mind, and he states that literary history, “[w]ith its focus on modern literature ... has drawn narrow limits.”¹⁰⁸

Roger Escarpit has highlighted the existence of two parallel literary systems, one “educated” and one “popular.”¹⁰⁹ To a large extent, the history of literature has been affected by what has been perceived as “good” or “bad” literature, thus depending on a highly subjective assessment. Furthermore, throughout history it has chiefly been the educated elites who have invented and consecrated the notion of popular culture, as Roger Chartier has pointed out.¹¹⁰

Previous research

In a Swedish context, several studies have explored the subject of readers and reading during the nineteenth century. Some of the more well-known examples include Elisabeth Tykesson’s book on the so-called *Räuberroman* (robber novel) in Sweden, *Rövarromanen och dess hjälte i 1800-talets svenska folkläsning* (1942); Eric Johannesson’s study of family magazines from 1850 to 1880, *Den läsande familjen: familjetidskriften i Sverige 1850–1880* (1980); Åke Åberg’s study of provincial literary culture between 1790 and 1850, *Västerås mellan Kellgren och Onkel Adam: Studier i provinsens litterära villkor och system* (1987); Margareta Björkman’s dissertation on commercial lending libraries in Stockholm, *Läsarnas nöje: kommersiella lånbibliotek i Stockholm 1783–*

107. Gunnar Hansson, “Läsarnas litteraturhistoria – när, hur och varför?” in *Litteratursociologi: Texter om litteratur och samhälle*, edited by Johan Svedjedal (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2012), 431–39.

108. Hallingberg, *Läsarna*, 340.

109. Robert Escarpit, *Litteratursociologi* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1970), 86–102.

110. Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: texts, performances, and audiences from codex to computer* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Philadelphia Press: 1995), 83.

1809 (1992); Gunnar Hansson's reader-approach to the history of literature, *Den möjliga litteraturhistorien* (1995); Eva-Helen Ulvros' study of bourgeois women in southern Sweden from 1790 to 1870, *Fruar och mamseller: Kvinnor inom sydsvensk borgerlighet 1790–1870* (1996); Marion Leffler's study of class formation and library loans in Lund and Helsingborg from 1860 to 1901, *Böcker, Bildning, Makt: arbetare, borgare och bildningens roll i klassformeringen i Lund och Helsingborg 1860–1901* (1999); Hanna Östholm's dissertation on reading societies, *Litteraturens uppodling: Läsesällskap och litteraturkritik som politisk strategi vid sekelskiftet 1800* (2000), as well as articles by Johan Jarlbrink, Gunnel Furuland, Sven Ola Swärd and others.

Only some of these studies are based on source materials that can link the consumption of books to specific individuals, making it possible to study actual historical readers. Furthermore, equally few of these studies cover the time of the Modern Breakthrough. One exception is Leffler's dissertation, which constitutes a very interesting study of comparative relevance for the present dissertation. It covers the time of the Modern Breakthrough and focuses on book culture and library loans in Lund and Helsingborg. In addition, there are a few recent Swedish dissertations studying reading in Sweden, for example Mats Dolatkhan's dissertation on children's reading practices, *Det läsande barnet: Minnen av läspraktiker 1900–1940* (2011), and Pamela Schultz Nybacka's *Bookonomy: The Consumption Practice and Value of Book Reading* (2011). Both of these dissertations deal chiefly with a later period, but constitute interesting and inspiring supplementary sources.

The reception of the literature of the Modern Breakthrough among its contemporary domestic audience is of particular interest to the present study. The 1880s are one of the most closely studied periods in Swedish cultural and literary history. The vast body of research includes author biographies, articles, monographs, anthologies and seminar reports; David Gedin has called it practically "insurmountable."^{III} The readers and the book consumption during this period have, however, seemingly been difficult to pinpoint. In most cases, the subject has been given only passing attention.

Gunnar Ahlström comes to the conclusion in his *Det moderna genombrottet i Nordens litteratur* (The Modern Breakthrough in Nordic literature) that the

III. Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 26.

ideas of the Modern Breakthrough managed to find supporters only among “isolated readers and smaller groups of sympathizers.”¹¹² Ahlström’s study, published in 1947, which has been called a “definitive and enduring study,” is one of the first and most influential studies of the Modern Breakthrough.¹¹³ In his celebrated study of the literature of the 1880s and 1890s, *Från åttital till nittital* (1953; From the Eighties to the Nineties), Karl-Erik Lundevall builds his argument on authors’ royalties, size of editions and newspaper reviews, and manages to add nuance to Ahlström’s conclusions regarding reception. But he is not able to draw any substantial conclusions regarding the audience of the Modern Breakthrough: “the interesting question regarding the audience must unfortunately be left unanswered; it would require a far too extensive separate study.”¹¹⁴ In Per Arne Tjäder’s study of the literary movement of the 1880s, *“Det unga Sverige”: åttitalsrörelse och genombrottsepok* (1982), the focus is on the self-awareness of the authors of the literary movement and on textual analysis. The subject of the audience and readers is not covered to any greater extent.

Ann-Lis Jeppsson studied commercial lending libraries and their role in disseminating the ideas of the Modern Breakthrough in her dissertation *Tankar till salu: genombrottsidéerna och de kommersiella lånbiblioteken* (1981). She devoted one of four chapters to discussing the clientele of the lending libraries, but claimed that “regrettably, no borrowers’ catalogues have been preserved, which could have been able to provide reliable information about those who frequented the [commercial lending] libraries.”¹¹⁵ In his dissertation, *Fältets herrar: framväxten av en modern författarroll: artonhundraåttitalet* (2004), David Gedin analyses the emerging role of the author in Sweden during the 1880s. Gedin describes the role of the author and the relation between the literature and contemporary society and further dedicates one chapter to women’s reading. Åke Åberg’s article “‘Det moderna genombrottet’ i svensk landsort” published in *Samlaren* in 1995, is one of very few attempts at studying the contemporary reception of the Modern Breakthrough literature, by

112. Gunnar Ahlström, *Det moderna genombrottet i Nordens litteratur* (Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundets bokförlag, 1947), 425.

113. Michael Robinson, *An International Annotated Bibliography of Strindberg Studies 1870–2005* vol. 1: General studies (London: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 2008), 324.

114. Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 191.

115. Jeppsson, *Tankar till salu*, 11.

addressing readers and reading in Sweden during the 1880s. The study is based on preserved sales' records from C. M. Sjöberg's bookshop in Västerås, and serves as an indispensable comparative resource.¹¹⁶

In many cases, the decision to leave out the subject of the audience and readers comes down to a lack of available information. "The sources fail us," as Sten Torgerson has put it.¹¹⁷ Similar arguments are heard from most scholars who have studied the Swedish book market and literature of the nineteenth century; most find it too complicated or altogether impossible to track audiences and individual readers. Sven Rinman states that "(i)t would be a very difficult but tempting task to follow the trail of the readers."¹¹⁸ Rinman also states that, regrettably, "we have only vague and sporadic information to rely on ... Possibly, some results could be reached through tedious and time-consuming processing of preserved lending library catalogues, antiquarian bookshops and private collections. Virtually all publishers' and booksellers' archives with preserved sales figures have been lost."¹¹⁹ Gunnel Furuland writes that "the last stage of the literary process is difficult to reach."¹²⁰ Eric Johannesson states that the actual reading masses cannot be studied and that we have to rely on "more or less educated guesswork" if we want to study the consumption of family magazines.¹²¹ Sven Møller Kristensen asks, "(n)ow, who were the readers of this mass of literature? Unfortunately, it cannot be determined with any scientific certainty."¹²² Johan Svedjedal, finally, also notes that a lack of sources makes it difficult to have a closer look at reading groups; "... it would require preserved customer records from bookshops and borrowers' ledgers from libraries."¹²³ The same arguments come up in additional studies.¹²⁴ The

116. Åberg, "Det moderna genombrottet," 52.

117. Sten Torgerson, *J. F. Hallmans lånebibliotek i Uddevalla* (Göteborg: Institutionen för litteratur, idéhistoria och religion, Göteborgs universitet, 2011), 43.

118. Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 448.

119. *Ibid.* 249–50.

120. Furuland, *Romanen som vardagsvara*, 109.

121. Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 41, 59.

122. Sven Møller Kristensen, *Digteren og samfundet i Danmark i det 19. Aarhundrede*. II. Del Naturalismen 1870–1914 (København: Athenæum, 1945), 173.

123. Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle*, 35, see also 45.

124. Margareta Björkman, *Läsarnas nöje: kommersiella länbibliotek i Stockholm 1783–1809* (Uppsala: Avdelningen för litteratursociologi och litteraturvetenskap, 1992), 397–404; Furuland, *Romanen som vardagsvara*, 109.

present study, based on rich and varied source materials from the 1880s from three different literary institutions, is likely to add a missing piece of the puzzle to the history of reading and the readers during the 1880s, and to furthermore contextualize the history of the Modern Breakthrough.

Numerous prominent studies have been devoted to the nineteenth-century Swedish book market, each of them covering specific elements and sections of the literary circuit. I will mention only a few of the most important for the present study. Sven Rinman's *Studier i svensk bokhandel: Svenska bokförläggareföreningen 1843–1887* (1951) and Johan Svedjedal's *Bokens samhälle: Svenska bokförläggareföreningen och svensk bokmarknad 1887–1943* (1993) both focus on the Swedish Publishers' Association and constitute excellent studies of the Swedish book market. Bo Peterson has contributed information on the role of the publisher during the nineteenth century in his books *Boktryckaren som förläggare: Förlagsfunktion och utgivningspolitik hos P. A. Norstedt & Söner 1879–1910* (1993) and *Välja & sälja: om bokförläggarens nya roll under 1800-talet* (2003). Gunnel Furuland has written about the book market and the publishing industry in Sweden between 1833 and 1851, focusing on serialized fiction, in her dissertation *Romanen som vardagsvara: förläggare, författare och skönlitterära häftesserier i Sverige 1833–1851 från Lars Johan Hierta till Albert Bonnier* (2007). Kristina Lundblad's dissertation *Om betydelsen av böckers utseende* (2010), published in English translation as *Bound to be modern* (2015), focuses on Swedish cloth bindings and material culture from 1840 to 1914, and also addresses the development and modernisation of the Swedish book market. Additional information can be found in K. O. Bonnier's voluminous *Bonniers – en bokhandlarefamilj* (1930–56) and Per I. Gedin's *Litteraturens örtagårdsmästare* (2003).

Studies focusing specifically on commercial lending libraries, parish libraries, and bookshops are of particular importance to the present study. Ann-Lis Jeppsson, Margareta Björkman, and Sten Torgerson have published books on commercial lending libraries. Jeppsson studied lending libraries in Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö during the Modern Breakthrough, their printed library catalogues in particular. Björkman's dissertation covered the earlier history of commercial lending libraries, focusing on libraries in Stockholm between 1783 and 1809. Torgerson wrote the paper *J. F. Hallmans lånbibliotek i Uddevalla* (2011) about a commercial lending library in the provincial town

of Uddevalla during the period stretching from 1838 to 1890. Jonas Barck has also written an interesting article on Wacklin's commercial lending library in Växjö.¹²⁵ None of these studies, however, are based on loans from lending libraries during the late nineteenth century, and thus, the present dissertation, with its unique primary source material from Sjöblom's lending library, can fill an important gap.

Nils-Åke Sjösten's dissertation on parish libraries as a mean of education, *Sockenbiblioteket – ett folkbildningsinstrument i 1870-talets Sverige: en studie av folkskoleinspektionens bildningssyn i relation till sockenbiblioteken och den tillgängliga litteraturen* (1993), is so far the most comprehensive study of Swedish parish libraries. Bodil Berg published an article on the parish library in Svedvi, with a particular focus on library holdings and loans between 1886 and 1890, which also serves as a comparative resource for the present study. In addition, a number of essays and articles concerning parish libraries have been published by students of the Swedish School of Library and Information Science in Borås, most of them under the supervision of Åke Åberg. Some of these studies also focus on parish library loans, for example Göran Gynnerstedt's study of the parish library in Norra Solberga and Catherine Uhrbom's study of the parish library in Norn.¹²⁶ When it comes to the history of Swedish bookshops, the studies by Rinman, Svedjedal, and Peterson cover vital aspects of this field. A number of comprehensive studies of individual bookshops also provide valuable resources. Möller's book on Lindstedt's bookshop in Lund, G. M. Silfverstolpe's history of Fritze's bookshop in Stockholm, Mårtensson's book on Glerups bookshop in Lund, and Karlsson and Elofsson's book on Hübinette's bookshop in Östersund, are some of the most notable examples.¹²⁷ Claes Krantz's study of Gumpert's bookshop is naturally of particular impor-

125. Jonas Barck, "Ett lånebibliotek i Växjö" in *Landsbibliotekets gamla samlingar: om handskrift-er och böcker ur Landsbibliotekets i Växjö gamla samlingar*, edited by Jonas Barck (Växjö: Kronobergs läns hembygdsförbund i samarbete med Smålands Museum, 1994) 175–87.

126. Both published in *Biblioteksstuderande skriver bibliotekshistoria*, edited by Åke Åberg (Kungälv: Skrifter från Högskolan i Borås, 1989).

127. Bert Möller, *En gammal bokhandel. Aktiebolaget Ph. Lindstedts universitetsbokhandel i Lund* (Lund: Ph. Lindstedt, 1933); Gunnar Mascoll Silfverstolpe, *Fritzes 1837–1937: minnesskrift, på uppdrag av C.E. Fritzes Kungl. hovbokhandel* (Stockholm: Fritzes, 1938); *Glerups 150 år*, edited by Anders W. Mårtensson (Lund: Glerups univ.-bokh., 1975); *Hübinettes 150 år: en bok om länets äldsta bokhandel*, edited by Stigolov Elofsson and Berndt Karlsson (Östersund: Hübinettes bokhandel, 1998).

tance to the present study. Studies based on bookshop sales are very sparse; possibly Åberg's article is the only existing study to be as comprehensive. Here is in other words yet another area on which the present study will seek to shed some welcome new light.

A number of studies of reading experiences and reading practices have shown that the habit of reading aloud in Sweden still prospered during the nineteenth century, alongside silent reading.¹²⁸ Eric Johannesson argues that the persistent tradition of what he calls "household reading," where the *pater-familias* read aloud to all members of the household, including servants and maids – in line with the Lutheran "Hausandacht" – gave way to a more personal and intimate "family reading" during the mid-nineteenth century, alongside the emergence of the bourgeois family.¹²⁹ When studying the consumption of books, it is important to keep these issues in mind. Cautiousness is advised, especially in cases in which the entire family or household used a single account. It may, in many cases, be more fruitful to think in terms of household or family consumption rather than the reading habits of individuals.¹³⁰

The Scandinavian Moment in World Literature

The present thesis is part of a research project studying the Modern Break-through, entitled *The Scandinavian Moment in World Literature* (SCANMO).¹³¹ SCANMO focuses on how a peripheral literature arose in the course of the last few decades of the nineteenth century and entered the stage of world literature. In literary history, the relation between the authors of the Modern

128. Eva Helen Ulvros, *Fruar och mamseller: Kvinnor inom sydsvensk borgerlighet 1790–1870* (Lund: Historiska Media, 1996), 292–310.

129. Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 15–33; Marion Leffler, *Böcker, bildning, makt: arbetare, borgare och bildningens roll i klassföreringen i Lund och Helsingborg 1860–1901* (Malmö: Lund University Press, 1999), 197–98

130. Åberg, "Det moderna genombrottet," 54, 72.

131. SCANMO was financed by the Norwegian Research Council and UiT – The Arctic University of Norway and will result in one book: *Ibsen, Scandinavia, and the Making of a World Drama* (CUP, 2017) and two PhD dissertations. Project members: Professors Narve Fulsås and Tore Rem and PhD candidates Henning Hansen and Maria Purtoft.

Breakthrough and their contemporary domestic audiences has been depicted as fraught with hostility and lacking harmony, prompting several of the most prominent members of the literary movement, among them Ibsen and Strindberg, to pursue their writing careers abroad.¹³² However, this narrative cannot be reconciled with the fact that some of these authors were downright bestsellers. Ibsen's books, for example, were published in runs of as high as 10,000 copies, which was exceptional even in a wider European context.¹³³ SCANMO challenges the perception of the Scandinavian literary market as a constraining setting for these authors, and rather emphasises that their future international successes would not have occurred had they not been established in Scandinavia first.¹³⁴ The project looks into the particular conditions in the Scandinavian book market and explores the resources of the literary periphery. A key prerequisite for the project has therefore been to study the contemporary Scandinavian book market, and thus Ibsen and Strindberg's domestic audiences.

The SCANMO research group consists of Professors Narve Fulsås and Tore Rem and PhD students Henning Hansen and Maria Purtoft. Fulsås and Rem's book *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World Drama* was published with Cambridge University Press in November 2017. The present dissertation is one of two studies within the SCANMO project looking at readers and reading in Scandinavia during the end of the nineteenth century. Purtoft's dissertation (forthcoming) focuses predominantly on Norway, whereas the present study focuses on Sweden.

132. Narve Fulsås and Tore Rem, *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), I, 105–06.

133. Gisèle Sapiro, "Translation and the Field of Publishing," *Translation Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2008), 154–166 (160). See also Fulsås and Rem, *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World Drama*, 109.

134. It is worthwhile noting that Ibsen and Bjørnson received life long *diktergasje* "State grant," allowing them to be writers on full-time. Apart from the consecration of their works, it also gave them a certain level of economic independence. Fulsås and Rem, *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World Drama*, 49.

Structure

The study is divided into altogether eight chapters. In general, the findings from each archive are presented separately to simplify comparison. Chapters three to seven end with brief summaries of the findings presented in each chapter.

This introductory chapter presents the research aim and outlines the methodological and theoretical framework, including a description of the archival source material. The chapter further offers a brief insight into the field of readers and reading in nineteenth century Sweden, including research conducted within this area. Finally, it introduces the SCANMO project.

Chapter two offers a background and focuses on the conditions of the Swedish book market during the late nineteenth century, particularly when it comes to issues such as demographic changes, literacy, and industrial development.

Chapter three presents the three literary institutions: the bookshop in Gothenburg, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, and the commercial lending library in Lund. Firstly, it details the local literary conditions, including access to libraries, newspapers, and bookshops; secondly, it analyses the history of each institution; and thirdly, it describes the clientele of each institution.

The fourth chapter concerns book consumption at the three institutions. It presents the literature available in each institution and analyses actual book consumption through bestsellers, popularity of genres, etc.

Chapter five draws on the findings from chapter four and discusses the consumption of some of the best-selling or most borrowed categories of books from the three institutions. Apart from schoolbooks, it pays special attention to fiction, religious works, and magazines and journals, i.e. printed matter that was familiar to most people in the late nineteenth century, regardless of their social and economical standing. Finally, I take a closer look at the bookshop sales of *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon*, by William Thomas Stead, and the literature concerning A. E. Nordenskiöld's Vega expedition.

Chapter six is devoted entirely to the Modern Breakthrough literature. It analyses the selection of Modern Breakthrough literature available from the three institutions and its consumption. The readers of Modern Breakthrough literature are the centre of attention, and I describe in detail the book consumption of one particular reader, novelist Sophie Elkan.

Chapter seven explores the relation between reading and limitations such

as seasonality, language, and economic capacity. It also studies the impact of reading preferences on the development and demise of parish libraries and commercial lending libraries. We get a closer look at the book consumption of certain groups of readers, mainly peasants, women, and children. The reading habits of these particular groups were at times questioned, controlled, and criticised, albeit for different reasons and in different ways. Two particular readers, neighbours Johannes Persson and Anders Nilsson in Munka-Ljungby, are portrayed.

The eighth and final chapter, summarises and comments upon the findings of the study.

THE SWEDISH BOOK MARKET AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Socio-economic and demographic changes

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Swedish population was on the rise. Between 1800 and 1900 the number of inhabitants more than doubled, growing from 2.3 to 5.1 million, and Sweden emerged from relative poverty to become a developed industrialized country.¹³⁵ The growth rate was only partially dampened by extensive migration to North America, primarily the United States. The first large migratory waves occurred in the late 1860s, and the number of migrants peaked during the 1880s, when on average 35,000 per year left for the United States.¹³⁶ In the decades between 1850 and 1910 more than one million Swedes embarked for the United States, most of them taking the route from Gothenburg via England. The migrants consisted predominantly of young, unmarried persons from less affluent segments of society; many came from the countryside.¹³⁷ Despite increased urbanisation and industrialisation, Sweden was by the end of the nineteenth century still a largely rural society.

135 *Historisk statistik för Sverige del 1. Befolkning 1720–1967* (Stockholm: Statistiska Centralbyrån 1969), 45–46; Lennart Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia: tillväxt och omvandling under två sekel* (Stockholm: SNS förlag, 2007), 148–51.

136 Erlend Hofsten, *Svensk befolkningshistoria: Några grunddrag i utvecklingen från 1750* (Göteborg: ePan, 2001), 74

137 Martin Fritz, *Göteborgs historia: näringsliv och samhällsutveckling vol. 2: Från handelsstad till industristad 1820–1920* (Stockholm: Nerenius & Santérus, 1996), 128–30; Hofsten, *Svensk befolkningshistoria*, 73–79.

Table 2.1: The 10 largest cities in Sweden in 1880, ranked by population¹³⁸

Cities	Population
Stockholm	168,775
Gothenburg	76,401
Malmö	48,504
Norrköping	26,735
Gävle	18,758
Karlskrona	18,300
Jönköping	16,147
Uppsala	15,675
Lund	14,304
Örebro	11,785

The urban-dwelling population was increasing only slowly, and as late as in 1880, around 690,000, a mere 15 per cent out of a population of around 4.5 million, lived in the cities.¹³⁹ By the turn of the century, around half the workforce still worked on farms, although their numbers started to dwindle. Working conditions were slowly improving; both wages and life expectancy were on the rise, and the first few steps were taken towards regulated working hours.¹⁴⁰

The 1870s and 1880s were marked by strong economic fluctuations. The early 1870s saw a price increase for Swedish goods in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War, which in turn led to the development of Swedish industries and growing optimism. The end of the 1870s, however, marked a turning point, and prosperity was replaced by reduced profitability, followed by a number of severe bankruptcies, not least in the financial sector.¹⁴¹ Sweden plunged into the so-called Long Depression, which would affect development negatively until the early 1890s. During this period, the Swedish economy experienced

¹³⁸ Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 63, based on *Historisk statistik för Sverige*, 46–47.

¹³⁹ Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 62–64; Bo Öhngren, “Urbaniseringen i Sverige 1840–1920” in *Urbaniseringsprocessen i Norden*, part 3, edited by Grethe Authén Blom (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977) 261–356 (265).

¹⁴⁰ Hofsten, *Svensk befolkningshistoria*, 141–43, *Striden om tiden: Arbetstidens utveckling i Sverige under 100 år i ett internationellt perspektiv* (Göteborg: Avhandlingar från Historiska institutionen, 2001), 51–52; Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia*, 192–95.

¹⁴¹ Fritz, *Göteborgs historia*, III–12.

falling prices, decreased exports, and increasing competition from abroad.¹⁴² Real wages, however, increased in spite of the depression.¹⁴³ The increase was particularly strong within the industrial sector, which attracted more and more employees; between 1870 and 1890 the number of industrial workers in Sweden increased from 140,000 to 320,000. A greater demand for labour, in combination with increased union membership, placed industrial workers in a favourable position. Meanwhile, farmers increasingly focused on livestock rather than cultivating crops, which required year-round manpower and improved and stabilised working conditions for rural populations.¹⁴⁴

In some ways, the end of the nineteenth century was a remarkable time, characterized by a pioneering spirit and rapid societal and economical development.¹⁴⁵ It was the era of steam and speed, and industrialisation was changing the foundations of society. "The air, we breathe, is not the same as that of our fathers' or grandfathers'. ... [O]ur time is the era of steam power and electricity," Nils Erdmann wrote in 1884.¹⁴⁶ Novelties, such as the telephone, electrical lightning, etc., were gradually improving the everyday lives of ever more people.¹⁴⁷ These technological advancements reached the elite segments of society first, and we should keep in mind that it was not before well into the twentieth century that modern amenities became commonplace, depending on local economic and social circumstances. For large parts of the society, the late nineteenth century was also, as Kristina Lundblad reminds us, marked by "poverty, destitution, and injustice."¹⁴⁸ But the late nineteenth century was also the heyday of democratisation, manifested through popular education and popular movements. The Christian revivalist, the temperance, and the labour movements attracted hundreds of thousands of members, creating their own societies within the Swedish society.¹⁴⁹ The women's liberation movement was

142 Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia*, 187–91.

143 Ibid. 151, 192.

144 Ibid. 183–201.

145 Anders Ekström *Den utställda världen: Stockholmsutställningen 1897 och 1800-talets världsutställningar* (Stockholm: Nordiska museets Handlingar, 1994), 62–104; Törnvall, *Botaniska bilder till allmänheten*, 142.

146 Erdmann, *Modern realism*, 1.

147 Fritz, *Göteborgs historia*, 108, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia*, 159; Jan Garnert, *Anden i lampan: etnologiska perspektiv på ljus och mörker* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1993), 131–47.

148 Lundblad, *Bound to be Modern*, 62.

149 Hallingberg, *Läsarna*, 66–68; Sven Lundkvist, *Folkkrörelserna i det svenska samhället 1850–*

on the rise, and the end of the nineteenth century saw increasing support for the strengthening of women's position in society, a struggle that was also reflected in the Modern Breakthrough literature.

Literacy rates in the 1800s

Compulsory schooling was introduced in 1842 with the establishment of public elementary schools, and two decades later nearly 99 per cent of Swedish children attended school, although access to secondary education and university was far from universal, especially for women.¹⁵⁰ Widespread, primarily religiously oriented, basic reading ability predated the state school, largely thanks to home schooling and annual household examinations conducted by the church authorities. A paragraph concerning general literacy was included in the Swedish Church Law already in 1686. As Egil Johansson points out, the "social pressure was enormous," since those who did not pass examinations in reading were not allowed to take the communion or to marry.¹⁵¹ Johansson's pioneering literacy studies have shown that as early as the late 1600s, there were parishes in Sweden where at least one member of every household could read, and by the end of the eighteenth century almost all men and women were literate, remarkably early in an international context.¹⁵² In a Swedish medical

1920 (Uppsala: Studia historica Upsaliensia, 1977), 67; Lars Furuland, *Malung och litteraturen* (Malung: Malungs kommunalbibliotek, 1977), 284–88.

150 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 334; Berit Larsson, *Ljus och upplysning äfven för Qvinnan: kvinnors medborgarbildning i den svenska folkskolan 1868–1918* (Göteborg: Anamma, 1997), 29–30.

151 Egil Johansson, "The history of literacy in Sweden" in *Understanding literacy in its historical context: Socio-cultural history and the legacy of Egil Johansson*, Harvey J, Graff, ed. (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2009) 28–59 (29).

152 Egil Johansson, "Gå i skola hemma," *Forskning och framsteg*, no 5–6 (1977): 35–7; R. A. Houston, "Literacy," *Encyclopaedia of European Social History from 1350 to 2000*, vol. 5, edited by Peter N. Stearns (Detroit: Charles Scribner's sons, 2001) 391–406 (396); Reinhard Wittman, "Was there a reading revolution at the end of the eighteenth century?" in *A History of Reading in the West*, edited by Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Cambridge: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 284–312 (288); Loftur Guttormsson, "The development of popular religious literacy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 15, no. 1–2 (1990), 7–35 (30).

book from 1828 by C. J. Hartman, it was even claimed that “a full-grown person who cannot read is so rarely seen that he or she is regarded almost as a heathen.”¹⁵³ Test results from Swedish army recruits collected between 1874 and 1884 showed that 99.8 per cent read well or to an acceptable standard, and in an 1875 survey of the proportion of illiterates in twelve European countries, Sweden displayed the lowest proportion of them all.¹⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the ability to write lagged behind. Despite societal and economical development, only about a third of the population had achieved satisfactory levels of both reading and writing by the mid-1800s.¹⁵⁵

Although most people had acquired the ability to read, and the establishment of elementary schools had fuelled the population’s literary interests, there was still a substantial discrepancy between the number of literates and the number of actual book consumers. In some cases, the lack of reading material may even have impaired people’s reading capabilities.¹⁵⁶ During the early nineteenth century, the common people in Sweden were very much like the German population described in Rudolph Schenda’s famous study: a “Volk ohne Buch” – a “People without Books.”¹⁵⁷

Bridging the gap between the number of potential and actual readers was one of the parish libraries’ most important challenges. For large parts of the population, newspapers also fulfilled the common people’s need for reading materials, and in many cases it was probably more common that newly acquired reading skills were practised on newspapers rather than books.¹⁵⁸ While the book trade was largely centralised in the cities, newspapers, by contrast,

153 C. J. Hartman, *Husläkaren, eller allmänna och enskilda föreskrifter i sundhetsläran samt sjukdomslära, eller kortt anvisning att känna och riktigt behandla de flesta i Swerige förekommande inre och yttre sjukdomar; till bruk för husfäder, pharmaceutici: och alla, som oexamine-rade syszelsätta sig med medicinens utöfning* (Stockholm: Z. Hæggström, 1828), 5–6

154 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 334; Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The age of capital 1848–1875* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975), 43.

155 Johansson, “The history of literacy in Sweden,” 28–32, 55–56.

156 Åke Åberg, *Västerås mellan Kellgren och Onkel Adam* (Södertälje: Västerås kulturnämnds skriftserie, 1987), 18.

157 Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 146; Rudolph Schenda, *Volk ohne Buch*; Åke Åberg, “Folket läste,” in *Den svenska boken 500 år*, edited by Harry Järv and Egil Johansson (Stockholm: LiberFörlag, 1983), 364–401 (393).

158 Gina Dahl, “Opplysningens arkeologi: Et bokhistorisk blick på opplysningstiden,” *Din* 2/3 (2007), 97–112 (105).

could be accessed in all parts of the country, and furthermore, they were cheaper. Consequently, newspapers were of the utmost importance for the rural population. Ingemar Oscarsson has even found interesting accounts of newspaper reading among peasants dating as far back as the 1840s.¹⁵⁹ The latter part of the nineteenth century saw significant growth in periodical literature internationally.¹⁶⁰ The number of Swedish newspapers increased substantially, along with increasing print runs.¹⁶¹ Most newspapers contained some entertainment, notably serialised fiction, which was widely appreciated by most subscribers.¹⁶² Not everyone was pleased with the success of the newspapers. Some voiced concerns regarding the contents of the newspapers and demanded that the libraries should make sure that the newspapers did not operate unopposed.¹⁶³

Manufacturing developments and structural changes to the book market

By the end of the nineteenth century, paper manufacturing and the printing process had become fully industrialised. In terms of technological developments, a book printed in the year 1800 had in many ways more in common with the Gutenberg Bible than the mass-market paperback printed a hundred years later. New editions, larger and cheaper than ever before, found their way to the constantly growing reading public. The demand for reading materials was unprecedented, and new means of communications facilitated the dissemination of books. Thanks to technological advancements such as the railroad, the telegraph, and the telephone, news travelled faster than ever before, and distances shrank.¹⁶⁴

159 Oscarsson, "Fortsättning följer," 57–58.

160 In the United States, for example, the number of newspapers increased twentyfold between 1850 and 1900. Lyons, *A History of Reading and Writing*, 143.

161 Svedjedal, *Bokens sambälle*, 35; Oscarsson, "Fortsättning följer," 52–58.

162 Åberg "Folket läste," 367–69.

163 Johan Jarlbrink, "Lässcener: Publik och medier på kafé och sockenbibliotek" in *1800–talets mediesystem*, edited by Jonas Harvard and Patrik Lundell (Stockholm: Kungliga biblioteket, 2010), 43–64 (47).

164 Leslie Howsam, *Past into Print: The Publishing of History in Britain 1850–1950* (London:

For a large and sparsely populated country like Sweden, the expansion of the railway network in the 1860s was of particular importance, and delivery times for letters and books, which would previously take weeks if not months to reach distant parts of the country, were now down to days. The required infrastructure for the modern book market, including not only modern communications and postal services, but also banks and a functional educational system, was finally in place.¹⁶⁵ These developments had far-reaching implications for the book trade, and the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have even been called “The Golden Age of the Book in the West.”¹⁶⁶ The book had become an everyday object, and a mass literary culture had emerged. In some ways, the end of the nineteenth century would mark the beginning of a new era, one in which almost everyone could access books in one way or another.

According to Simon Eliot, scholar of English literature, two major phases of the industrialisation of reading occurred during the nineteenth century. Steam presses and the expansion of the railway characterized the first phase while the second was brought about by electricity, lending libraries, universal literacy, and the mass circulation of newspapers.¹⁶⁷ As the modernisation of the book trade progressed, the roles of the publisher, the printer and the bookseller were professionalised.¹⁶⁸ In Sweden, the establishment of the Swedish Publishers’ Association in 1843 can be seen as part of this process, and during the last few decades of the century, the modern specialised role of the publisher finally emerged.¹⁶⁹ In a Scandinavian context, the great book trade meetings of 1856, 1866, 1873, and 1884, which rotated between the three Scandinavian capitals, were inspired by the pan-Scandinavian movement and can be seen as attempts to bridge the gap between the countries.¹⁷⁰

British Library and University of Toronto Press, 2009), 2; Lyons, *A History of Reading and Writing*, 137–42.

165 Törnvall, *Botaniska bilder till allmänheten*, 141–43; Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 332–33, 444–45; Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 59; Henrik Schück, *Den svenska förlagsbokhandelns historia II* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & söners förlag, 1923), 377.

166 Lyons, *A History of Reading and Writing*, 153.

167 Simon Eliot, *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing 1800–1919* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1994), 106–07.

168 Lyons, *A History of Reading and Writing*, 137.

169 Lundblad, *Bound to be Modern*, 34, 46.

170 Gundel Söderholm, “Adam Helms och skandinavismen,” in *Always on the hunt: Adam Helms Lecture 20 år* edited by Leif Friberg and Emi-Simone Zawall (Stockholm: Stock-

The publishing industry employed new sales tactics. It was particularly successful in selling subscription works in instalments, and the second half of the nineteenth century was the “Golden Age of Instalments.”¹⁷¹ Combining the sale of subscriptions with bonus gifts was becoming increasingly common. Customers who signed up for a full-year subscription of a magazine were offered gifts such as lithographs and photographs. The strategy consisting of throwing in bonus gifts peaked around 1880, when all kinds of strange things could be offered to magazine subscribers.¹⁷² Booksellers were complaining that customers were not paying attention to literary contents anymore: they only had an eye on the gifts. In an August 1881 meeting of the Booksellers’ Association, it was settled that this practice should be abolished altogether.¹⁷³

Meanwhile, the size of the average book print run was soaring. New inventions and improved communications, aided by cunning sales tactics, subsequently led to larger and cheaper editions. During the first half of the nineteenth century, fiction was commonly printed in editions of 500–750 copies, but as early as the 1860s and 1870s, popular works were printed in first editions of as many as 10,000 copies.¹⁷⁴ Successful schoolbooks and religious works were printed in even greater numbers. Although the Swedish book trade was sensitive to economic fluctuations, the number of published titles continued to grow. Out of the 319,000 titles published in Sweden during the entire nineteenth century, 83 per cent were published during the last two decades of the century.¹⁷⁵ The late nineteenth century market for books was also affected by a qualitative development of the literary production according to contemporaries. The famous publisher Karl Otto Bonnier claimed that the literature of the

holms universitetsbibliotek, 2013), 39–56 (48–50).

171 August Hänell, *Liber Librariorum: Bokhandlarnas bok II* (Göteborg: Svenska Bokhandlareföreningen, 1920), 86.

172 Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 89–92, 125–30; Verner Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek och öfriga anstalter för folkläsnings* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1901), 44.

173 Hänell, *Liber Librariorum II*, 84–85; Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 142.

174 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 250–51, 335–36, 449–50; Bo Bennich-Björkman, Lars Furuland and Lars Lönnroth, “Liberalismens tidsålder, en periodöversikt 1830–1890,” in *Den svenska litteraturen: De liberala genombrotten 1830–1890*, edited by Lars Lönnroth, Sven Delblanc (Uddevalla: BonnierFakta Bokförlag AB, 1989) 9–34 (21).

175 Bo Peterson, *Välja & sälja: om bokförläggarens nya roll under 1800-talet, då landet industrialiserades, tägen började rulla, elektriciteten förändrade läsvanorna, skolan byggdes ut och bokläsarna blev allt fler* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 2003), 117.

1870s, with novelists such as Pehr Thomasson and Marie Sophie Schwartz, was marked by “literary decay.”¹⁷⁶ A substantial change did not come about until the 1880s with the emergence of the Modern Breakthrough literary movement.

Selling and purchasing books

Nowadays, the authors' patron is the great reading public, and the social interaction ... and the intimacy between the two is conveyed not by the Academy but through the bookshops.

Tor Hedberg, *Ett decennium* (1912).¹⁷⁷

In 1888, Alexander Kielland wrote a letter to his publisher Fredrik Hegel. Hegel, who managed the great Danish publishing house Gyldendal, was also the literary agent and publisher of all the greatest Danish and Norwegian Modern Breakthrough authors and one of the most important players in the Scandinavian book market. In his letter to Hegel, Kielland made a few enthusiastic remarks regarding the Scandinavian book-buying audience. “[T]here is in our time no nation in which so many books are read as in Scandinavia ... [and] no people has ... as many coins to spare for book purchases...”¹⁷⁸ If we are to believe Hedberg and Kielland’s descriptions of the book market, one might get the impression that buying books was within the reach of everyone, even the general public. This was, however, not the case, and we will return to that point later on.

In an 1838 essay, author Carl Jonas Love Almqvist stated that no books other than “the hymnbook, the catechism, and sometimes the Bible” reached the rural population.¹⁷⁹ While book prices dropped and publishers started targeting new groups of readers in the course of the nineteenth century, it is true

176 Bonnier, *Bonniers: en bokhandlarefamilj IV*, 9.

177 Tor Hedberg, *Ett decennium: uppsatser och kritiker i litteratur, konst, teater m.m. del 1* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1912), 190–91.

178 Letter from Alexander Kielland to Jacob Hegel, sent from Paris 9 February 1888. www.bokselskap.no

179 C. J. L. Almqvist, “Svenska Fattigdomens betydelse” in *Samlade verk 8*, edited by Bertil Romberg (1996), 279–312 (279)

that more and more people could afford to buy books. But how many books did the average household possess? We have only very limited knowledge concerning book ownership during the late nineteenth century. A few studies of book ownership have been conducted using estate inventories, which would sometimes record books. Estate inventories are, however, a somewhat unreliable source of information. They could be more or less comprehensive, but usually only books of a certain economical value were listed, especially by the late nineteenth century.¹⁸⁰

One of the earliest comprehensive surveys investigating book ownership dates from as late as 1928–31. The study was conducted by public educator Carl Cederblad and was based on 3,200 book inventories. The inventories were compiled by elementary school pupils, who had been given the task to record the books found in their homes. The results convey severe heterogeneity along socio-economic lines when it comes to the number of books. According to the survey, the average household had 27 books and three copies of newspapers, and less affluent households only about half as many. The average working-class home possessed 22 books, and the average farmer's household 25. Two of the book inventories came from bourgeois homes, where by contrast an average of 600 titles was recorded. The Bible was the most common book, followed by the hymnbook and the New Testament. Selma Lagerlöf's *Gösta Berlings saga* was the most common book of fiction to be found in homes.¹⁸¹

Although Cederblad's survey covers a later period and mainly takes into account the less affluent segments of society, it provides a much-needed perspective. Book ownership during earlier periods was, as Åke Åberg has pointed out, most likely even more limited.¹⁸² Author Jan Fridegård (1897–1968) grew up under exceedingly modest circumstances, practically without any books.¹⁸³ His parents were *statare*, poor agricultural workers receiving primarily payment in kind, and it was only later in life, through school and libraries, that

180 Åberg, *Västerås mellan Kellgren och Onkel Adam*, 92–93.

181 Martin Kristenson, *Böcker i svenska hem: Carl Cederblads litteratursociologiska undersökning 1928–1931* (Uppsala: Avdelningen för litteratursociologi vid Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen, 1987), 60; Dolatkah, *Det läsande barnet*, 46–48; Johan Svedjedal, *Tänkta världar: samlingsvolym* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 2004), 224.

182 Åberg "Folket läste," 366.

183 Lars Furuland, *Ljus över landet och andra litteratursociologiska uppsatser* (Hedemora: Gidlunds bokförlag, 1991), 172–77.

Fridegård eventually could access books. Among the less affluent segments of society, many probably had similar experiences, even as late as the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁸⁴

The book market was very heterogeneous. Some books reached a widespread readership while others attracted only a very limited number of readers. At the same time as Pehr Thomasson's novels were printed in cheap editions of 20,000 copies, the publisher Joseph Seligmann consoled the literary historian Karl Warburg after the publication of his study of Molière in 1884 which, we can presume, was sold in rather modest numbers.¹⁸⁵ "We have too small an audience in our country, equipped with a nice taste and a calm mind, which indulges in such noble reading matter," Seligmann wrote to Warburg.¹⁸⁶ Several of Thomasson's writings were published in the cheap literary series "Öreskrifter för folket" (Penny pamphlets for the people), which, according to its publisher, was intended "for popular reading, for parish libraries, and suitable for public school awards."¹⁸⁷ The books in the literary series were very cheap and hugely popular. "No one, except for those who grew up among the peasant classes, may have any idea of how Thomasson's books were appreciated," ethnologist Pehr Johnsson, who grew up in the countryside during the end of the nineteenth century, recalled.¹⁸⁸ Warburg's book on Molière, by contrast, was at least ten times as expensive as Thomasson's books, priced at 2.50 kronor. Clearly, these books catered to different audiences. It is obvious that the publishers of Thomasson's works had reached out to new groups of readers, and that even the lower layers of society were now perceived as potential book buyers. It all came down to book prices. But what was then regarded as an expensive book?

184 In an article from 1907, it was stated that the average rural households did not have more than ten books. "Bekämpandet af smuts- och kolportagelitteratur" in *Social tidskrift: organ för folkbildningsarbetet och de sociala frågorna* (Stockholm: Oskar Eklunds boktryckeri, 1907), 175–178 (176).

185 Lars Furuland, *Statarna i litteraturen: En studie i svensk dikt och samhällsdebatt* (Stockholm: Tidens förlag, 1962), 148.

186 Letter from Seligmann to Warburg, 8 September 1884. Warburg's book on Molière was *Molière: en lefnadsteckning på grundvalen af den nyaste Molière-forskningen* (Stockholm: Seligmann, 1884), Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 353–54.

187 "En samling smärre skrifter, lämpliga för folkläsnig och för sockenbibliotek samt till premier i folkskolor" in *Albert Bonniers förlagskatalog 1837–1882* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers boktryckeri, 1883), 116.

188 Pehr Johnsson, "Min barndoms sockenbibliotek," *Biblioteksbladet* 1918, 166–70 (167).

According to the prospectus from its publisher, a popular edition of a serialized Bible printed in 1880 and priced at 12 kronor was affordable for most.¹⁸⁹ But then again, the Bible was not just any book. Twelve kronor would constitute a significant expense for most people.

Financial constraints notwithstanding, for a long time a significant proportion of the population had only limited or no access to bookshops: the rural population in particular. Before the nineteenth century the only established bookshops were confined to Stockholm and the university towns of Uppsala and Lund. Over the years, their numbers expanded greatly, and by the mid-1800s bookshops could be found in “almost every town in the kingdom.”¹⁹⁰ Between 1843 and 1887, the number of commissioners to the Swedish Publishers’ Association increased from 74 to 135.¹⁹¹ Since commissionership allowed the bookshops to sell books published by practically all the largest publishing houses in Sweden, it was sought-after. Although the number of bookshops was on the rise, they were practically all located in towns.

The booksellers of the early nineteenth century were a motley crew. For many in the trade, bookselling was a subsidiary occupation; some were first and foremost printers and bookbinders while others were vicars, captains, bookkeepers, teachers, academics, tobacco vendors and even wine merchants. Nineteenth century bookshops would also have little or no resemblance with their contemporary counterparts. They were a public gathering place, which provided not only books and stationary, but “practically everything, except food,” as Ture Nerman wrote in his memoirs.¹⁹² An advertisement from Killberg’s bookshop in Ängelholm lists for example hammocks, thermometers, and croquet games. Even a respectable bookshop such as Gumpert’s bookshop sold everything from insulation tape and crucifixes to human skulls.

189 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 239.

190 Hånell, *Liber Librariourm II*, 18, 43.

191 Svedjedal, *Biblioteken och bokmarknaden – från folkskola till e-böcker*, 14.

192 Quoted from Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle*, 73. See also Wendy Griswold, Elizabeth Lannaghan and Michelle Naffziger “Readers as audiences” in *The Handbook of Media Audiences*, edited by Virginia Nightingale (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 35 n.

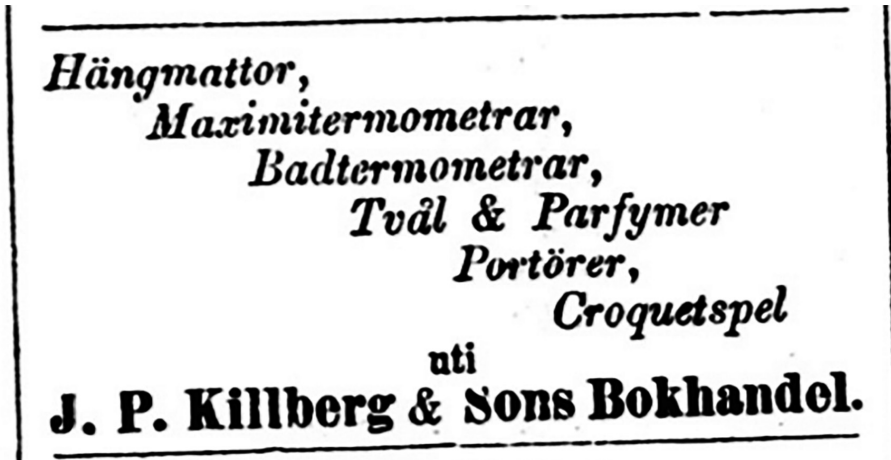


Figure 2.1: Advertisement from Killberg & Son's bookshop in Ängelholm, Norra Skåne 10 July 1885

For a long time, the bookshop remained the domain of society's elites.¹⁹³ The less affluent were rarely seen in the bookshops, even after the turn of the century. A 1905 article stated that: "The booksellers in our cities generally have no significant clientele among the rural population. When a farmer enters a bookshop, we can almost take it for granted that he is buying a hymnbook or a bible as a confirmation gift or a schoolbook for his children."¹⁹⁴ Apart from the financial aspect, there may also have been a psychosocial barrier. In an interview conducted by Åke Åberg, a man who worked as a bookseller in Motala in the early twentieth century stated that "factory workers and their wives and children found the bookshop too posh. Even if they wanted to enter, it was as if they did not really dare."¹⁹⁵

Apart from the commissioner bookshops, books could be acquired from a multitude of other institutions and individuals; for example itinerant peddlers, bookbinders, railway kiosks, antiquarian bookshops, tobacco stalls, and street vendors.¹⁹⁶ In addition, a large number of independent bookshops also

193 Krantz, *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn*, 33–34.

194 Enoch Ingers, "Bokauktionerna på landsbygden: några reflexioner och anmärkningar" in *Folkbiblioteksbladet* 1908, 133–38 (133).

195 Åberg, "Folket läste," 379.

196 According to Rinman, the old ways of selling books lived on resiliently. Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 261. Hänell mentions complaints from booksellers, who experienced competition from railway booksellers. Hänell, *Liber Librariourm II*, 181.

operated in towns. In Gothenburg, for example, they outnumbered the commissioner bookshops. While books were expensive, there was a strong demand for second-hand books. Second-hand bookshops could be found in most towns, and several large bookshops also engaged in the sales of used books. For a mundane clientele, the antiquarian bookshops may have seemed less intimidating than the regular bookshop or the public library. "People would not enter the bookshop or the library, unless something in particular gave them a push."¹⁹⁷

For the rural population, book auctions were of particularly great importance. All kinds of books were sold in these auctions, and not only used books. Some publishers sold great quantities of books hot off the press, which vexed booksellers. According to Enoch Ingers, these book auctions were to a large extent "determinative for what the vast population in our countryside got to read."¹⁹⁸ According to Rinman, however, their importance may have been exaggerated.¹⁹⁹ For centuries, itinerant book peddlers, also known as book canvassers or colporteurs, had been crucial for the dissemination of books in Sweden. Many of these itinerant booksellers were bookbinders, who had a longstanding privilege on selling bound books. During a time when there were hardly any permanent bookshops, these itinerant booksellers formed the backbone of the Swedish book trade. Book peddlers' importance for the rural population is hard to overstate, since in many parts of the country there was hardly any other way of acquiring books. Traditionally, itinerant booksellers focused on selling staple prints, chapbooks, and other popular writings.²⁰⁰ The literature was of what many would regard as dubious character, and eventually the term "kolportagelitteratur" (colporteur literature) would become synonymous with fiction of a particularly low quality.²⁰¹

In the wake of the revivalist movement during the nineteenth century, the role of book peddlers gained renewed impetus. Publishers of religious prints employed book peddlers who became crucial for the dissemination of religious literature. Cheap or even free pamphlets and other religious writings

197 Åberg, "Folket läste," 381.

198 Ingers, "Bokauktionerna på landsbygden," 134.

199 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 235.

200 Furuland, *Romanen som vardagsvara*, 81–82.

201 Svedjedal, *Biblioteken och bokmarknaden*, 16.

reached all parts of the country, owing largely to the networks of colporteurs.²⁰² Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen (The Swedish Evangelical Mission) was the largest producer of religious writings. From 1856 to 1881, they produced a staggering 13 million copies of religious pamphlets, magazines, and novels.²⁰³

However, it was not only religious works that were disseminated through colportage. The sale of books published in cheap instalments and distributed by book peddlers was particularly successful.²⁰⁴ Thus, an illustrated version of Zacharias Topelius' *Fältskärens berättelser* (*The Surgeon's Stories*), published over 1883 and 1884 in instalments, were priced at 25 öre (0.25 kronor) each and distributed in as many as 30,000 copies.²⁰⁵ Magazines, newspapers and other ephemera were also advertised and sold by book canvassers, who would "go door-to-door, with a stubbornness and impertinence, which aims to defeat any repellent action."²⁰⁶

202 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 238–43; Hallingberg, *Läsarna*, 92; Bo Bennich-Björkman and Lars Furuland, "Vad folket sjöng och läste," in *Den svenska litteraturen: De liberala genombrotten 1830–1890*, edited by Lars Lönnroth, Sven Delblanc (Uddevalla: BonnierFakta Bokförlag AB, 1989) 269–299 (274).

203 Hallingberg, *Läsarna*, 353.

204 Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle*, 36–37.

205 Bonnier, *Bonniers: en bokhandlarefamilj IV*, 49.

206 Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 89–91.

Borrowing books

[F]ew people from the book-reading public buy books. ... Novels, magazines and light reading are normally borrowed from the commercial lending libraries.

Claës Lundin, *Nya Stockholm*, 1890.²⁰⁷

In a letter to Strindberg in 1883, his publisher Albert Bonnier expressed fear that steep book prices would lead many potential customers to turn to libraries to borrow new books rather than to buy them.²⁰⁸ To some extent, Bonnier's fears seem to have been justified. The second half of the nineteenth century was the Golden era of libraries in Sweden, and for the great mass of readers, public and commercial lending libraries and reading rooms were the go-to places for books rather than bookshops.²⁰⁹ For a Swedish manual worker, making on average around 1.33 kronor a day in the 1880s, a new novel by Strindberg, priced at 2.50 or 3.25 kronor, would naturally have been a considerable expense.²¹⁰ By comparison, the annual membership fee of one or two kronor at the parish library, or as little as 10–20 öre (0.1–0.2 kronor) for borrowing a single volume from a commercial lending library, was affordable even for industrial workers or farmhands.²¹¹

For the rural population, which accounted for over 80 per cent of the population, the establishment of parish libraries was of utmost importance. In the countryside, the parish library was the only literary institution that provided a stable and affordable way of accessing books.²¹² The earliest parish libraries

207 Claës Lundin, *Nya Stockholm: dess yttre och inre förhållanden; dess olika folkklasser, typer och personligheter; dess kyrkor och bönesalar, vetenskapsmän och konstnärer; dess värdsbus, skådebanor och kaserner, föreningar och arbetaresamfund; dess tidningar och literära kretsar; dess sällskapslif, förlustelser och idrotter till lands och vatten under 1880-talet* (Stockholm: Hugo Gebers förlag, 1890), 357–58.

208 Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle*, 40.

209 E. Reyer, "Hvad folk læser," in *Samtiden* (1892) 464–69; J. Viktor Johansson, "Göteborgs biblioteksförhållanden," *Biblioteksbladet* 1916, 122–24 (123).

210 Jeppsson, *Tänkar till salu*, 162; *Svensk bok-katalog jemte musikförteckning för åren 1876–1885* (Stockholm: Svenska Bokförläggare-Föreningen, 1890), 241.

211 Jeppsson, *Tänkar till salu*, 162; Pehr Johnsson, "Ett skånskt församlingsbibliotek och dess utvecklingshistoria" in *Biblioteksbladet* 1920, 69. The parish library in Broby (Skåne), for example, charged 1 krona annually from freeholders and others well off, 50 öre for crofters and 25 öre for the rest.

212 "Folkbibliotek" i *Nordisk familjebok*: vol. 8, edited by Th. Westrin (Stockholm: Nordisk

were established in the first half of the century, but it was not until the Swedish Elementary School Act of 1842, which stated that the clergy should encourage the development and use of parish libraries, that parish libraries were established across the country. Initially, development was slow, and in 1859 the Chancellor of Justice sent a reminding letter to all chapters, which sped up the process. The number of parish libraries finally increased substantially.²¹³ By the 1870s, over 1,500 parish libraries had been established across the country.²¹⁴

The size and literary contents of individual parish libraries varied greatly, and many struggled financially. Parish libraries were first and foremost conveyers of knowledge, and some of them adjusted their holdings to local needs and desires. Parish libraries in rural areas where the parishioners principally worked on farms acquired books on agriculture while parish libraries in coastal towns also offered books on fishing, and so forth.²¹⁵ Meanwhile, the first modern public libraries (*stadsbibliotek*) were established from the 1860s onwards and in some places working association libraries were organised, but for a long time they were both scarce and modest in size. Furthermore, organisations within the temperance and the revivalist movements also established libraries.²¹⁶

The fact that most public libraries, including parish libraries, focused on supplying books for scientific, educational and edifying purposes fuelled the need for commercial lending libraries.²¹⁷ Commercial lending libraries were established on a small scale by the end of the eighteenth century, but flourished during the latter part of the nineteenth century, offering a viable alternative to

familjeboks förlags aktiebolag, 1908); Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 17.

213 Bodil Berg, "Svedvi sockenbibliotek," 114; Jarlbrink, "Lässcener," 47; Åberg, *Biblioteksstudierande skriver bokhistoria*, 116; Ingrid Atlestam, Madeleine Bergmark and Eva Halász, *Fullbokat: Göteborgs folkbibliotek 1862-1997* (Borås: Göteborgs stadsbibliotek, 1997), 17-18.

214 Anders Burius, "Sockenbibliotek - mellan filantropi och folkbibliotek," *Nordisk tidskrift för bok- och biblioteksväsen* 81 (1994): 25-54 (29); Carl Magnus Carlander, *Svenska bibliotek och ex-libris: Anteckningar af C. M. Carlander I* (Stockholm: Förlagsaktiebolaget Iduna, 1904), 333. According to Carlander, there were over two thousand parish libraries by the turn of the century.

215 Sjösten, *Sockenbiblioteket*, 24-26; Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 12-18, 32-35; Tynell, *Folkbiblioteken i Sverige*, 47-48; Elsi Ekstedt and Lars Ericsson, "Utan läskunnighet inget bibliotek. Utan bibliotek ingen läskunnighet" in *Västerbotten no 3:1986: Böcker, Bibliotek och Läsning* (Umeå: Västerbottens museum, 1986), 174-81.

216 Svedjedal, *Biblioteken och bokmarknaden*, 11-12.

217 Svedjedal, *Biblioteken och bokmarknaden*, 10; Åberg, "Från Luther till Libris," 9.

bookshops.²¹⁸ In 1904, Carl Magnus Carlander stated that: “Nowadays there is hardly a single town, no matter how insignificant, that is not equipped with a lending library.”²¹⁹ The commercial lending libraries of the early nineteenth century catered to elite segments of society and offered a wide selection of foreign books, mostly fiction, often in the original language.²²⁰ In the course of the nineteenth century, however, their clientele changed and became more diverse. Customers increasingly came from the middle and working classes and the foreign language books became superfluous.²²¹

218 Sjösten, *Sockenbiblioteket*, 24; Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle*, 39.

219 Carlander, *Svenska bibliotek och ex-libris I*, 359.

220 Björkman, *Läsarnas nöje*, 74–84; Elisabeth S. Eide, “Reading Societies and Lending Libraries in Nineteenth-Century Norway,” *Library & Information History* 26, no. 2 (June 2010): 121–38 (132); Gunnar Sahlin, “1700-talets lånebibliotek och den litterära publiken” in *Bibliotek – tradition och utveckling: festskrift till Lars-Erik Sanner den 18 januari 1991* (Stockholm: Stockholms universitetsbibliotek, 1991) 228–41 (233–35).

221 Kirsten Mosolff, “Bibliotekstilbud i København før de kommunale folkebiblioteker: lejebiblioteker, klub- og foreningsbiblioteker samt folkebiblioteker c. 1850-1885,” *Biblioteks-historie* 7 (2005) 25–73 (30–31, 34–35); Furuland, *Romanen som vardagsvara*, 117; Tykesson *Rövarromanen och dess hjälte*, 131–32; Åberg, “Folket läste,” 387; Eide, “Reading Societies and Lending Libraries in Nineteenth-Century Norway,” 132–33.

CHAPTER 3

THE BOOKSHOP, THE PARISH LIBRARY, AND THE COMMERCIAL LENDING LIBRARY

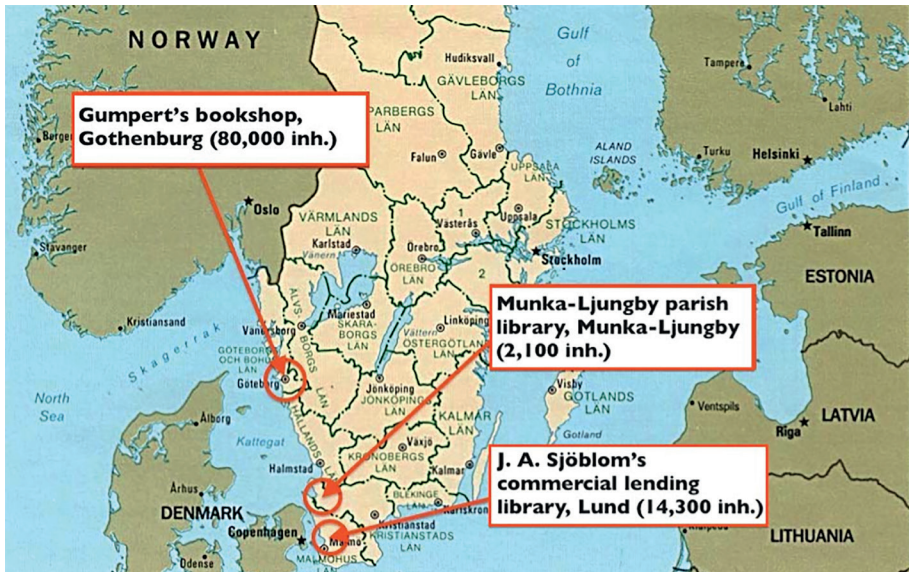


Figure 3.1: The location of the three institutions and the population of the town or parish in 1880

The bookshop

Book culture in Gothenburg

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Gothenburg experienced a strong growth in both its economy and population. Between 1850 and 1890 the population quadrupled from 26,000 to 105,000, growing at a higher rate than the capital.²²² Owing to the improved communications – not least the new steamer lines – and to the expanding industries in the region, several major pulp and iron industries, the city experienced unprecedented growth and modernisation, which in turn aided cultural development.²²³ However, Gothenburg was a segregated society, struggling with major social inequalities. The newcomers to Gothenburg, many of whom wanted to work in the industrial sector, had to battle unemployment, poverty, and overcrowding.²²⁴ Gothenburg's favourable location facilitated access to the great trading centres in Western Europe and the city eventually took over the role from Stockholm as the nation's trade capital.²²⁵ In the early 1870s, Strindberg lived in Gothenburg for a brief period, and in his semi-autobiographical work *Tjenstevinnans son* (1886; *The Son of a Servant*), he offers a vivid description of the city, capturing some of its dynamic spirit. Strindberg was astonished to see ships from Copenhagen, London, Hamburg, and Le Havre in the city's harbour, and he sensed that Gothenburg, rather than Stockholm, was slowly becoming the centre of the Nordic countries.²²⁶

Despite Strindberg's enthusiasm, it is important to keep in mind that the economic and cultural prosperity of Gothenburg was confined largely to the latter part of the nineteenth century. The book trade, for example, was underdeveloped for a very long time. The development of a professional

222 Fritz, *Göteborgs historia*, 105–12; Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia*, 189.

223 Ivan Lind, "Göteborgs handel och sjöfart sedan 1860," in *Göteborg: en översikt vid trehundraårsjubileet 1923 över stadens kommunala, kulturella och sociala förhållanden samt viktigaste näringsgrenar*, edited by Nils Wimarson (Göteborg: Elanders boktryckeri, 1923), 656–88 (656–64).

224 Atlestam, *Fullbokat*, 41–42.

225 Fritz, *Göteborgs historia*, 172.

226 August Strindberg, *Tjenstevinnans son III. I röda rummet: en själs utvecklingshistoria 1872–75* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1887), 61–62.

book trade in Gothenburg was inhibited – as it was in Sweden in general – by the bookbinders’ privilege to sell bound books, and it took a remarkably long time before Sweden’s second largest city got its first stable, permanent bookshop.²²⁷ The book trade in Gothenburg took a great leap forward when two of the most industrious booksellers and publishers of the time, Adolf Bonnier and Christian Wilhelm Kyhl Glerup, set up business in the city, in 1827 and 1830 respectively. Shortly afterwards, Glerup entrusted his business in Gothenburg to the assistant manager of the bookshop, Nathan Jacob Gumpert.

For a number of years, Gumpert’s and Bonnier’s were the only two large bookshops in Gothenburg, and they did not take too kindly to any further competition. In 1849, when bookseller C. F. Arwidsson applied for commissionership of the Swedish Publishers’ Association, the two rivals wrote a joint letter to the association to advise against the appointment, claiming that the Gothenburg market was too small.²²⁸ Despite their concerns, Arwidsson was granted commissionership, and over the years, additional bookshops were established in Gothenburg. The demographic and economic growth in Gothenburg – and perhaps also a developing literary interest among the audience – prompted the need for additional bookshops. By the end of the century there were around a dozen bookshops in Gothenburg, including five commissioners to the publishers’ association.²²⁹

During the last few decades of the century, Gothenburg was home to epoch-making liberal and radical cultural movements, and in the fields of literature and the arts the city emerged as a cultural centre and a viable alternative to Stockholm. A number of liberal institutions for the arts and humanities were established, such as the University of Gothenburg and Sweden’s first modern public library: *Göteborgs folkbibliotek* (Gothenburg People’s Library). A dynamic group of philanthropic intellectuals, including writers, politicians, and wealthy businessmen, under the leadership of the editor Sven Adolf Hedlund (1821–1900), constituted a powerful cultural force in Gothenburg. The city

227 Peterson, *Brödrarfolk och syskonfejder*, 51–52. See also Gösta Lext, *Bok och samhälle i Göteborg 1720–1809* (Göteborg: Elanders boktryckeri, 1950), 163.

228 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 119.

229 *Festskrift med anledning af Svenska Bokförläggareföreningens femtiårs-jubileum*, 258–59; *Göteborgs adress- och industri-kalender för år 1882* (Göteborg: Fred. Lindberg, 1882), 21.

became the centre of an energetic library culture, not least thanks to a handful of its culturally interested patrons. The industrialist and philanthropist James Dickson, for example, was the one who established the Gothenburg People's Library in 1861, for a long time called "The Dickson library." Unlike most large libraries in Gothenburg, which were intended primarily for research and scientific studies, the Gothenburg People's Library was open to everyone and offered light reading.²³⁰ The library was remarkably successful, and after two decades, in 1880, it had over 6,000 members and a collection of nearly 4,000 volumes, which were borrowed over 26,000 times annually.²³¹

The library of the workers' association in Gothenburg, *Göteborgs arbetareförenings bibliotek*, consisted of nearly 4,000 volumes in 1886, mainly fiction.²³² During the 1880s, a number of so-called reading rooms were established. Mainly targeting manual labourers, they served as combined reading rooms and lodging places, offering both reading materials and non-alcoholic beverages. One of their purposes was to prevent the workers from going to bars on their way home from work.²³³ The commercial lending libraries also formed an important institution for the readers in Gothenburg. The first ones were established around 1800, and by the end of the century, there were at least half a dozen lending libraries in the city, some of them boasting collections of more than 5,000 volumes.²³⁴ The literary atmosphere in Gothenburg was also characterised by an active periodical and ephemeral press. Ever since the mid-eighteenth century, a variety of magazines and newspapers had been available to the population of Gothenburg on a regular basis. Most of them were short-lived, while others were very successful. By the end of the nineteenth century, two rivals dominated the market for daily newspapers: *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, established in 1832, and *Göteborgs-Posten*,

230 Sven Delblanc and Lars Lönnroth, "Vad rätt du tänkt: Viktor Rydberg och Göteborgs-liberalismen ca 1850–1895," in *Den Svenska Litteraturen: De liberala genombrotten 1830–1890*, edited by Lars Lönnroth and Sven Delblanc (Uddevalla: BonnierFakta Bokförlag AB, 1989), 160–77 (161–63); Atlestam, *Fullbokat*, 41–60; Carlander, *Svenska bibliotek och ex-libris I*, 232; Johansson, "Göteborgs biblioteksförhållanden," 123.

231 *Bidrag till Sveriges statistik. Befallningshafvandes femårsberättelser åren 1876–1880 för Göteborgs och Bohus Län* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt, 1881), 50.

232 Jeppsson, *Tankar till salu*, 72.

233 Atlestam, *Fullbokat*, 57–59; Johansson, "Göteborgs biblioteksförhållanden," 123.

234 Lext, *Bok och samhälle i Göteborg*, 195–98; Carlander, *Svenska bibliotek och ex-libris I*, 400–406.

established in 1858. They both soon joined the ranks of the country's largest newspapers.²³⁵

Gumpert's bookshop



Figure 3.2: The interior of Gumpert's bookshop, c. 1890. Photography from Claes Krantz' Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn: 150 års bokhandelshistoria (Gothenburg: Gumperts tryckeri, 1958)

Gumpert's bookshop was one of Gothenburg's most prominent businesses and one of Sweden's largest bookshops at the time, with an annual turnover of over 100,000 kronor during the 1880s.²³⁶ The history of the bookshop has been described in detail in Claes Krantz's *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts hörn: 150 års bokhandelshistoria* (1958) and Gunilla Lind's *N. J. Gumperts bokhandel 1808–2008: 200 år av bokhandelshistoria i Göteborg* (2008). The bookshop was established by vicar Anders Bjursten (1767–1834) in 1808. From 1824, it was run by vicar Anders Peter Tranæus (1789–1868). The two first owners were first and foremost clergymen, and for them, the small bookshop was not much more than an ancillary business. Under their leadership, Gumpert's bookshop hardly resembled a bookshop at all. In 1830, when Tranæus took office as vicar in Morup, the bookshop, including all its books, was sold to Christian Wilhelm Kyhl Glerup (1800–71).²³⁷ He was the first proprietor of Gumpert's bookshop

235 Bernhard Lundstedt, *Sveriges periodiska litteratur III: Landsorten 1813–99* (Stockholm: Iduns Kungliga Hofboktryckeri, 1902), 63–129.

236 Gunilla Lind, *N. J. Gumperts bokhandel 1808–2008: 200 år av bokhandelshistoria i Göteborg* (Göteborg: Akademibokhandeln, 2008); Hånell, *Liber Librariorum II*, 47.

237 Ewert Wrangel, *C. W. K. Glerup och det Glerupska förlaget* (Lund: C. W. K. Glerup,

to be a professional bookseller and publisher.

Gleerup was to become one of the most well respected booksellers in Scandinavia, and his bookshop in Lund was already one of the biggest in Sweden. The first shipment of books that he had delivered from his main bookshop sold out within days, suggesting there was a need for a permanent and more professionally run bookshop in Gothenburg. Gleerup was the first bookseller in Gothenburg to offer his customers books on approval. They could thereby buy a book and get their money back if they wanted to return it, which was something of a novelty.²³⁸ While Gleerup's bookshop in Lund left him little time to operate his Gothenburg branch, he had to find someone who could manage the bookshop in Gothenburg for him. Gleerup hired Julius Møller (1804–33), a Danish bookshop assistant. Møller took over the bookshop in 1833, but sadly passed away shortly after. Instead it was Gumpert, Møller's assistant, who eventually was to become the new owner.

Nathan Jacob Gumpert (1805–54) has been described as a highly capable businessman, and under his leadership the business expanded, adding a printing office, an art shop, and a music lending library. The bookshop also sold toys and photographs, tickets for the theatres and society dinners, and even body care products. At times, the bookshop also served as a public polling station. Gumpert also ventured into publishing, a path his successors also followed.²³⁹ In 1854, Gumpert passed away, and his widow, Edla Gumpert (1810–76), and his nephew, Oscar L. Lamm (1829–90) became the new owners. Lamm was only 25 years old at the time, but by then he had already worked in the bookshop for fourteen years. Eventually, Lamm's interest in publishing books took the upper hand, and in 1864 he moved to Stockholm. The business was sold to Frans Beijer (1836–1902). Shortly afterwards, Beijer hired Magnus Kindal (1836–1919) as his assistant, and after a while Kindal was promoted to co-owner of the bookshop on equal terms with Beijer. Like his predecessor, Beijer too became more interested in book publishing, and in 1869 he too moved to Stockholm. In 1872, Kindal became the sole owner of the bookshop.

1926), 57–62; Isidor Adolf Bonnier, *Anteckningar om svenska bokhandlare intill år 1900 jämte strödda notiser från senare tid: 1. Landsortsbokhandlare (utom Uppsala)* (Stockholm: Isidor Adolf Bonnier, 1920), 82–86.

238 Bonnier, *Anteckningar om svenska bokhandlare 1*, 83

239 Karl Otto Bonnier, *Boniers – en bokhandlarefamilj III* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1930), 16–17.

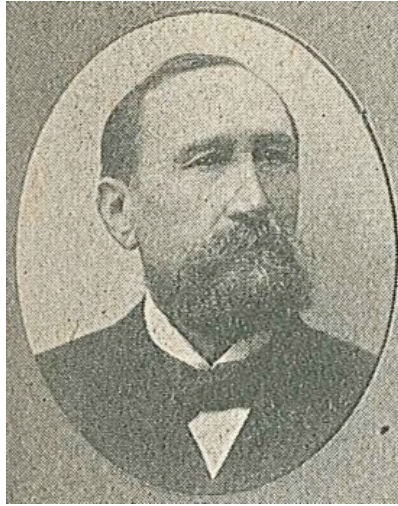


Figure 3.3: Magnus Kindal (1836–1919), proprietor of Gumpert’s bookshop from 1872 to 1898. Hvar 8 dag no 1:1906

Kindal has been described as one of Sweden’s “most industrious book-sellers.”²⁴⁰ Under his leadership the bookshop moved to a large three-storey property on the corner of Södra and Östra Hamngatan in central Gothenburg, which had been bought a few years earlier for a staggering 120,000 kronor. Gumpert’s bookshop was thus located at the busiest intersection in Gothenburg, which soon became known as “Gumpert’s corner,” for nearly a century.²⁴¹ Its opening hours were 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and it was staffed by ten shop assistants, a dozen delivery boys and eventually also a female cashier. Most of the stock was crammed into the shop’s bookcases, stretching thirteen shelves high from floor to ceiling. The bookshop assistants climbed the ladders “like monkeys” and were constantly wrapping and unwrapping parcels with books. A grand iron stove in the middle of the store, which belched out smoke every now and then, heated the bookshop, and reeking and unreliable gas lamps lighted it.²⁴²

Since the business continued to grow, eventually it had to be split into two companies: N. J. Gumpert’s bookshop and N. J. Gumpert’s stationary shop,

240 I. A. Bonnier, *Anteckningar om svenska bokhandlare* 1, 85.

241 Krantz, *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn*, 25.

242 *Ibid.* 30–31.

housed on different stories in the building. During the last decades of the century, the sales of magazines became an important part of Gumpert's business, alongside schoolbooks, teaching materials, music prints, photographs, as well as second-hand books. In 1878, the bookshop even opened a second branch, in Majorna, west of central Gothenburg. Kindal had a very modern take on the role of advertisement. He kept the customers up to date with all the latest books through weekly advertisements in the biggest newspapers in Gothenburg, and for a few years, circulars offering new titles were even sent to customers every month, free of charge.²⁴³ He was well aware of the importance of speed, and when shipments with books in strong demand arrived in the port or at the railway station, the delivery boys from Gumpert's competed with delivery boys from other bookshops to be the first to offer their customers the new arrival.²⁴⁴

By the end of the 1880s, the number of bookshops in Gothenburg had, as previously mentioned, increased to around a dozen, and the book trade in the city was more than ever before characterized by fierce competition. A new bookshop, Wettergren & Kerber, was established in Gothenburg in 1882. This newest competitor was a particularly sensitive matter for Kindal, as Carl Wettergren and Theodor Kerber were his two bookshop managers, until they both suddenly decided to resign and start their own bookshop. Wettergren had worked for Kindal since 1870 and Kerber since 1874. On 24 February 1882, Kerber, who had been in charge of the sales of foreign books at Gumpert's bookshop, sent a letter to the publishing house Gyldendal in Copenhagen, accompanying the bookshop's official annual economic report:

*The present annual report is the last one that I will conduct on behalf of N. J. Gumpert's bookshop, while I, together with C. Wettergren, will open a bookshop of our own on 16 March. As your accounts indicate, I have not unsuccessfully managed to further the dissemination of your books, and it is my wish that in the future the contact between our two companies will be even livelier.*²⁴⁵

243 Lundstedt, *Sveriges periodiska litteratur III*, 91.

244 Krantz, *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn*, 32.

245 Letter to Gyldendal's publishing house from Kerber, 24 February 1882. Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag A/S arkiv, Korrespondence B.3.c. 1876–1884

Kerber's attempt to steal the commissionership with Gyldendal was not appreciated by Kindal. In a letter to Gyldendal 22 March 1882, Kindal wrote that the Swedish Publishers' Association in Stockholm unanimously had declined Wettergren & Kerber's requested commissionership, and that he hoped that Gyldendal would do the same.²⁴⁶ "Mr Kerber does not open his business to profit from it, but simply to have his revenge on me, since I would not make him a partner of my firm. The competition will only cause substantial losses for both of us." Kindal ended the letter by saying that publishers entering into commercial relations with Kerber would do so at their own risk, while Kerber did not have any capital of his own, and furthermore he added: "Kerber is German."²⁴⁷

With both of his bookshop managers suddenly gone, Kindal had to find a replacement. Already in 1882 he hired another assistant, J. A. W. Hartelius. Eager not to make the same mistake twice, Gumpert quickly made Hartelius his partner, from 1 July 1882, but Hartelius did not stay for very long. In 1886 he resumed the position as manager of C. F. Arwidsson's bookshop in Gothenburg, and Kindal was on his own again. Not before his son, Carl Kindal, became of age in 1898, did Kindal get another companion.²⁴⁸

According to his colleagues, Kindal seems to have been quite the businessman. A testimony from Fritz Orstadius, manager of J. F. Richter's bookshop in Gothenburg, provides something of a caricature of Kindal, but also adds to the picture of the harsh business climate in Gothenburg. In a letter to the Publisher's Association of 8 September 1888, Orstadius complained that "Mr Kindal, who now surely has become a millionaire, runs his business not to make a profit, but solely to ruin his colleagues' businesses, since he is dominated by the direst envy and professional jealousy."²⁴⁹ A business-minded bookseller, unpopular among at least some of his colleagues, Kindal seems to have been better liked by his staff.

Employment at Gumpert's bookshop was, according to Krantz, sought-after,

246 Not until 1885 did Wettergren & Kerber become a commissioner of the Publisher's Association. *Festskrift med anledning af Svenska Bokförläggareföreningens femtiårs-jubileum*, 259.

247 Letter to Gyldendal's publishing house from Kindal, 22 March 1882, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag A/S arkiv, Korrespondence B.3.c. 1876–1884.

248 I. A. Bonnier, *Anteckningar om svenska bokhandlare 1*, 86.

249 Quoted from Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle*, 93.

and qualified for future work within the book industry. Many stayed in Kindal's service for years, some even for decades. The future bookshop manager Johan Lundgren, for example, worked for Gumpert's bookshop for 60 years, and Ernst G. Pettersson for 45 years. The employees were expected to be hard working, and unpaid overtime during peak seasons was common. As compensation, the staff received extra payments for Christmas, and a two-week vacation every summer; something of a novelty, long before any holiday legislations. During Christmas, all employees – bookshop managers, assistants and errand boys alike – were invited to Christmas dinner with the Kindal family.²⁵⁰

Johan Lundgren, who kept a diary during all his years at Gumpert's bookshop, has captured something of the atmosphere of the bookshop as well as the relation between Kindal and his employees. When Lundgren first arrived in Gothenburg in January 1887 to take up the position as bookshop assistant, he was immediately greeted by Kindal, who had booked a room for him at a hotel. The morning after, he was invited to breakfast with Kindal and the colleagues ("the boys"), and they all went for a long walk together. Frequently, almost weekly, Lundgren was invited to dinner with Kindal and his family, and they spent long afternoons and evenings together, having dinner and playing cards.²⁵¹

Customers of Gumpert's bookshop

During the nineteenth century, most bookshop customers made, as already mentioned, their purchases on credit, and normally paid their balance once or twice a year. Naturally, it was possible to pay the books in cash immediately, but it seems to have been customary for most returning customers to buy their books on credit.²⁵² Consequently, the bookshop had a sales account detailing all the regular customers' purchases. According to the accounts, Gumpert's bookshop had on average around 1,200 regular customers during the 1880s. Compared to the population of Gothenburg in general, the bookshop's clientele represented a rather narrow segment of the city's 80,000 inhabitants. According to the 1880 census, the largest group of professionals in Gothenburg

250 Krantz, *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn*, 29–31.

251 Johan Lundgren diary for January 1887, in the archive of N. J. Gumpert, GLA/C0038:1, Regional State Archives in Gothenburg.

252 Åberg, "Det moderna genombrottet", 54.

were those employed within the industrial sector, followed by those employed within trade and transportation.²⁵³

Like most bookshops at the time, Gumpert's bookshop primarily served the needs of the highly educated and well to do. The sales' ledgers disclose that the mayor of Gothenburg, bishops, military men, doctors, engineers, academics, and some of the foremost Swedish writers and literary critics of the time were among the bookshop's customers. In addition, nearly a quarter of the customers consisted of *grosshandlare* (wealthy merchants or wholesale distributors). But among the bookshop's clientele were also a handful of tailors, shoemakers, and carpenters. The proportion of women with their own account in Gumpert's bookshop was small but growing, tripling from 1875 to 1900. Most customers lived in Gothenburg or its vicinity, but the bookshop also sold books through mail order. The diagram below lists the 25 largest categories of customers in Gumpert's bookshop in 1879. That year, Gumpert's bookshop had in all 1,183 credit customers.

253 *Bidrag till Sveriges officiella statistik: A. Befolkningsstatistik för år 1880. Ny följd XXII:3* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt, 1885), xxxii-xxxiii.

Table 3.1: The 25 largest categories of account/returning customers in Gumpert's bookshop in 1879

Profession/Title	Number of customers
Wholesaler	197
Bookkeeper	66
Tradesman/Shopkeeper	66
Authorities/Institutions	45
Schools and school boards	41
Vicar	41
Captain	34
Engineer	30
District judge	28
Physician	28
“Chalmerist” – student at Chalmers University of Technology	24
Unmarried woman	24
Widow	23
Companies	23
Lieutenant	21
Doctor of philosophy	18
Married woman	13
Teacher	13
Pharmacist	12
Company manager	12
City broker (<i>stadsmäklare</i>)	11
Master builder	10
Architect	9
Mayor	8
Writer	7
No title/unidentified	147
110 Other titles/professions	232
Total: 135 titles/professions	Total: 1,183

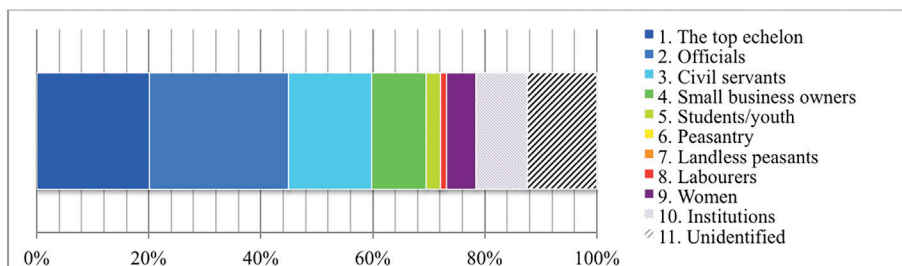


Figure 3.4: Social segmentation of the customers of Gumpert's bookshop in 1879

According to Krantz, the clientele of Gumpert's bookshop became more exclusive by the end of the century, which was reflected by the bookshop's shift towards more scholarly and foreign literature.²⁵⁴ The oldest preserved sales' account dates from 1870, so it is not possible to trace the clientele of the bookshop with any greater accuracy earlier than this date.

However, in 1857, the proprietor of Gumpert, Oscar L. Lamm, wrote a letter to the Swedish Publishers' Association where he described the bookshop's customer base. A new bookshop was about to open up in Gothenburg, and just like his predecessor, Lamm made an attempt at trying to dissuade the Publishers' Association from granting them commissionership. Lamm argued that there was absolutely no need for a fourth commissioner in Gothenburg, and added that it was already hard for the three bookshops to make ends meet as it was: "Although our society is not small, and the prosperity has increased considerably in the past few years, the sale of literature is lagging behind; most of the bourgeoisie [*ståndspersoner*] consist of merchants, who do not even buy a single book a year."²⁵⁵ As we have seen, nearly a quarter of a century later, the merchants and wholesalers still formed the main base of the bookshop's clientele. Lamm's description of them as hardly buying any books at all must, however, be taken with a grain of salt since he was trying to convince the Publishers' Association of the harsh conditions in Gothenburg.

²⁵⁴ Krantz, *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn*, 33–34.

²⁵⁵ Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 259–60.

The parish library

Book culture in Munka-Ljungby

During the later part of the nineteenth century, Munka-Ljungby was a small parish with 2,100 inhabitants. Fertile lands surrounded the parish, and among the industries in Munka-Ljungby were several stamping mills and sawmills. Until the railway opened in the early twentieth century, the Rönne River offered the most important means of transportation to the port in Ängelholm, which opens up onto the Kattegat Sea.²⁵⁶ Munka-Ljungby had a post office and three school buildings, but for most other public services, such as pharmacies, banks, hospitals, etc., the villagers had to go to Ängelholm, roughly seven kilometres away. The book culture in Munka-Ljungby was exceedingly modest. The closest bookshop, J. P. Killberg's bookshop, established in 1851, was also located in Ängelholm.²⁵⁷ Books could be purchased from itinerant peddlers, and sometimes they were sold at the market. Book auctions were another way of acquiring books in Munka-Ljungby. Every year around Christmas time, starting no later than the 1880s, book auctions were organised in the municipal building of Munka-Ljungby, by the lay assessor Karl O. Hansson. Printed auction catalogues were issued prior to the auction, free of charge.

256 Johan Brinck, "Landsbysocknarnas historia i korthet," Ängelholms kommun, last modified 13 October 2017, <https://www.engelholm.se/Uppleva-gora/Bibliotek/Bibliotekets-tjanster/Slaktforskning/Angelholmsbygdens-historia/Angelholmshistoria/Landsbygdssocknarnas-historia/>

257 *Festskrift med anledning af Svenska Bokförläggareföreningens femtiårs-jubileum*, 255–56; Patrik Kumlin, *Utflykt i bokskogen – Berättelsen om Killbergs bokhandel* (Helsingborg: Killbergs bokhandel, 2000), 23.

Bokauktion
i MUNKA LJUNGBY.
Tisdagen den 28 dennes kl. 11 f. m.
hålles auktion i Munka Ljungby kommu-
nalrum & en större samling goda böcker.
Kataloger utdelas gratis.
Röamölla den 21 December 1886.
KARL O. HANSSON.

Figure 3.5: Advertisement in Norra Skåne on 16 December 1886 for the annual book auction in Munka-Ljungby

In the early 1880s, Wendela Lundgren opened a lending library in Ängelholm. The library was rather modest, with a collection of three hundred volumes. Lundgren's customers paid a subscription fee, ranging from five kronor for a year's membership, to 15 öre for one hour. Apart from Ängelholm, there were also lending libraries in Helsingborg, Hässleholm, and Vittsjö.²⁵⁸ Even if some lending libraries welcomed customers living in the countryside, and sometimes even offered particularly favourable terms, the distances were far from insignificant: Helsingborg was over 30 kilometres away, and Vittsjö and Hässleholm over 50 kilometres away.

No newspapers or magazines were published in Munka-Ljungby, but in nearby Ängelholm a number of newspapers were established during the latter part of the nineteenth century. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, two newspapers were issued in Ängelholm on a regular basis: *Engelholms tidning*, established in 1867, and *Norra Skåne*, established in 1880. *Engelholms tidning* had a pressrun of around 300 copies during the early 1870s.²⁵⁹ Both newspapers were issued twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays. An annual subscription cost between four and five kronor, and each number comprised four pages. From 1885 and onwards both newspapers issued three numbers

²⁵⁸ Carlander, *Svenska bibliotek och ex-libris I*, 406–07, 427.

²⁵⁹ Sture M. Waller, *Den svenska pressens upplagor 1824–1872*, edited by Karl Erik Gustafsson and Per Rydén (Göteborg: Sylwan, 2001), 82–83.

every week, on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.²⁶⁰

Norra Skåne seems to have been used regularly for announcements regarding the inhabitants of Munka-Ljungby. Apart from short international, national, and local news and anecdotes, *Norra Skåne* contained a large proportion of advertisements and editorial letters. Already in the very first specimen copy in 1880, a serial story ran at the end of the number, and this was to become a permanent feature of the newspaper. The very first serial consisted of a short story written by François Coppée, called “Smedernas streik” (The strike of the blacksmiths) in Swedish translation by J. Fagerström. Among the books published as serials in *Norra Skåne* were numerous intriguing, translated stories, such as *En spion* (A Spy) by F. Hoffman, *Nihilist-qvinnan: nutidsroman* (The Nihilist Woman: Contemporary Novel) by Fritz Horn and *Rocamboles* by French sensation Ponson du Terrail. Such titles could easily be found in lending libraries, but they rarely made their way to the parish libraries.

Munka-Ljungby’s parish library

The parish library in Munka-Ljungby was established in 1859, on a local initiative. The book collection was housed in the school, except for a brief period when it was located in the local parish house. Initially, the members funded the library. According to the statutes, the library was open to “each and every resident of the parish, who has paid at least two kronor to the library.”²⁶¹ The one-time membership fee was later replaced by an annual fee of one krona, which was eventually reduced again to 50 öre (0.50 kronor). Upon its establishment, the library received contributions of 50 kronor from two anonymous benefactors, and in 1892 the estate owner Detlef von Ahlefeld donated a further 50 kronor. In addition, the library received an annual allowance from the liquor tax revenues. Borrowing books was free for everyone who had paid the membership fee, and “trustworthy” non-members living in the parish were also allowed to borrow books, upon the condition that they paid the equivalent of two per cent of the books’ value.

260 Lundstedt, *Sveriges periodiska litteratur III*, 20–23.

261 The archive of the library board of Munka-Ljungby municipality, A:1. Minutes of proceedings 1859–1886.



Figure 3.6: The school in Munka-Ljungby on graduation day in 1899.

Courtesy SPF Seniorerna Munka

Opening hours were Saturdays from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., but for practical reasons, they were eventually limited to every second Saturday. At first, members were allowed to borrow an unlimited number of books, upon the condition that they were returned after a week, but after a couple of months the duration of the loans was extended, first to two, and finally to four weeks, and the maximum number of books was set to three. During the library's first fifteen years, a single bookcase was enough to accommodate the library's books, but in the late 1870s an additional bookcase had to be acquired. The bookcases were fitted with glass doors and the collection was insured to a value of 1,000 kronor.

Initially, the library had seventy-five members, and the number of members grew steadily. In 1882 the members had to be divided into two equally sized groups, in order to avoid congestion. Members with borrower's numbers 1–70 were allowed access on the second Saturday of the month, and those with a number of 71 or higher were welcome on the last Saturday of the month. A board consisting of three or four members, one of whom was appointed librarian, administered the library. During the first few years a farmhand served as librarian, but from 1873 until 1902, the position was held by the elementary-school teacher Frans Linnell (1840–1912). Among the longstanding members of the

board were dye manufacturer Helmer Nore Hansson and two yeomen, Janne Andersson and Anton Ebbesson. The library still exists as the public library of Munka-Ljungby.

The members of the parish library

Three members' lists from the parish library in Munka-Ljungby have been preserved: one from the mid-1870s, listing 116 members, one from around 1880, listing 142 members, and one from around 1885, listing 155 members. The titles or professions have been recorded only for 20 to 30 per cent of members. In some cases the name of the village or farm of residence has been written down. With the help of the censuses and parish registers it has been possible to identify a majority of the members of the parish library. But the widespread use of patronymic surnames (e.g. Johansson, meaning "son of Johan") and the lack of additional information, such as titles, professions, dwelling places, and in some cases first names, has prevented the identification of a number of members.

By the end of the nineteenth century, close to 10 per cent of Munka-Ljungby's 2,000 inhabitants – a high figure even by international standards²⁶² – were members of the library. Around 75 per cent of the identified library members were farmers or farmhands. The second largest group consisted of widows, closely followed by blacksmiths, agricultural workers, shoemakers, tradesmen, maids, bookbinders, and tailors. Among the members of the library in Munka-Ljungby were some from the poorest segments of society, such as *statare* (agricultural workers who only received payment in kind), and *inby-seshjon* and *fattighjon*, workhouse and poorhouse inmates.²⁶³ One institution, the local poorhouse, was also registered as a member of the library. In 1880, the oldest recorded member of the library was 86 years old, and the youngest, noted as a *gosse* (boy), was only 14 years old. The average age of the members was around 50, and the median 53. A handful of women, close to 10 per cent of the members, had their own accounts, but in most cases the *paterfamilias* was the account holder, and the entire household would use the same account. Therefore, given the average size of a Swedish household at the time, as many as half the population of Munka-Ljungby may have had access to the library.

262 Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800–1900* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 236.

263 Schön, *En svensk ekonomisk historia*, 198–99.

Mostly only rather specific professions or titles were noted in the library's members' lists, for example widow, smith, dyer, shoe-maker, copyholder, wheelwright, tailor, carpenter, and dairyman. The profession or title of those working on farms – a majority of the library's members – have usually not been recorded, probably because this kind of occupation was the norm, as is evident from the 25 most common professions in the library members' list from around 1880 to 1885 (see table below). If we look at some of the most common titles among the members of the parish library, titles such as *hemmansägare* (yeoman), *statare*, *torpare* (crofter), and *åbo* (copyholder) were all used to describe peasants, but with different conditions and varying rights. The yeoman owned land, and the children of the copyholder had the right to inherit the property. Farmhands, *statare* and crofters were examples of landless farmers. The crofters had a piece of land at their disposal for as long as they lived, while farmhands and the *statare* often worked for payment in kind.²⁶⁴ Among the library's members were only very few with a formal education. The few exceptions were the teacher Frans Linnell, who also served as librarian, and the junior-school teacher Selma Hagström (b. 1840).

In some cases, the censuses and parish registers have recorded a title different from the one in the library's members' lists, and in many cases, members of the library changed professions over time. It is, for example, not unusual that a young man at first is recorded in the library records as a *dräng* (farmhand) and later, when he gets his own household, as a *hemmansägare* (yeoman). Others have changed profession altogether: someone who is recorded as a carpenter in one source is noted as a farmhand or a yeoman in another one. Some library members undoubtedly had secondary professions. This kind of social mobility – more horizontal than vertical – seems to have been very common.

264 "Släktforskarsholan: Bondelivets titlar" <http://slakthistoria.se/slaktforskarsholan/slaktforskarsholan-bondelivets-titlar>

Table 3.2: The 20 largest categories of customers in the parish library in Munka-Ljungby c. 1880–85

Profession/Title	Amount
Yeoman / Farm owner	24
Widow	13
<i>Undantagsman</i> (previous farm owner receiving his livelihood/support from his successor)	12
Farmhand	11
Blacksmith	7
Crofter	7
Copyholder	7
<i>Statare</i> (farm worker only receiving payment in kind)	6
Tailor	5
Carpenter	4
Dyer	3
Tradesman	2
Wife	2
Shoemaker	2
Unmarried woman	2
(Unmarried) working maid	2
Workhouse inmate	2
House owner	2
Mill owner	2
Painter	2
No title/unidentified	32
10 other titles/professions	10
Total: 30 professions/titles	159

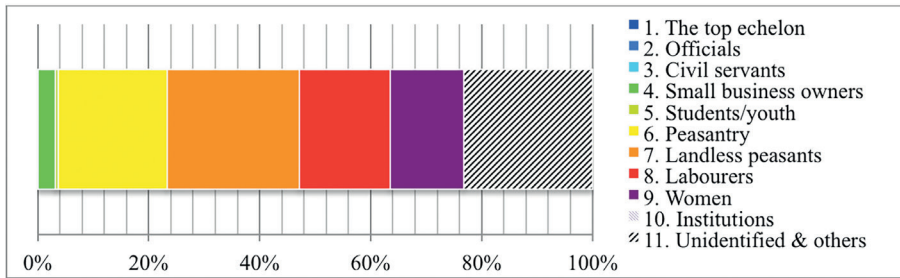


Figure 3.7: Social segmentation of identified members of the parish library in Munka-Ljungby c. 1880–85

Göran Gynnerstedt noted in his study of the parish library in Norra Solberga that it was predominantly the most affluent sections of the community who used the parish library.²⁶⁵ In comparison, the members of the parish library in Munka-Ljungby were socially more diverse. There were, for example, no higher-ranking civil servants using the library, and although the single largest group of customers consisted of land-owning peasants, they were outnumbered by the landless peasants. Clearly, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby catered to a clientele of a completely different social standing than both the bookshop and the commercial lending library.

The commercial lending library

Book culture in Lund

The old university town of Lund had around 14,300 inhabitants in 1880 and it was the ninth largest town in Sweden.²⁶⁶ The population was diverse, with a significant proportion of academics and students and sizeable groups of labourers and artisans. Just over half of the city's population worked in industries or crafts. The city was surrounded by fertile farmland, but by the end of the

²⁶⁵ Göran Gynnerstedt, "Nora Solberga sockenbibliotek. Bokbestånd, utlåning, låntagare, målsättning och ekonomi med tonvikt på 1860-talet" in *Biblioteksstudierande skriver bibliotekshistoria* (Kungälv: Skrifter från Högskolan i Borås, 1989) 68–109 (89–94)

²⁶⁶ Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 63.

century, more and more people moved into Lund from the countryside, seeking employment in the industries rather than in agriculture.²⁶⁷

During the late nineteenth century, Lund had a range of different kinds of libraries. First of all there was the large University Library. Akademiska Föreningen (The Academic Society) and several of the Student nations and University Faculties also had substantial book collections.²⁶⁸ However, only students and academics, a group of around 1,000 people, were allowed to use them. Lunds stadsbibliotek (Lund Public Library), established in 1864, was open for everyone. In 1884, it had a book collection of little more than 1,000 volumes, and it was predominantly frequented by labourers and artisans, although the number of middle-class borrowers was on the rise.²⁶⁹ The opening hours, however, were very limited: only 2.5 hours per week.²⁷⁰ In 1892, a worker's library was established in Lund, organised by the workers' unions. It was open two hours every Monday and Thursday.²⁷¹ Commercial lending libraries and antiquarian bookshops had existed in Lund since around 1820 at least, but by the end of the century, Sjöblom's library was the only commercial lending library in the town. Lund had two regular bookshops, Gleerup's bookshop and P. H. Lindstedt's bookshop. Both called themselves *universitetsbokhandel* (University bookshop), and they catered to the university's need of stationary and literature. In addition, the university organised book auctions every Wednesday and Saturday.²⁷² Lund had had a periodical press ever since the early eighteenth century, and by the late nineteenth century two major newspapers, *Folkets tidning* and *Lunds Dagblad*, were issued Monday to Saturday.²⁷³

267 Leffler, *Böcker, bildning, makt*, 201–09.

268 Carlander, *Svenska bibliotek och ex-libris I*, 214–25.

269 *Katalog öfver Lunds Stads Bibliotek 1864–1884* (Lund: Håkan Ohlssons boktryckeri, 1884);
Leffler, *Böcker, bildning, makt*, 137–46.

270 *Adress-Kalender*, 48.

271 Leffler, *Böcker, bildning, makt*, 247–48.

272 *Adress-Kalender*, 47–48.

273 Lundstedt, *Sveriges periodiska litteratur III*, 238–54.

J. A. Sjöblom's lending library



*Figure 3.8: Jacob Albert Sjöblom (1849–1922). Photography from William Lengertz's **Min kulörta bok** (Malmö: Lengertz, 1940)*

The proprietor, Jacob Albert Sjöblom, is said to have been something of a character, and half-truths and myths about him flourished among generations of schoolboys and students in Lund. Sjöblom started buying and selling used schoolbooks in 1867, and eventually expanded his business with a commercial lending library. Apart from books, Sjöblom traded in stationery, old coins, antiques, and stamps. In March 1876, Sjöblom won the substantial amount of 60,000 kronor in the Danish lottery called Klasse-Lotteriet.²⁷⁴ Shortly after, in April 1876, he sold a significant part of his book collection in a large book auction in Lund: the printed catalogue ran 46 pages and listed over 2,000 volumes.²⁷⁵ He had a large house built for himself in the fashionable Svanegatan in central Lund, finished in 1878. The house, Billegården 21, remains to this day. He did, however, not abandon his book businesses entirely.

Sjöblom's combined antiquarian bookshop and commercial lending library was a place constantly bursting with activity. The generous opening hours, Monday to Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., proved a stark contrast to most public libraries. A former customer recalled that the business hours were long, but tranquil: "there was no hustle or bustle back then!"²⁷⁶ But the long

²⁷⁴ Notice published in *Blekingeposten* 17 March 1876.

²⁷⁵ *Katalog öfver J. A. Sjöbloms Boklager, som kommer försäljas på Bok-auktionskammaren i Lund den 26 april 1876* (Lund: Fredrik Berlings boktryckeri och stilgjuteri, 1876).

²⁷⁶ *Vår ungdoms Lund: minnen nedtecknade av äldre lundensare* (Lund: Det Gamla Lund,

opening hours were naturally a big commitment for Sjöblom. On 18 December 1888, Sjöblom's younger brother, Johan Sjöblom, wrote a letter urging his brother to come to Helsingborg to celebrate Christmas with his family. Apparently, Sjöblom was reluctant to leave Lund, due to the probable loss of income. But the brother was not easily swayed: "As soon as you receive this letter, you are to put an advertisement in the newspaper notifying that the lending library will be closed for the entire Christmas Eve."²⁷⁷

Throughout the years, Sjöblom's business was housed in a number of different locations in central Lund: Stortorget, Stora Södergatan, and Grönegatan. In 1878, the lending library moved to its first more permanent location, in Sjöblom's newly erected house on Svanegatan. In 1882 Sjöblom bought his colleague Tullstorp's lending library in Malmö. He used it as a branch for a few years, before he sold it to the unmarried Johanna Andersson, who in turn later passed it on to the unmarried Cecilia Hainer.²⁷⁸ A few years later, in 1886, the lending library had to move again, since Sjöblom had lost most of his money and was forced to sell his house.²⁷⁹ The preserved correspondence reveals that Sjöblom had lent large amounts of money to a number of acquaintances and had a hard time getting the money back.

Once the house on Svanegatan was sold, the lending library moved to a house in Bantorget, and sometime during the 1890s, Sjöblom had to move once again, possibly because the Grand Hotel was to be built on the same location. This time, the library moved back to Stora Södergatan, opposite of Lund Cathedral School. In 1904 Sjöblom closed his lending library for good, but he continued buying and selling used books.²⁸⁰ In 1906, the antiquarian bookshop moved one last time, to the corner of Östra Märtensgatan and Råbyvägen, where it was housed until Sjöblom's death in 1922. One of Sjöblom's customers described Sjöblom's last venue as "a sight for the gods ... with leaning bookshelves and piles of books everywhere ... narrow passages ... and hardly a single place to put your foot down ... catacombs of books, the like of

1954), 32.

277 Letter to Jacob Albert Sjöblom from Johan Sjöblom, Helsingborg, 18 December 1888. The archive of Jacob Albert Sjöblom, Lund University Library.

278 Carlander, *Svenska bibliotek och ex-libris I*, 412.

279 Johnny Ambrius, *Skånska antikvariat* (Malmö: Ambrius & Buckhorn, 1989), 26.

280 I. A. Bonnier, *Anteckningar om svenska bokhandlare I*, 223.

which has never before been seen!”²⁸¹

One of the best known anecdotes about Sjöblom, originally published in the students' magazine *Lundagård*, recounts the interactions between Sjöblom and his alleged archenemy, nicknamed “Dionysos.” On one occasion Sjöblom had played a prank on Dionysos, and Dionysos was therefore looking for revenge. He entered Sjöblom's shop and bought an old book for 1,75 kronor. When Sjöblom looked the other way, he snuck a couple of banknotes in the book and then made sure Sjöblom saw them. Sjöblom was in a state of shock and eventually managed to buy the book back – at a higher price – but then, all the banknotes had vanished, of course. Sjöblom spent 10 days searching all his books for banknotes, without any success. After the futile pursuit he had to close the shop and spend two weeks bedridden.²⁸² Although there might be no truth at all to the anecdotes about Sjöblom, they tell us that he was a well-known character and something of an institution for generations of customers in Lund.

Customers of Sjöblom's lending library

Two customer catalogues from Sjöblom's lending library provide a rare insight into the clientele of lending libraries. They date from sometime around the mid-1890s and the late 1890s respectively and list around 500 regular users each, at a time when Lund had 16,000 inhabitants. Furthermore, the preserved samples of borrowers' receipts provide detailed information about the clientele of the lending library during the early 1880s. The preserved receipts show that in 1882, around 240 customers whose surnames start with B, O, P, or S borrowed books from Sjöblom's lending library. Since around a fourth of the population in Lund had surnames starting with one of these letters, the number of customers borrowing books from Sjöblom's lending library this year must have been around 1,000.

281 William Lengertz, *Min kulörta bok: Skånska porträtt, händelser och minnen* (Malmö: Lengertz, 1940), 154.

282 *Humor från Skåne: en kavalkad i ord och bild*, edited by Axel Larsson (Malmö: Bernece, 1954) 317–19.

Table 3.3: The 25 largest categories of customers in J. A. Sjöblom's lending library during the early 1880s, based on borrower's receipts from 1879–84 for customers with surnames starting on the letters B, O, P, or S

Profession/Title	Amount
Student	44
<i>Fröken</i> ("Miss," unmarried woman)	36
Boy/youngster/schoolboy	33
Clerk	18
Maid	13
<i>Seminarist</i> (student at training college)	13
Married woman	11
Painter	9
Blacksmith	8
Graduate	7
Upper secondary school pupil	5
Tradesman	5
Doctor of Philosophy	5
Farmer	4
Tinsmith	4
Tailor/spinner	4
Sergeant/Lieutenant	4
Waiter	4
Sailor	3
Founder	2
Glove maker	2
Professor	2
Shoemaker	2
Miller	2
Soldier	2
No title/unidentified	48
51 other titles/professions	66
Total: 76 titles/professions	356

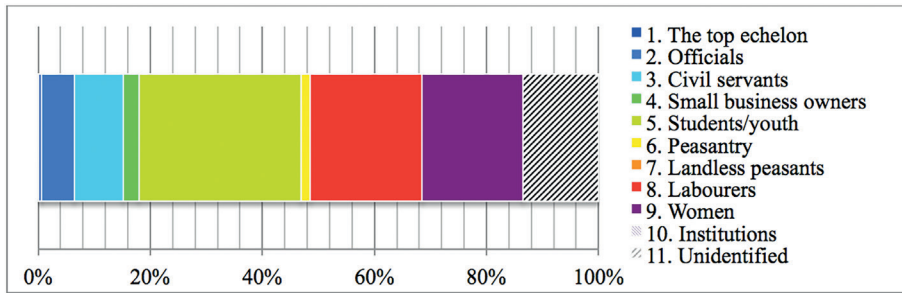


Figure 3.9: Social segmentation of the customers of Sjöblom's lending library c. 1882

Tracing those who frequented lending libraries during the late nineteenth century has, as mentioned before, proved a difficult task. In her study of lending libraries, Jeppsson had a hard time pinpointing the clientele, since she lacked the proper sources.²⁸³ Svedjedal, for his part, suggested that the lending libraries' clientele during the 1880s was "essentially the same as that of the bookshop," which is not entirely consistent with the findings of this study, at least if the clientele of Sjöblom's library is fairly representative of that of lending libraries in general.²⁸⁴ Being a university town means that the social composition of Lund's population did not resemble that of most other towns. However, even if we disregard the members of the academic community among Sjöblom's customers, the differences between the clienteles of Gumpert's bookshop and of Sjöblom's lending library, for example, were still substantial. Sjöblom's lending library served a socially diverse clientele, quite unlike that of Gumpert's bookshop.

Most customers of the lending library were concentrated in Lund, but many lived in other parts of Scania, some even further away. Farmer Jöns Olsson, for example, a recurring customer of the lending library, lived in Halmstad, over 120 kilometres from Lund. During the early 1880s, students constituted the single largest group of customers, and the proportion of labourers and artisans was rather small, only slightly larger than the proportion of officials and members of the top echelon. By the late 1890s, however, the social balance of the clientele had changed. Now, labourers and artisans constituted the largest social group and the number of young boys and peasants increased substantially.

283 Jeppsson, *Tänkar till salu*, 11.

284 Svedjedal, *Bokens sambälle*, 39. See also Åberg, "Från Luther till Libris," 9–10.

Meanwhile the proportion of officials and students was decreasing.

According to Sjöblom's own categorization, the single largest group of customers in his lending library by the end of the century was unmarried women and girls, followed by young men and boys, university students, married women, unskilled labourers, farmers, foundry men, book-keepers, carpenters, shoemakers, and maids. A number of employees from the university were also customers of the library, for example university lecturers, associate professors, doctors of philosophy, and professors, but their numbers seem to have decreased since the 1880s. For many years, the lending library was situated in the vicinity of Lund Cathedral School, and schoolboys were a particularly important customer group.²⁸⁵ Almost a quarter of the customers were female, up from around 18 per cent in the early 1880s. The gender balance of the Swedish population as a whole was somewhat uneven. In 1880, there were 106 women per 100 men.²⁸⁶ The imbalance was even more pronounced in Lund. According to census, Lund had 6,326 male inhabitants in 1886, as compared to 8,592 female inhabitants.²⁸⁷ As Marion Leffler points out, Lund had particularly many unmarried women by the end of the nineteenth century.²⁸⁸

Some groups of customers are almost entirely absent among Sjöblom's clientele. Clerics, for example, seem to have avoided novels altogether, which is evident from the sales' ledgers from Gumpert's bookshop (a point we will return to later on). It is therefore not surprising that there seem to have been hardly any clerics borrowing books from Sjöblom's lending library. The only exception that we know of among Sjöblom's customers was vicar Erik Berlin (1832–86), who borrowed novels by Marie Sophie Schwartz and Georg Ebers on a few occasions.

285 Henning Hansen "Bokläsning i Lund omkring 1880," *Biblis* 67 (2014): 50–57 (54).

286 *Historisk statistik för Sverige*, 46–47

287 *Bidrag till Sveriges officiella statistik: sammandrag. Kungl. Maj:ts befallningshafvandes femårsberättelser. Ny följd VII. 1886–1890. Malmöhus Län* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & söner, 1895), 39.

288 Leffler, *Böcker, bildning, makt*, 155.

Table 3.4: The 25 largest categories of customers in J. A. Sjöblom's lending library, listed in the two preserved customer catalogues from c. 1895–1900

Profession/Title	Amount
<i>Fröken</i> (unmarried woman)	159
Boy/youngster	85
Graduate	40
Student	33
Married woman	30
Unskilled labourer	27
Soldier	27
Farmer	26
Founder	25
Clerk	23
Upper secondary school pupil	23
Artisan	20
Farmhand	18
Maid	18
Shoemaker	18
Tradesman	17
Delivery boy / messenger	15
<i>Seminarist</i> (student at training college)	15
Tailor/spinner	15
Blacksmith	15
Painter	14
Marker	12
Butcher	12
Waiter	11
Bricklayer	10
No title/unidentified	63
52 other titles/professions	205
Total: 77 titles/professions	976

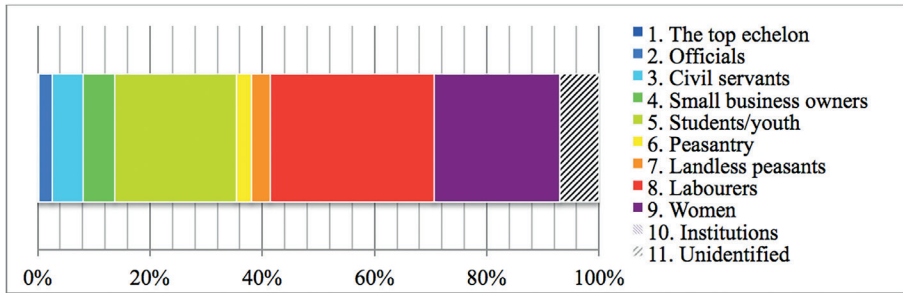


Figure 3.10: Social segmentation of the customers of Sjöblom's lending library c. 1895

During the nineteenth century, clashes occasionally occurred in Lund between town and gown, i.e. the working-class population and the academic population. In 1848, bishop Wilhelm Faxé lamented the “lengthy wartime among the town’s students and the working youth.”²⁸⁹ In particular, there seems to have been a lot of tension between the town’s students and the young journeymen. According to an article by geologist Leonard Holmström, who was a student in Lund during the 1860s, these tensions would often lead to fistfights and large-scale conflicts. It was easy to get involved in fights involuntarily, and members of the two sides avoided roaming the streets alone, although the discord, according to Holmström, used to have been worse.²⁹⁰ Sjöblom’s lending library may have been one of relatively few places where these groups could mingle under, presumably, rather peaceful circumstances. Both sides were, as we can see from the preserved receipts, keen borrowers of books, although by the end of the century Sjöblom’s lending library was becoming more of a domain for the working classes than the academic community. The commercial lending library was, as Rudolf Schenda points out, the most democratic institution for reading. Here, everyone was welcome.²⁹¹

289 Ibid. 89.

290 Leonard Holmström, “Hågkomster från 1860-talets studentliv i Lund” in *Under Lundagårdens kronor: en minneskrans vid tvåhundrafemtioårsfesten af gamla studenter* (Lund: Gleerupska universitetsbokhandeln, 1918), 192–211 (202–04)

291 Schenda, *Volk ohne Buch*, 205.

Summary

Gumpert's bookshop in Gothenburg, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, and Sjöblom's commercial lending library in Lund were three principally different kinds of literary institutions. They operated in entirely different social and literary spaces, spanning from the urban setting of Gothenburg to the rural Munka-Ljungby. Gothenburg and Lund were hubs for book culture, and their inhabitants could acquire books from a variety of libraries, bookshops, and reading societies, whereas access to books in Munka-Ljungby was far more limited. In spite of its strictly limited opening hours, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby was arguably of far greater importance to the population of Munka-Ljungby than for example Gumpert's bookshop was to the population of Gothenburg, as they had practically no other way of acquiring literature.

Less than 2 per cent of the population of Gothenburg were regular customers of Gumpert's bookshop, as compared to the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, where at least 10 per cent of the population were members of the library. In Lund, around 7 per cent of the population, or c. 1,000 out of c. 14,000 inhabitants, borrowed books from Sjöblom's lending library at least once in 1882. Given the fact that the entire household or family would often share an account in the bookshop or in the library, the actual number of book consumers was higher. This applies to the parish library in Munka-Ljungby in particular, but also to Gumpert's bookshop, and to some extent also to Sjöblom's commercial lending library.

The three institutions catered to customers of widely different social standing. Gumpert's bookshop attracted customers from the top echelon of society, for example wholesalers, academics, white-collar workers, and clerics, whereas the parish library was frequented predominantly by land-owning peasants, farmhands, and artisans. The customers of the commercial lending library mirrored a more differentiated social structure. Compared to the other two institutions, Sjöblom's clientele was more socially diverse, and included academics and noblemen as well as artisans and peasants, but hardly any clerics. The commercial lending library was also the one with the largest proportion of registered female customers.

OFFER AND DEMAND: SALES AND LOANS

The bookshop

Gumpert's bookshop was a demand-driven business: the taste of its customers decided the selection of books on offer. However, like most large bookshops at the time, Gumpert's mainly sold books on commission, which meant that the selection of books to a large extent was limited by what books the publishers delivered. The literary focus of Gumpert's bookshop underwent radical change in the course of the nineteenth century. In the early and mid-nineteenth century, dubious literature, for example quackery and gothic stories, had constituted a large share of the bookshop's stock, but in the course of the second half of the century, focus shifted towards scholarly and more "respectable" literature.²⁹²

Gumpert's bookshop was a trusted commissioner of the Swedish Publishers' Association as well as of a number of foreign publishers, and new books arrived to the bookshop on a regular basis. In an advert from 1873, the bookshop boasted that "shipments with all that the newest literature has to offer arrive from Germany, England and France every week, and from Stockholm every other day" (see figure 4.1).²⁹³ Since communications improved over the years, it is likely that these shipments became even more frequent. Apart from the literary novelties, the bookshop had a large stock crammed into the bookshop. In general, books were commercially viable for a rather long time, and the books stored in the bookshop probably consisted largely of such literary staples.

292 Krantz, *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn*, 12–13, 33–34.

293 *Göteborgs Kalender för 1873* (Göteborg: Handelstidningens tryckeri, 1873), 1



Figure 4.1: Advertisement for Gumpert's bookshop on the cover of *Göteborgs Kalender för 1873*

Since there was a lot of competition among the booksellers in Gothenburg, it could be advantageous to specialise in certain fields or genres. For Gumpert's bookshop, schoolbooks seem to have been such a niche, although they offered books in all fields.²⁹⁴ In recurring advertisements in *Göteborgs Aftonblad*, it was claimed that "Gumpert's bookshop has – as always – the best stock of schoolbooks in sturdy bindings, sold at the publishers' unusually low original prices, at which no one can compete."²⁹⁵ As early as in 1857, the proprietor of Gumpert's, Oscar L. Lamm, stated that "the best-selling literature consists of schoolbooks and some fiction."²⁹⁶ Gumpert's bookshop also published textbooks on its own, probably after having realised that this could make a better profit than selling them on commission.

Among the ten best-selling publications at Gumpert's bookshop were, to no great surprise, the almanac and the catechism, but the remaining eight titles consisted of schoolbooks. Ephemeral publications constituted another important category in Gumpert's bookshop. During the late 1880s, customers at Gumpert's bookshop could choose from around 800 different foreign and Swedish journals and magazines covering a wide range of subjects, from French literary calendars to German trade magazines on iron production. Of course, these magazines could just as well be delivered directly to the individual customer, but by ordering through the bookshop, the customers did not have

294 Krantz, *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn*, 27–28.

295 Advertisement from *Göteborgs Aftonblad* 3 September 1889.

296 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 259–60.

to pay for the postal service.²⁹⁷ In terms of number of purchases, fiction was by far the bestselling genre. Schoolbooks were sold in greater numbers, but these high sales figures are to a large extent explained by the fact that school boards and teachers bought large quantities of standard textbooks; occasionally they would order hundreds of copies of a single book. Not all customers bought schoolbooks, but most customers bought fiction every now and then. Literary novelties were in particularly strong demand.

Table 4.1: Books sold (number of purchases and number of copies) from Gumpert's bookshop 1879–90 recorded in the 10 per cent sample of customers, categorised according to genre

Genre	Purchases	Percentage	Copies	Percentage
Fiction	3,329	21.0 %	3,673	15.4 %
Magazines & journals	2,504	15.7 %	2,791	11.7 %
Textbooks	2,082	13.1 %	7,569	31.8 %
Professional literature	1,667	10.5 %	1,770	7.4 %
History	804	5.1 %	808	3.4 %
Religion & philosophy	785	5.0 %	1,120	4.7 %
Travel books, geography & maps	674	4.5 %	706	3.0 %
Miscellaneous	639	4.3 %	682	2.9 %
Dictionaries & encyclopaedias	471	3.0 %	476	2.0 %
Calendars & almanacs	350	2.2 %	1,363	5.7 %
Children's books and picture books	324	2.0 %	447	1.9 %
Music	249	1.5 %	282	1.2 %
Art books	234	1.4 %	239	1.0 %
History of literature	190	1.2 %	192	0.8 %
Cooking and household manuals	160	1.0 %	160	0.7 %
Unidentified	1,365	8.5 %	1,499	6.4 %
Total:	15,827	100 %	23,777	100 %

²⁹⁷ Krantz, *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn*, 27.

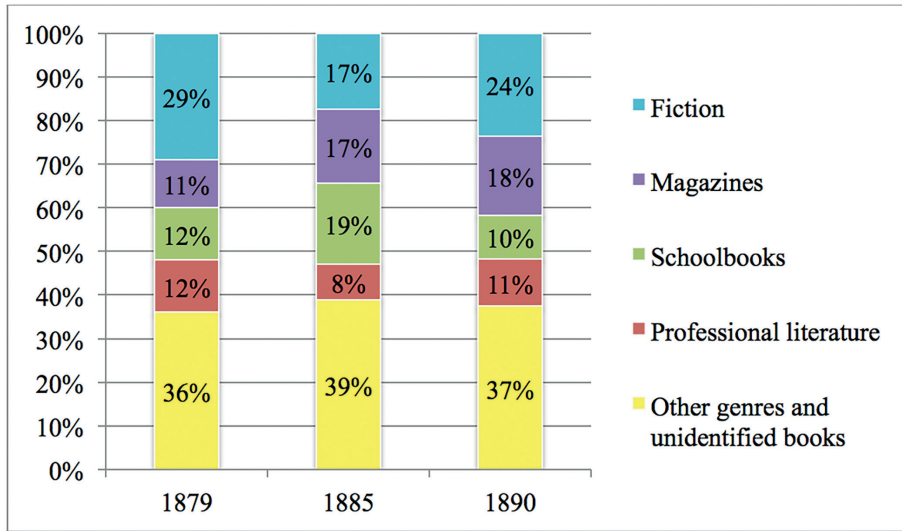


Figure 4.2: Purchases from Gumpert's bookshop 1879, 1885, and 1890 recorded in the 10 per cent sample of customers, categorised according to genre

The parish library

Unlike bookshops and lending libraries, parish libraries were not striving for profits. To quite some extent, the parish library was a political tool, with close ties to the public elementary school. The overarching purpose of the parish library was to provide the population with “appropriate” literature, with a focus on educating and edifying literature. However, the literary contents of the libraries seem to have varied a great deal. Control was not always strict, and some parish libraries reportedly offered “highly reprehensible books.”²⁹⁸

Only a small minority of the parish libraries ever published library catalogues, and it is therefore hard to tell what kind of books most of them actually offered.²⁹⁹ However, a number of lists with recommended books for parish libraries – parish library model catalogues if you like – offer clues as to what books the libraries contained. Two such lists were more widespread than oth-

²⁹⁸ Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 19.

²⁹⁹ Carlander, *Svenska bibliotek och ex-libris I*, 333; Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 40. Carlander claims that less than one in ten parish libraries published catalogues.

ers: one compiled by the politician and public educator Per Adam Siljeström and published in the 1859 issue of the widespread magazine *Läsning för folket*, and one issued by the School Inspectorate in 1870, which was distributed to all parishes for free. The School Inspectorate's catalogue was more official, unlike the other lists of recommended books, and a second edition followed in 1882.³⁰⁰ Additional model inventories were compiled by private societies, and by publishers promoting their own books.³⁰¹ Siljeström's and the School Inspectorate's lists differed in several respects, not least when it came to the issue of fiction. Siljeström stressed the importance of acquiring entertaining and amusing books, and was of the opinion that entertaining books were as important as educational ones. According to Siljeström, the parish libraries should "nourish the imagination" of the readers, and not only educate. Although the Swedish School Inspectorate is said to have been inspired by Siljeström's list, their model catalogue contained no prose fiction whatsoever, and only a small number of collections of poetry.³⁰²

It proves difficult to determine to what extent the parish libraries used model inventories of this kind. Although there were numerous lists with recommended books, ultimately, the decision as to which books should be acquired, lay with the individual library board or parish meeting. Many parish library boards wanted to be safe rather than sorry, and banned the purchase of fiction altogether, while others chose to follow Siljeström's example. According to a survey conducted among parish libraries in 1900 by the student society Heimdal, the libraries' holdings varied greatly.³⁰³ Nils-Åke Sjösten has compared the books listed in fifty printed parish library catalogues to the 1870 model catalogue presented by the Swedish School Inspectorate. He found that the average number of books in the parish libraries was fairly similar to the number of books listed in the 1870 catalogue, 350 compared to 332, but noted significant differences when the books were compared according to genre (see figure 4.3).

300 Tynell, *Folkbiblioteken i Sverige*, 51–63; Sjösten, *Sockenbiblioteket*, 17–18, 61–62.

301 The society "Sällskapet för nyttiga kunskapers spridande," compiled one list, published in two editions (1878 and 1883). The publishers Nils Magnus Lindh, Lars Johan Hierta and Albert Bonnier all published their own lists.

302 Tynell, *Folkbiblioteken i Sverige*, 61; Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 24.

303 Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 8–9, 19–21.

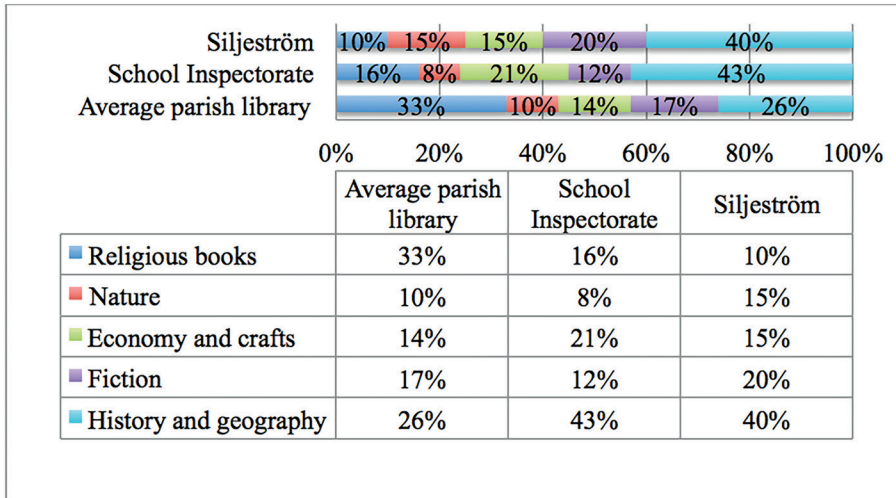


Figure 4.3: Books in Siljeström's and the School Inspectorate's model library catalogues as well as in the average parish library listed according to genre, based on Sjösten's findings

The large proportion of religious works found in the libraries is particularly striking, and Sjösten concluded that on average only about a third of the books found in the parish libraries were listed in the Swedish Inspectorate's catalogue. Even if there are tangible differences between the recommended books and the actual books listed in the fifty parish library catalogues, the books found in these libraries seem to have conformed fairly well to the 1870 list, at least when it comes to ideology. Both the literature in the 1870 list and the books that actually ended up in the parish libraries seem to have been markedly conservative. Through his studies of the literature found in most parish libraries, Sjösten has been able to show that subjects such as socialism and the emancipation of women were treated as threats to society, at the same time as the role of the Bible as a source of knowledge was emphasized. The importance in upholding the class society was also stressed and when it comes to descriptions of other countries and peoples, the white race was put forward as the superior one, according to Sjösten's study. There was, however, a tendency for the actual books in the libraries to be slightly more liberal and secular than those listed in the model catalogues.³⁰⁴

When it comes to the books in the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, it is

³⁰⁴ Sjösten, *Sockenbiblioteket*, 61, 144–45, 233–54.

possible to reconstruct the library holdings during the periods 1870–1888 and 1899–1903. The proportion of fiction, around 20 per cent, was in line with Siljeström’s recommendation. But the large proportion of religious books, around a third of the holdings, was larger than both Siljeström’s and the School Inspectorate’s recommendations of 10 and 16 per cent respectively.

Table 4.2: Holdings from the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, 1870–88 and 1899–1903

Genres	1870–76	1876–81	1881–88	1899–1903
Biographies and stories (Fiction)	105 (18.7 %)	173 (22.7 %)	202 (23.3 %)	306 (24.8 %)
Geography, nature and travel	106 (18.9 %)	122 (16.0 %)	130 (15.1 %)	109 (8.9 %)
History	50 (8.9 %)	63 (8.3 %)	66 (7.6 %)	73 (5.9 %)
Household and farming	61 (10.9 %)	72 (9.5 %)	79 (9.2 %)	102 (8.2 %)
Magazines and journals	54 (9.6 %)	59 (7.7 %)	65 (7.5 %)	86 (7.0 %)
Miscellaneous and unidentified	20 (3.5 %)	29 (3.8 %)	32 (3.7 %)	148 (12.0 %)
Religious works	166 (29.5 %)	244 (32 %)	292 (33.6 %)	410 (33.2 %)
Total	562 (100 %)	762 (100%)	866 (100%)	1,234 (100%)

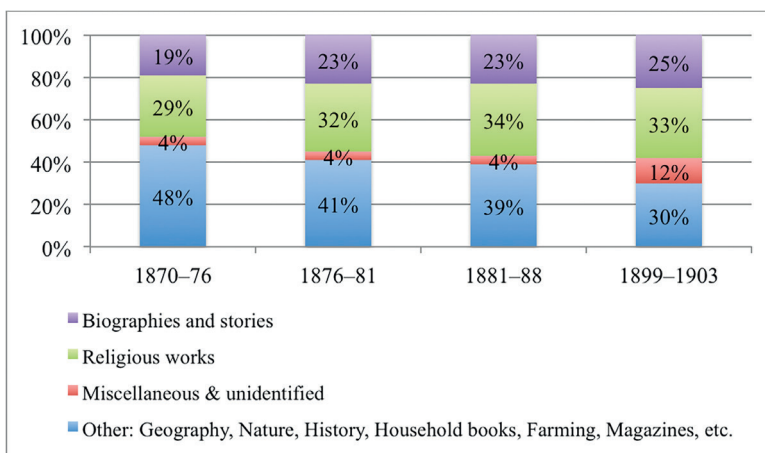


Figure 4.4: Munka-Ljungby library holdings 1870–88 and 1899–1903

According to the statutes of the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, the library should acquire “useful and interesting books for the level-headed reader,” and for a long time, books that would educate and enlighten, rather than entertain, were prioritized.³⁰⁵ Over the years, the library’s section of “biographies and stories” increased from 19 per cent in the early 1870s to almost 25 per cent by the turn of the century. The proportion of religious works was rather stable throughout the period, and levelling out from the late 1870s. All other categories of books decreased; their combined proportion was reduced from 52 per cent in the early 1870s to 42 per cent by the turn of the century. The sudden growth of the “miscellaneous and unidentified” section by the turn of the century has a methodological explanation: in the catalogue for 1899–1903 the librarian has not written complete titles or the name of the author for a number of books, hence they have remained unidentified.

The library in Munka-Ljungby seems to have been more independent and liberal than other parish libraries, and also more sizeable. By the turn of the century, the library offered over 1,000 volumes, as compared to the average parish library holdings of around 350 volumes.³⁰⁶ Although mainly inoffensive and edifying books were acquired, new novels by Jules Verne for example were occasionally bought, and in early 1882 even one of Strindberg’s works, *Svenska folket i helg och söken* (1881–82; Swedes on weekdays and Sundays), was added to the library shortly after its publication – this at a time when most libraries shunned Strindberg.³⁰⁷ By the turn of the century, more and more contemporary fiction was acquired, including books by authors such as Alphonse Daudet and Gustave Flaubert.

Up until the late 1890s, a recurring element of the board meetings was the inspection and assessment of new books. It is easy to imagine that the opinions of long-standing librarian Frans Linnell carried more weight in the discussion than those of the other board members, consisting of yeomen, dye manufacturers, and farmers, often 20 years his junior, some only having served on the board for a year or less. In the course of the 1890s, individual members participated increasingly in the acquisition of new books, not least the

305 The archive of the library board of Munka-Ljungby municipality, A:1. Minutes of proceedings 1859–1886.

306 Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 29–32; Sjösten, *Sockenbiblioteket*, 223 n.

307 Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 34.

dye manufacturer, Hansson, and farmer Jönsson. By the turn of the century, two young elementary-school teachers, Nils Persson Berner (b. 1869) and Ola Persson Sahlin (b. 1872) became involved in the library, and they also started acquiring books. All the purchases were approved, and it seems that from around this time, new books – fiction almost exclusively – were incorporated in the collection, without much discussion. Only a few years earlier, the library had bought primarily useful books, such as devotional literature and farming manuals, and as late as 1898, the librarian Linnell was appointed to buy books for 20 kronor from the publisher Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen. The arrival of the young elementary-school teachers probably did not spark the library's new agenda: contemporary literature had been acquired before their time, albeit on a modest scale. But the newcomers may well have accelerated and enhanced the development.

Table 4.3: Loans from the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, 1870–88 and 1899–1903

Genres	1870–76	1876–81	1881–88	1899–1903
Biographies and stories (Fiction)	2,204 (29.2 %)	2,872 (37.2 %)	2,563 (36.2 %)	1,961 (65.2 %)
Geography, nature and travel	1,333 (17.6 %)	1,015 (13.1 %)	896 (12.6 %)	151 (5 %)
History	560 (7.4 %)	690 (8.9 %)	587 (8.3 %)	109 (3.7 %)
Household and farming	490 (6.4 %)	361 (4.7 %)	323 (4.6 %)	141 (4.7 %)
Magazines and journals	754 (9.9 %)	277 (3.6 %)	288 (4.1 %)	108 (3.6 %)
Miscellaneous and unidentified	300 (4 %)	429 (5.6 %)	310 (4.4 %)	55 (1.8 %)
Religious works	1,938 (25.5 %)	2,076 (26.9 %)	2,105 (29.8 %)	482 (16 %)
Total	7,579 (100 %)	7,720 (100 %)	7,072 (100 %)	3,007 (100 %)

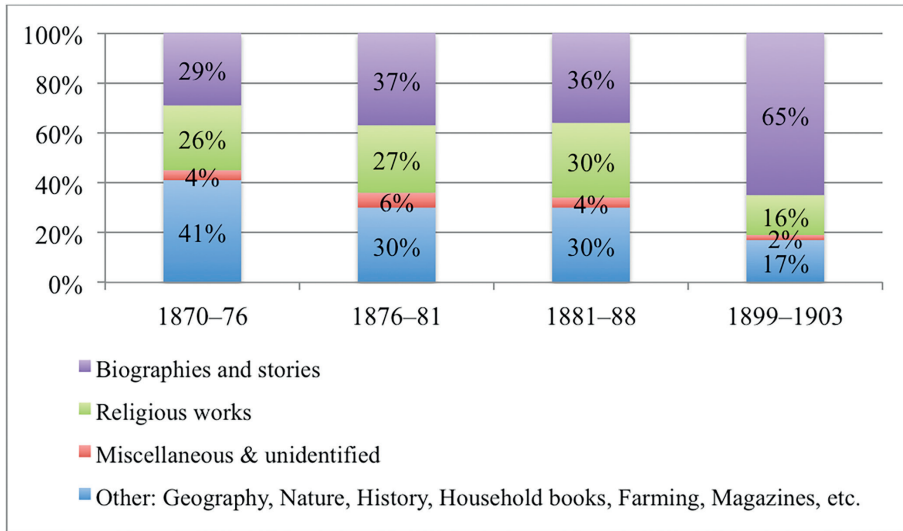


Figure 4.5: Munka-Ljungby library loans 1870-88 and 1899-1903

Between 1870 and 1888 as well as between 1899 and 1903, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby registered over 25,000 loans. If the loan periods had been shorter and the library had been open more frequently, the number of loans would, most probably, have been even higher. At a library board meeting on 21 November 1869, the librarian stated that as much as over a third, 130 out of 351, of the library's volumes were on loan, and added that this was a normal ratio. Popular books were on loan almost constantly.

The loan figures show a significant and growing discrepancy between offer and demand in the parish library. The great popularity of the "biographies and stories" section, which includes most of the library's fiction, is striking. The craving for fiction seems only to have increased as the years passed. By the turn of the century, the proportion of fiction in the library's holdings had increased from 19 per cent in the early 1870s to 25 per cent, and the increase in fiction loans was even greater, from around 30 to 35 per cent of all the loans in the 1870s and 1880s to over 65 per cent between 1899 and 1903. However, religious books also seem to have had a stable readership, increasing slowly but steadily from 1870 to 1888. Not before the turn of the century did the loans of religious books fall significantly, along with most other genres, with one notable exception: fiction.

Table 4.4: The ten most borrowed authors* in Munka-Ljungby, 1870–88 and 1899–1903

*Including editors and societies

Authors	Titles	Loans
Carl Olof Rosenius (author/editor)	53	1,545
Sällskapet för nyttiga kunskapers spridande (a Swedish version of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge)	64	1,300
Carl Georg Starbäck	29	934
Zacharias Topelius	5	519
Martin Luther	21	419
Bernhard Wadström (author/editor)	8	368
A. L. O. E.	8	363
Victor Hugo	5	309
B. J. Glasell	7	296
D. L. Moody & D. Sankey	14	286

The most popular authors at the parish library in Munka-Ljungby mainly belonged to an older generation of writers, such as Carl Georg Starbäck and Victor Hugo. Many of their books were published in Sweden in the 1850s and 1860s. The proportion of religious authors is also significant. Among the top-ten authors, Rosenius, Luther, Wadström, Glasell, and Moody & Sankey were writers of religious works, and the novelist Charlotte Maria Tucker, writing under the penname A. L. O. E., also wrote books with religious undertones.

The quantity of loans from the library in Munka-Ljungby seems to be fairly high in comparative terms. In the parish library in Äspö (Trelleborg) in 1873, only 136 books were borrowed, and by 1876 the number of loans had decreased to 13.³⁰⁸ In the parish library in Husie (Malmö) 1860–79, less than 50 books were borrowed annually on average, and the number of loans was decreasing over the years.³⁰⁹ In Munka-Ljungby, the average number of annual loans was over 1,400 during the same period. The parish library in Nyed (Karl-

308 Jarlbrink, "Lässcener," 59.

309 Sjösten, *Sockenbiblioteket*, appendix, 9.

stad) reported similar figures: 1,536 loans in the year 1877.³¹⁰ Husie had around the same number of inhabitants as Munka-Ljungby, Äspö had fewer, whereas Nyed had around five times as many.³¹¹

The commercial lending library

In commercial lending libraries, the selection of books was rarely influenced by any political, moral, or religious agendas, but was rather made with the aim of earning the greatest possible profit. “People should be allowed to borrow whatever they want,” a lending library proprietor said in an interview.³¹² Many lending libraries adapted their holdings to the “general” readers’ tastes, and devoted their libraries almost entirely to books that people wanted to read, but not necessarily own – novels in particular. The lending libraries can, in other words, be said to have reflected the general reading public’s taste better than any other literary institution.³¹³

Sjöblom printed a number of library catalogues, which could provide a key to assessing which books were offered in the lending library. According to library historian Carl Magnus Carlander, Sjöblom printed a complete library catalogue for his lending library in Lund in 1889, containing 2,618 books.³¹⁴ Regrettably, it has not been possible to find any copy of this catalogue. The only complete library catalogue that has been preserved from Sjöblom’s lending library dates back to 1895. It was printed in Lund, and priced at 25 öre. The catalogue is divided into five sections: “Novels, etc.,” “Additions: Novels, etc.,” “Further additions: Novels, etc.,” “Children’s literature,” and “Miscellanies,” comprising a total of 1,864 items, of which several consist of more than one volume. The 1895 catalogue probably does not represent a complete inventory

³¹⁰ Ibid. appendix, 27.

³¹¹ Carl Martin Rosenberg, *Geografiskt-statistiskt handlexikon öfver Sverige* (Stockholm: Nya Tryckeri-Aktiebolaget, Stockholm 1882–83).

³¹² Åberg, “Folket läste,” 387.

³¹³ Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital, 1777*; Staffan Björck, “Den första bokfloden: om 1800-talets romanserier och länbibliotek” in *Vänskapens pris: Litteraturvetenskapliga studier* (Lund: Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen i Lund, 1995), 71–83 (78).

³¹⁴ Carlander, *Svenska bibliotek och ex-libris I*, 412.

of Sjöblom's library. Although it bears the short title "Catalogue" and gives no indication of being one of several parts, it seems unlikely that the total number of books in the library would be considerably lower in 1895 than in 1889, and furthermore, at least one of the sections in the 1895 catalogue ends abruptly, on the letter H. It is therefore important to compare the information from the catalogue with other available sources.

Sjöblom combined his book lending business with an antiquarian bookshop, and the boundaries between the two businesses seem to have been somewhat fluid. For example, customers who took a liking to a book they had borrowed were allowed to buy it. In a letter sent to Sjöblom in 1888, customer G. A. Broomé wrote: "What is the price for the copy of *Anna Karenina* that my mother borrowed the other day? I would very much like to buy it."³¹⁵ On the rear of the card Sjöblom has scribbled a short reply and stated the price "2.75 kronor." Apparently, it was possible to buy books from the library, and if such sales were common practice, the composition of the collection would naturally be affected. The preserved sales' and acquisitions' catalogue, covering the years 1873–88 also indicates that, in many cases, Sjöblom sold books for less than he had paid for them, which further indicates that he had them on loan for a while, before selling them.

Like most commercial lending libraries, Sjöblom devoted his library almost entirely to fiction. By 1889, Sjöblom advertised his lending library in the directory of Lund as a "novel-lending library," and in the 1895 catalogue, fiction is completely dominant.³¹⁶ The 1895 catalogue includes a short section of "miscellanies," that is literature consisting of history, science, travelogues, as well as a few books on conduct, religion, and philosophy, but in all they represent less than 5 per cent of the books listed in the catalogue. Furthermore, some of the books listed here, for example Ludvig Holberg's *Nils Klims underjordiska resa* (1884; *Niels Klim's Underground Travels*), Giuseppe Garibaldi's *Munkens spira, eller Rom i 19:e århundradet* (1871; *The Rule of the Monk, or, Rome in the nineteenth century*), or Nils Bourkersson's *Tre år i mormonlandet* (1867; *Three Years in Mormon Country*), could just as well have been listed as fiction.

The books referred to in the preserved borrowers' receipts, dating from the

315 Letter to Sjöblom from the lawyer Gustaf Angelo Broomé 18 July 1888. The archive of Jacob Albert Sjöblom, Lund University Library.

316 *Adress-Kalender*, (9).

years 1878 to 1885 (most however, from 1882 to 1883), give an indication of the library's holdings during the early 1880s. Most of the c. 660 individual titles listed in the preserved sample of receipts from Sjöblom's lending library consist of fiction, except for a few calendars, magazines and a couple of books on science. When we bring together what we know of the library's holdings from the titles mentioned in the remaining borrowers' receipts with the information in the printed 1895 library catalogue, we get a fairly good picture of which books the library offered in the period c. 1880–95.

Table 4.5: The most frequently recurring authors in Sjöblom's commercial lending library c. 1882 and 1895 according to number of titles. Based on borrower's receipts from 1879–84 for customers with surnames starting on the letters B, O, P, or S and the printed library catalogue from 1895 respectively

T. Authors (c. 1882)		T. Authors (1895)			
25	Emilie Flygare-Carlén	35	Marie Sophie Schwartz		
21	Marie Sophie Schwartz	34	Jon Olof Åberg		
19	Paul de Kock	29	Emilie Flygare-Carlén		
17	Frederick Marryat	26	Walter Scott		
15	Alexandre Dumas	James Fenimore Cooper	24	Oskar Meding ("Gregor Samarow")	
14	Jules Verne	23	Frederick Marryat		
13	Walter Scott	Eugène Sue	22	Henrik af Trolle	Jules Verne
11	Thomas Mayne Reid	17	Louisa May Alcott	Paul de Kock	
10	Henrik af Trolle	16	M. E. Brad-don	Turgenev	E. Werner
9	August Blanche	15	Émile Zola	James F. Cooper	

Most commercial lending libraries primarily offered contemporary fiction.³¹⁷ In this respect, Sjöblom's lending library was perhaps a little different, as it contained both old and new books. Niels Juel-Hansen's *Erik Sjöblad, den svenske Robinson* and Émile Zola's *Bättre slödder (Pot-Bouille)* could be borrowed from Sjöblom's library in 1882, the same year as they were published. At

³¹⁷ Jeppsson, *Tankar till salu*, 73–74; Torgerson, *J. F. Hallmans lånebibliotek*, 35–42.

the same time, a number of older books were also available in the library, such as Lady Morgan's *Flora Macarthy*, published in 1828, and Heinrich Zschokke's *Alamontade eller galerslafven* (1834; *Alamontade der Galeerensklave*). Even though many books in Sjöblom's library were a little dated, the time gap was less pronounced than at the parish library. If we only consider the first date of publication, roughly 50 per cent of the books available from Sjöblom's library in the period from 1882 to 1883 were published before 1870, and 50 per cent of the books were published in 1870 and later.

When the library's holdings in the early 1880s are compared to the 1895 library catalogue, several noteworthy differences can be spotted. In total, only about 45 per cent of titles recorded in the borrowers' receipts can be found in the printed 1895 catalogue. There must, in other words, have been a substantial turnover of the library's stock, where out-dated or tattered books were replaced or sold off. In the early 1880s, the library offered books by many authors active primarily during the first half of the nineteenth century, or earlier, for example Bengt Lidner, Gustaf Fredrik Gyllenborg, Adam Oehlschläger, Esaias Tegnér, Sophie von Knorring, and Karl August Nicander, as well as literary calendars by Werner von Braun and Carl Fredrik Dahlgren.

Over the years, Sjöblom's lending library seems to have offered more and more contemporary literature. Meanwhile, the number of books by authors who wrote most of their books around the mid-1800s also decreased substantially, for example the writings of Eugène Sue, Thomas Mayne Reid, August Blanche, and Fredrika Bremer. Many of the books listed in the 1895 catalogue were published in the late 1880s or in the 1890s, and several authors who made their debut or breakthrough in the Swedish market during this period, for example Arthur Conan Doyle, Anatole France, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Gustave Flaubert, Ola Hansson, Jerome K. Jerome, Rider Haggard, Verner von Heidenstam, Selma Lagerlöf, and Leo Tolstoy were represented in the 1895 catalogue. Still, a significant part of the library's holdings consisted of classics, albeit published in new editions.

When we compare the authors with the largest number of individual titles according to the borrowers' receipts from 1879–84 with the most well-represented authors in the 1895 catalogue, the top-ten list is quite stable (see table 4.5). Some of these authors, for example Scott, Marryat, Dumas, Verne, Cooper, Marie Sophie Schwartz, and Emilie Flygare-Carlén seem to have

remained popular over the years, and their writings constituted cornerstones in the collection throughout the period. The popularity of Cooper's works, for example, continued in Sweden even into the twentieth century, as Gunnel Furuland points out.³¹⁸ At the same time, children's literature seems to have become more popular. A couple of the authors listed under "children's literature" in the 1895 catalogue, Jon Olof Åberg and Louisa May Alcott, are for example represented with 34 and 17 titles respectively in the 1895 catalogue, but in the 1879–84 material only one title by Alcott is mentioned, and not a single by Åberg. Perhaps this is an indication that Sjöblom was adapting his collection to a younger clientele.

Summary

The bookshop, the lending library, and the parish library were based on fundamentally different ideological and economical principles. The bookshop and the lending libraries were commercial institutions, whereas the parish library was more of a political or ideological tool, with ties to both school and church. These underlying conditions had implications for what kinds of literature were made available. The selection of books on offer in the bookshop and the lending library was subject to demand, whereas the books in the parish library in Munka-Ljungby were assessed and selected by the library board and the appointed librarian.

Gumpert's bookshop offered its customers books from a wide range of fields, and it had extensive sections of schoolbooks, scholarly literature, fiction, and magazines. The parish library focused primarily on useful and edifying books and had substantial sections on religious books and household manuals, but also a considerable amount of fiction and travelogues. The literature offered by Sjöblom's commercial lending library was much more homogenous. It consisted largely of fiction of the lightest sort, as well as other kinds of entertaining literature, such as travelogues, of both older and newer date.

318 Gunnel Furuland, *Från Banditen till Rosa och Blenda: Den gemensamma litterära marknaden och fem översatta författare i 1800-talets Sverige* (Uppsala: Avdelningen för litteratursociologi, 2010), 38–40.

When it comes to the size of the book collections, the parish library was the smallest of the three. By the turn of the century, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby boasted a collection of c. 1,000 books, around three times as many as the average parish library. Sjöblom's lending library had at least twice the number of books, listing over 2,600 books in its 1889 catalogue. It is hard to estimate the number of books available from Gumpert's bookshop since they published no catalogues listing all their holdings, but it was by far the largest of the three institutions, offering thousands of titles, sold in altogether tens of thousands of copies annually.

When it comes to the books available in the two libraries, the literature on offer was marked by a substantial time lag, the holdings of the parish library in particular. Some of the parish library's books were several decades old, and contemporary literature constituted only a minority of the library's stock. The books in the commercial lending library were both old and new, but a considerable number of them had been first published more than 15 years earlier. The bookshop, by contrast, prided itself on offering literary novelties. Toward the end of the century, the stocks of both the lending library and the parish library became more up to date, and popular and recently published books were acquired on a more regular basis. This change in acquisitions strategy seems to have been correlated to what the library customers preferred to read.

During the early years of the parish library, its members borrowed religious books in particular as well as substantial amounts of fiction and travelogues. To some extent this may be explained by the fact that other kinds of books were on loan a great deal of the time, and that new acquisitions normally consisted of religious books. In both the parish library and the lending library there was a growing discrepancy between offer and demand, which became more and more evident from the 1880s and onwards. In the parish library, the interest in fiction increased dramatically as years passed, and by the turn of the century, two thirds of the loans were taken out from the library's fiction section. The library in Munka-Ljungby seems to have been more liberal than the average parish library in introducing fiction, perhaps owing to the fact that it had been founded through a local initiative, rather than on orders from the church or the school. It may be one of the reasons why they were better than the average parish library at adapting to the literary preferences of the library members.

Similarly, the lending library also adapted to the new literary climate.

Although the change was not as dramatic as in the parish library, Sjöblom increasingly began to acquire books by contemporary authors, not least those popular among children, while at the same time selling off outdated literature. These initiatives, meant to satisfy the library customers' literary preferences both at the parish library and the lending library, may have been a way to battle increasing competition from publishers of cheap fiction and newspapers as well as to ensure the survival of the institutions by staying relevant and attractive to readers.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL GENRES

Fiction

At all three institutions, fiction was the most successful genre. In the case of the lending library, this is an unsurprising fact since it only offered fiction. However, at the parish library and the bookshop, which both offered books of a variety of genres, fiction also came out on top. In the parish library, fiction accounted for more than a third of loans, and at the bookshop it accounted for around a fifth of the sales. (However, if we take into account the number of copies, schoolbooks were sold in greater numbers, largely thanks to the large quantities ordered by school authorities.) We will now take a closer look at what kind of fiction and what authors the readers favoured.

There were tangible differences between the various kinds of fiction offered in the three institutions. The books in the two libraries were of older date, not least when it comes to the fiction. Only a handful of books by the best-selling fiction authors in Gumpert's bookshop were available in the two libraries. Instead, a substantial proportion of the most popular fiction in both the parish library and the commercial lending library seem to have been taken from the shelves of bookshops of the previous generation, with books by British novelists Walter Scott and Frederick Marryat, and the French author Victor Hugo. Since new books were expensive it usually took a long time before they could reach readers of limited means. As examples from Norway and Britain show, this was by no means limited to a Swedish setting.³¹⁹ Buying new books re-

319 Eide, "Reading Societies and Lending Libraries in Nineteenth-Century Norway," 138n; Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 217–18, 259; St Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 201–02.

mained expensive even after the mid-1800s, which had far-reaching implications not only for readers but also for libraries with a limited budget.

The commercial lending libraries specialised in light fiction. Seemingly, people were well aware of the nature of the reading materials available from this kind of institution, to the point that they did not always specify their requests, as a few preserved letters to the lending library confirm. In Anna Printzen's letter to Sjöblom, which was quoted in the introduction, she only stated that she wanted "a few good, preferably new books." A similar request was sent from Sjöblom's nephew Johan, who lived in Stiby, some 70 kilometres from Lund. In the letter sent on 28 December 1892, the nephew wrote:

A carriage manufacturer and a copyholder here intend to borrow books from Uncle's library. They want to borrow sixteen volumes all at once. It would be wonderful if you could lend these for a period of three months. They prefer some really hair-raising novels. Choose sixteen splendid novels, and you can count on gaining two excellent new customers. Don't send any junk here. ... Have the books sent immediately, and attach the lending library borrowing rules.³²⁰

The bookshop offered mainly works of fiction written by contemporary authors. Some of the most well-known writers of the time, for example Alphonse Daudet, Leo Tolstoy, Henrik Ibsen, and Émile Zola were sold in solid numbers, almost making it to the top-ten list (see table 5.1). In 1878, Strindberg expressed his astonishment at the great popularity that Daudet and other foreign authors enjoyed in Sweden: "People talk about Daudet as though he were a native of Stockholm, and they know much more about his latest works than those by [Johan] Jolin or [Frans] Hedberg."³²¹ The overall bestselling fiction author though, was Strindberg himself. At the same time, even at the bookshop, classical Swedish authors from the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, such as Bellman, Lenngren, and Stagnelius also managed to retain their popularity, and, as Lundevall points out, were still published in new editions.³²² At

320 Letter to J. A. Sjöblom from Johan Sjöblom, 28 December 1892. The archive of Jacob Albert Sjöblom, Lund University Library.

321 August Strindberg and Hans Sandberg, *August Strindbergs samlade verk 4: Ungdomsjournalistik* (Stockholm: Norstedts förlag, 1991), 342. First published in the January issue of *Finsk tidskrift* 1878.

322 Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 152.

Gumpert's bookshop, Johan Ludvig Runeberg's *Fänrik Ståls sägner* 1–2 (1848–60; *The songs of Ensign Stål*) and Esaias Tegnér's *Frithiofs saga* (1825) were still sold in substantial numbers. The fact that numerous copies were bought by schools suggests that at least some of the copies were intended for educational purposes.

Table 5.1: Top-ten most popular fiction authors in Munka-Ljungby 1870–88, Sjöblom's lending library c. 1882–83, and Gumpert's bookshop 1879–90

The sales figures from Gumpert's bookshop are based on the number of sales registered in the 10 per cent sample of customers. The loans from Sjöblom's lending library are made by customers with surnames starting on the letters B, O, P, or S. The second column of each section lists the number of titles (T.) and the third column lists the number of loans or sales (L./S.)

Munka-Ljungby	T.	L./S.	Sjöblom	T.	L./S.	Gumpert	T.	L./S.
C. G. Starbäck	29	934	E. Flygare-Carlén	25	164	August Strindberg	24	147
Zacharias Topelius	5	519	Frederick Marryat	17	121	Zacharias Topelius	12	102
A. L. O. E.	8	363	Paul de Kock	19	117	Arvid Ahnfelt	13	79
Victor Hugo	5	309	Alexandre Dumas	15	86	Alfred Hedenstierna	7	68
H. Beecher Stowe	4	264	Jules Verne	14	65	Carl Snoilsky	8	65
E. Flygare-Carlén	3	244	Marie S. Schwartz	21	63	J. L. Runeberg	7	61
Pehr Thomasson	4	208	Henrik af Trolle	10	43	Viktor Rydberg	15	59
Marie S. Schwartz	4	192	Eugène Sue	13	42	C. G. Starbäck	17	56
G. H. Mellin	3	188	Zacharias Topelius	3	41	Esaias Tegnér	6	54
			Ponson du Terrail	5				
J. & W. Grimm	2	162	Thomas Mayne Reid	11	40	J. O. Åberg	10	51

At all three institutions, the appetite for historical novels stands out as seemingly insatiable. Several of the most borrowed or sold authors – for example Starbäck, Topelius, af Trolle, Åberg, Dumas, Marryat, and Scott – were first and foremost writers of historical fiction. Anders Fryxell was also widely read, even among the more affluent sections of society, as Ulvros has shown.³²³ The demand for historical novels seems to have been strongest among the book-borrowing audience.

Only one author is found on the top-ten list at all three institutions: the Finland-Swedish author Zacharias Topelius (1818–98), who seems to have enjoyed something of a universal popularity.³²⁴ Eric Johannesson's study of accounts of reading from the late nineteenth century from Swedish vicarages recorded in the publication *Minnen från gamla svenska prästhem* (1924–36; Recollections from old Swedish vicarages), noted that Topelius was the most frequently mentioned author, followed by Esaias Tegnér, Charles Dickens, J. L. Runeberg, Walter Scott, and Alfred Hedenstierna.³²⁵

Emilie Flygare-Carlén (1807–92) was also remarkably popular in all three institutions, despite narrowly missing out on the top-ten in the bookshop. At Gumpert's, she was the thirteenth best-selling author of fiction. Flygare-Carlén had made her literary debut back in the 1830s, and was a very productive author, writing lengthy novels of varying kinds.³²⁶ According to Henrik Schück, Flygare-Carlén's popularity had already started to fade in the 1860s, and he further claimed that she "did not sell well" in the bookshops in the 1860s and 1870s.³²⁷ Although it is true that she was slightly less popular in Gumpert's bookshop than at the two libraries, Schück's judgment seems to have been premature: in the 1890s Karl Warburg stated that she "was still read," and it seems that her popularity remained strong for decades.³²⁸ The

323 Ulvros, *Fruar och mamseller*, 312.

324 Hallingberg, *Läsarna*, 385.

325 Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 25.

326 "Flygare-Carlén, Emelie," *Svenskt litteraturllexikon* (Lund: CWK Gleerup bokförlag, 1964). For a short introduction to Flygare-Carlén in English, see Maria Löfgren, *Emancipationens gränser: Emilie Flygare-Carléns 1840-talsromaner och kvinnans ställning* (Stockholm: Brutus Östlings bokförlag Symposion, 2003), 283–84.

327 Schück, *Den svenska förlagsbokhandelns historia*, 367–68.

328 Furuland, *Romanen som vardagsvara*, 536–37; Lundblad, *Bound to be Modern*, 60.

catalogue of the National Library of Sweden actually lists more editions of her novels during the twentieth century than throughout the nineteenth century, which also gives an indication of her long-lasting popularity. Flygare-Carlén was the most borrowed author at the lending library, where she was represented with at least 25 novels. *Jungfrutornet* (1848), *En nyckfull qvinna* (1848) and *Enslingen på Johanniskäret* (1846) were her three most borrowed novels. The parish library in Munka-Ljungby only had one of her books, *En natt vid Bullar-sjön* (1847) in three volumes, which were borrowed as much as 244 times between 1870 and 1888. Sometime between 1889 and 1898, however, the three volumes were culled.³²⁹ In the bookshop, her collected works were sold in considerable numbers.

The fiction dilemma in Munka-Ljungby

The amount of overlap between the most borrowed or sold authors in the three institutions was rather limited. Why did the libraries not offer the same books as the bookshop? Cost was certainly a limiting factor. However, contemporary fiction was not always more expensive than re-prints. In fact, most books targeted at parish libraries, for example through lists with recommended books issued by publishers and library organizations, were often more or less in the same price range as new Swedish novels. Instead, the most important factor restricting choice may in many cases have been that the library boards were reluctant to incorporate books that could in any way be perceived as radical or daring.³³⁰ According to the authorities, one of the main purposes of the parish libraries was to promote a “true Christian education,” and accordingly, most parish libraries acquired books of the moral and edifying type.³³¹ Moreover, criticism from the free churches targeting “aimless reading” may in some cases also have undermined the position of fiction, not least in the countryside.³³² Hence, entertaining books should preferably be avoided altogether. Nonetheless, in some cases public school inspectors, who oversaw parish libraries, encountered “despicable books,” including “numerous tales and adventures, as

329 Flygare-Carlén is not listed in any of the model inventories for parish libraries that I have seen.

330 Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 33–34.

331 Sjösten, *Sockenbiblioteket*, 20–26.

332 Eide, “Reading Societies and Lending Libraries in Nineteenth-Century Norway,” 133.

well as both older and newer novels,” as stated in their printed reports.³³³ In order to reinforce control, politician August von Hartmansdorff even wanted to transform the parish libraries into proper school libraries, since the parish libraries could contain “all sorts of writings, for example novels, which the women of the parish enjoy, but which are not necessarily suitable for the schools.”³³⁴

Both Gumpert’s bookshop and Sjöblom’s commercial lending library were first and foremost driven by commercial interests. For the parish library board, by contrast, a recurring dilemma was having to choose between the books they thought were best for the readers, and the books the borrowers preferred to read. Most library boards were probably painfully aware that the authorities’ guidelines went in the opposite direction from the library members’ reading preferences. This was a general problem for all libraries, as Martyn Lyons has shown in examples from Britain, Germany, and France.³³⁵ Some parish libraries were conservative in their policies and went to such lengths to control the borrowers’ reading habits as to even expressively prohibit the purchase or donations of fiction and magazines altogether.³³⁶ Such a move could, however, easily prove a perilous as well as pointless approach, while “working people often made a point of reading the books their employers warned them not to read,” as Jonathan Rose has noted.³³⁷ Contemporary fiction, for example, was often banned from the model library catalogues, but it only seems to have made it even more appealing. In many cases, the use of the library seems to have been directly linked to the amount of fiction the library offered, which seems to have been something of a transnational phenomenon.³³⁸ Loan statistics from public libraries in Berlin, Boston, Manchester, Vienna, and Milwaukee from the 1860s to the 1890s indicate that fiction accounted for more than three-quarters of loans.³³⁹ Although some librarians and library boards stressed

333 Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 19.

334 *Ibid.*, 8.

335 Lyons, *A History of Reading and Writing*, 166–67.

336 Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 19–20.

337 Rose, “Rereading the English Common Reader,” 56.

338 Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 231–33.

339 Reyer, “Hvad folk læser,” 464; Martyn Lyons, “New readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children, Workers,” in *A History of Reading in the West*, edited by Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Cambridge: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 313–344 (335).

the importance of acquiring entertaining books, many Swedish parish libraries only offered a very limited amount of fiction, which may to some extent explain their demise.³⁴⁰

The terms “fiction” and “novels” were notoriously avoided in parish library catalogues and model library catalogues, and were in some cases almost used pejoratively. In one model catalogue for parish libraries from 1882, fiction could only be found in the last section, concealed under the header “miscellaneous writings.”³⁴¹ Similarly, in the printed library catalogue from the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, most of the library’s fiction was categorized as “biographies and stories,” and some were listed under the sections for history and geography.³⁴² In the commercial lending library, by contrast, the term *roman* (novel) seems to have been used as a sales pitch, and Sjöblom advertised his commercial lending library as a *roman-bibliotek* (novel lending library).

“City mysteries,” seductive Paris and other forbidden fruit

Among the most frequently borrowed books in Sjöblom’s lending library were sensation and mystery novels as well as gothic and romantic stories, such as books by French authors Paul de Kock, Ponson du Terrail, and Eugène Sue, and the Swedish author Carl Fredrik Ridderstad. The “city mysteries” genre, inspired by Eugène Sue’s trendsetting *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842–43), was still flourishing in Sjöblom’s lending library as late as during the 1880s.³⁴³ To some extent this may be explained by the fact that many “city mysteries” did not appear in Swedish translation until years or even decades after the original edition.

Numerous authors tried to ride the wave of success by publishing books in the style of Sue, notably by incorporating the buzzword “mysteries” into the title of their publications. Several books with such titles, written by a range of different authors, were among the ones that were most borrowed from Sjöblom’s lending

340 Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 18–27.

341 *Anvisning å Böcker, Tjenliga för Sockenbibliotek* (P. A. Norstedt & Söner: Stockholm 1882), 25–29.

342 *Katalog öfwer böckerna i Munka Ljungby Socken-Bibliothek* (Österbergs boktryckeri: Landskrona 1883).

343 For a recent study of the “city mysteries,” see Amy Wigelsworth’s *Rewriting Les Mystères de Paris: The ‘Mystères Urbains’ and the Palimpsest* (Cambridge: Modern Humanities Research Association and Routledge, 2016).

library.

Apart from Swedish translations of some of Sue's books, *Parisiska mysterier* (1844; *Les Mystères de Paris*), and *Folkets mysterier eller en arbetare-familjs historia* (1850–51; *Les Mystères du peuple*), Sjöblom's lending library offered Théodore de Foudras and Xavier de Montépin's *Riddarne af kortleken: nya Pariser-mysterier* (1849; *Les chevaliers du lansquenet*), Eugène Francois Vidocq's *De verkliga Pariser-mysterierna* (1850; *Les vrais mystères de Paris*), Carl Fredrik Ridderstad's *Samvetet eller Stockholmsmysterier* (1851; *The Conscience or Stockholm Mysteries*), George Lippard's *Qväkarestaden Philadelphia och dess mysterier: Amerikanska nattsidor* (1857; *The Quaker City, or The Monks of Monk Hall*), Olympe Audouard's *Seraljens och de turkiska harems mysterier* (1864; *Les mystères du sérail et des harems turcs*), Pierre Zaccone's *Internationalens mysterier: En samtidshistoria* (1871; *Les Mystères de Bicêtre*), Paul Féval's *Londons mysterier* (1876; *Les Mystères de Londres*), Timothée Trimm's *En verldsstads mysterier* (1877; *Les Mystères du Grand Opéra*), and finally, Ned Buntline's *New-Yorks mysterier* (1880; *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York: A Story of Real Life*).

Several of these titles were published in series of cheap serialised fiction, which flourished around the mid-1800s and offered a wide range of light fiction, consisting primarily of contemporary, often translated, literature. Eugène Sue, for example, the most well-known author of the "city mysteries," was the author most published in Albert Bonnier's successful series "Europeiska följetongen."³⁴⁴

If we take a closer look at the customers borrowing these books from Sjöblom's lending library, a number of titles and professions frequently recur, and certain groups of customers are clearly over-represented. The categories of customers borrowing these books consisted to a large extent of students, schoolboys and other young men, as well as numerous manual labourers, such as tinsmiths and filers. The "city mysteries" novels had a loyal following among the young members of the lending library. Apart from students and youth, a few tradesmen, shopkeepers and bookkeepers also borrowed these books, as well as a handful of military personnel.

Despite the fact that women constituted a significant proportion of the clientele, hardly any women seem to have borrowed novels of this type. Natu-

344 Furuland, *Romanen som vardagsvara*, 356–59, 365–76.

rally, some men and boys may have borrowed the books on behalf of a female family member, but given the high number of loans of the “city mysteries,” the lack of female borrowers is quite remarkable. The only preserved example of a woman borrowing a “city mysteries” novel is the unmarried Katarina Karlsson’s loan of Féval’s *Londons mysterier* in July 1881. A few customers were clearly particularly devoted readers of the “city mystery” books. The student August Billing (1854–1925) borrowed Trimm’s *En verldsstads mysterier*, Buntline’s *New-Yorks mysterier*, and de Montépin’s *Riddarne af kortleken* within a very short time-frame. Similarly, janitor Jön Olsson Sjögren (b. 1843), borrowed *En verldsstads mysterier*, Buntline’s *New-Yorks mysterier*, Ridderstad’s *Samvetet eller Stockholmsmysterier*, and Zaccone’s *Internationalens mysterier* in April 1882, all within ten days.

The genre of light, thrilling literature, such as the “city mysteries,” was often criticized. The cheap literary series of the mid-1800s, for example Hierta’s and Thomson’s, which popularized authors such as Sue and Alexandre Dumas, were accused of promoting a literature of dubious and questionable character.³⁴⁵ Occasionally, literature even became the subject of political debate. In 1877, liberal politician Adolf Hedin, a member of the Swedish parliament, expressed particular concern regarding translated novels. In a speech addressing the Swedish Parliament, he stated that “[t]hese horrible, illustrated robber novels ... and ‘Mysteries’ from the European capitals ... are heaps of pure immorality, which are spread to even the lowest sections of society.”³⁴⁶

The great popularity of the “city mysteries” genre helped to perpetuate among the Swedish public an image of France, and of Paris in particular, as something of a den of iniquity.³⁴⁷ To some extent the “city mysteries” literature can be seen as a predecessor of the “Nick Carter” crime fiction, which stirred the Swedish book market during the early 1900s.³⁴⁸ Non-profit organisations and authorities were alarmed by the nature of the writing, and were particularly concerned about youngsters reading such literature, which they claimed was “poison for the emotional lives of young people.”³⁴⁹ Poison or not, as the

345 Ibid., 473.

346 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 248–49.

347 Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 74–75.

348 Furuland, *Ljus över landet*, 26–28.

349 ”Bekämpandet af smuts- och kolportagelitteratur,” 175–78.

many examples of “city mysteries” from Sjöblom’s lending library show, the lending libraries, by contrast, welcomed novels of this character with open arms. Among the 40 most borrowed books from Sjöblom’s lending library, almost a third consisted of “city mysteries” novels, and it is clear that there was a strong public demand for novels of this kind. While the lending libraries were commercial businesses and consequently could not afford to take the moral high ground, it is highly likely that their association with literature such as the “city mysteries” contributed to the perception of them as a business of dubious morals.³⁵⁰

Among the public libraries, such as the parish libraries, there was a widespread fear of French novels, which in some libraries could lead to the overall banishment of all literature of French origin, regardless of character and contents.³⁵¹ The fact that most “city mysteries” books were of French origin certainly did not help. But the odd “city mysteries” book undoubtedly made its way even to some of the parish libraries nonetheless. At the parish library of Munka-Ljungby, for example, the titles by the foremost Swedish writer of the “city mysteries,” Carl Fredrik Ridderstad, were among the library’s most popular books. Despite the fact that part one of his adventurous novel *Svarta handen* 1–2 (1848; *The Black Hand*), disappeared from the library as early as 1873, part two of the same work was borrowed over and over again, which further indicates the great popularity of the genre. As a matter of fact, part two was borrowed almost a hundred times after part one had been lost, until a member of the library failed to return it, in 1883.

In his speech concerning the reading of unwanted literature, the above-mentioned politician Hedin singled out one other kind of fiction as particularly harmful, alongside the “city mysteries”: robber novels. The robber novel genre had been in popular demand across Europe ever since the late eighteenth century, in the wake of Friedrich von Schiller’s *Die Räuber* (1781) and more notably, Heinrich Zschokke’s *Abällino der grosse Bandit* (1793).³⁵² In

350 The author Gunnar Serner’s parents and aunt did for example not take kindly to him visiting Sjöblom’s establishment. Frank Heller, *På detta tidens smala näs* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1940), 89–92.

351 Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 34.

352 Patrick Bridgwater, *The German Gothic Novel in Anglo-German Perspective* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013) 42–45.

Sweden, the robber novels were initially read by the elite segments of society, and the books had a place in the high-end reading societies and commercial lending libraries of the early nineteenth century. By the end of the century the popularity of the robber novel was declining, but the books were still read, not least by a more mundane clientele, for example schoolboys. The robber novels could still be found in some lending libraries, and some of the most popular titles were still published in new editions by the turn of the century.³⁵³ Several robber novels were available from Sjöblom's lending library. August Christian Vulpius's *Rinaldo Rinaldini* was the most popular one. Vulpius's famous novel, arguably the most famous of all the robber novels, was first published in Swedish translation in as early as 1801 and appeared in numerous editions throughout the century.

Although some books in the style of the "city mysteries" were available from Gumpert's bookshop, they were not as popular as in the lending library. The 10 per cent sample from the bookshop's ledgers lists no sales whatsoever of robber novels and not a single book by Eugène Sue, for example. Perhaps the robber novel and the "city mysteries" had been replaced by another kind of thrilling literature: crime fiction. The sales ledgers show that there was no shortage of juicy crime stories, although most of them were sold only in very limited numbers. According to the number of sales in the 10 per cent sample, most of them were sold in only around a dozen copies from Gumpert's bookshop. Among these books were Pierre Zaccone's *Röda lyktan: En poliskommissaries anteckn.r* (1880; *La Lanterne rouge*), Alfred Sirven's *Nanas dotter: Parisisk sedeskildring* (1881; *La fille de Nana, réponse au roman naturaliste de Zola*), Jules Lermina's *Förbryterskan: Kriminalberättelse från Paris* (1882; *La Criminelle*), Pierre Zaccone's *Charbonnettes äfventyr i Paris* (1882; *La Vertu de Charbonnette*), Catulle Mendès's daring *Monstres parisiens* (1882), Jules de Gastyne's *Den nakna qvinnan: en parisisk brottmåls historia* (1884; *La Femme nue*), Fergus Hume's *På villospår: En brottmåls historia från Australien* (1889; *Mystery of a Hansom Cab*), and René de Pont-Jest's *En detektivs spaningar, eller ett polisens mästerverk: kriminalberättelse* (1889; *Mémoire d'un détective*). Most of these books were originally published during the 1880s, and thus belonged to a later generation of literature than the "city mysteries."

353 Tykesson, *Rövarromanen*, 8, 140, 209–16.

Thrilling literature of this kind was bought by principals, shopkeepers, wholesalers, a baron, and a mirror manufacturer, among others. In general, a slightly younger clientele than the customary one bought these kinds of books. A handful were for example bought by students, and a marginal note in the sales records reveals that at least one of the books was bought by the son of a tradesman via his father's account. As far as the sales' ledgers reveal, only one of the listed books, Hume's *På villospår*, was bought by a woman, the unmarried Ida Folkesson. However, additional copies may well have been bought for or by women, on a male family member's account. A couple of customers, for example the wholesaler Gustaf Lamm and the principal Axel Lewton Schiller, bought several books of this nature.

In Gumpert's bookshop, crime fiction was a genre on the rise. By comparison, Sjöblom's lending library offered hardly any books of this sort. The most notable counter-example are the writings of Aurora Ljungstedt, who has been described as potentially Sweden's first crime writer.³⁵⁴ The number of modern crime novels was, however, increasing. To some extent, the reason crime fiction was not borrowed to any greater extent from Sjöblom's lending library is most probably that the genre was only popularized during the later 1880s and the 1890s.³⁵⁵ The first books by Arthur Conan Doyle were for example published in Swedish translation in 1891. Crime fiction reached the bookshop first, but pretty soon it made its way to the lending libraries. The earliest preserved printed catalogue from Sjöblom's library, which dates from 1895, lists numerous crime fiction titles, for example several of the earliest Swedish editions of Conan Doyle.

As the frequent use of "Paris" in the titles of the books listed above suggest, the craze for the French capital prevailed in the bookshop, just like in the lending library, not least thanks to the writings of Émile Zola and Alphonse Daudet. Moreover, the interest for France and Paris stretched well beyond the genre of "city mysteries" and crime fiction. Accounts from the French capital were

354 Yvonne Leffler, "Är Hastfordska vapnet av Aurora Ljungstedt vår första detektivberättelse?" in *Det glömda 1800-talet: några populära genrer inom svensk prosa och dramatik* (Karlstad: Centrum för Språk och Litteratur, 1993), 94–97.

355 For a recent study of late-victorian crime fiction, see Clare Clarke's *Late Victorian Crime Fiction in the Shadows of Sherlock* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

immensely popular; one imminent example are the writings of Danish author, journalist, and translator Richard Kaufmann (1846–94). Kaufmann married a French actress and lived in Paris for almost 20 years. He wrote several travelogues depicting contemporary French society and the bohemian lifestyle of Paris, all of which were available in Gumpert's bookshop both in the Danish original and in Swedish translation: *Fra det moderne Frankrig* (1882; From the Modern France); *Pariserliv i Firserne* (1885; Paris life during the 1880s); *Paris under Masken: Nye Pariserlivsbilleder* (1887; Under the Mask: New Images of Parisian Life); and *Paris under Eiffeltaarnet* (1889; Paris below the Eiffel tower). His travelogues from France, presented in his characteristic "light and vivid style," accompanied by beautiful, playful and at times daring illustrations by contemporary French artists, and presented in the publisher's beautifully decorated cloth bindings, reached a wide readership.³⁵⁶

Some of Kaufmann's books were downright bestsellers. The sales of for example *Fra det moderne Frankrig* and *Pariserliv i Firserne* even surpassed the sales of works that were later canonized, such as Daudet's *Sapho* (1884), Ibsen's *Vildanden* (1884; *The Wild Duck*), Strindberg's *Röda rummet* (1879), and Zola's *Nana* (1880). The books were expensive, even the paperback versions, but still, most customers preferred to pay extra to have their copy bound in the publisher's elaborate cloth binding. Kaufmann's books were bought primarily by a rather exclusive clientele, consisting primarily of wholesalers, doctors, and bookkeepers. But his books also made their way to a more popular readership. A copy of the Swedish translation of *Fra det moderne Frankrig* was even acquired by the parish library in Munka-Ljungby.

The fascination for Paris permeated all segments of society, but the literary depictions of France reached the Swedish audience in a variety of forms. The bookshop's customers shaped their views of France and Paris through the works of authors such as Kaufmann, Daudet, and Zola, and via Karl Baedeker's travelogues and numerous French magazines, for example *Paris illustré*. By contrast, the image of France and Paris mediated through the commercial lending library was very different; coarser and, arguably, more simplified. A considerable proportion, almost a third, of the books in the lending library

356 "Carl Richard Johannes Kaufmann," *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon* vol. IX, edited by C. F. Bricka (Kjøbenhavn: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag, 1895). See also Lundblad, *Bound to be Modern*, 187.

consisted of translations from French, which included novels by both high-brow and lowbrow authors.

If we are to single out one French author among those represented at Sjöblom's lending library, Paul de Kock is the obvious choice. De Kock (1793–1871) was represented with around 20 titles in Sjöblom's library and was the overall third most borrowed author, and by far the most popular French author. De Kock churned out an impressive number of novels, depicting Parisian life and low and middle-class characters. He is said to have enjoyed greater popularity abroad than in France, allegedly because “the defects of style disappear in translation.”³⁵⁷ His writing has further been described as “barely presentable” and even as a “marker of poor taste.”³⁵⁸ Regardless of these harsh remarks, de Kock's colourful books were strikingly popular among the clientele of Sjöblom's lending library. Furthermore, de Kock was one of the most frequently requested authors in the preserved letters sent to Sjöblom from his customers. On several occasions, Sjöblom was asked to send lists of all novels written by Paul de Kock currently available, and according to one such list, Sjöblom had over 100 novels by de Kock in stock during the early 1890s. In some cases, lending library customers also requested Sjöblom to send books by de Kock via porters, presumably waiting impatiently to devour another novel.³⁵⁹

Religious literature

In the provincial governors' five-year reports for 1856–60 it was stated that “[t]he desire to read religious writings is old in Sweden.”³⁶⁰ The literature that

357 “Charles Paul de Kock,” *The Encyclopedia Americana* vol. XVI (New York and Chicago: The Encyclopedia Americana Corporation, 1920).

358 Anne O'Neil-Henry, “Paul de Kock and the Marketplace of Culture” in *French Forum*, vol. 39, numbers 2–3 (spring/fall 2014), 97–112 (97).

359 Letter to Sjöblom from August W. Embring, Vallkärra, 7 September 1889. The archive of Jacob Albert Sjöblom, Lund University Library.

360 *Bidrag till Sveriges officiella statistik. Kungl. Maj:ts befallningshafvandes femårsberättelser för åren 1856–1860. Ny följd. Jemte sammandrag* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & söner, 1863), 9; Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 249.

could be found in most peoples' homes by the early nineteenth century had more or less been the same for generations, and consisted largely of religious works and other literary staples: hymnbooks, ABC books, the catechism and Bibles, and this was changing only slowly.³⁶¹ Hilding Pleijel has noted that "[t]here was a time when [Johann] Arndt's *Sanna Kristendom (True Christianity)* and *Paradis Lustgård (The Garden of Paradise)* could be found in any Swedish household with living religious interests."³⁶²

In the parish library of Munka-Ljungby, religious literature formed the single largest category of books, accounting for about a third of the book collection. The authorities and public educators advocated for a more diverse book collection, in terms of genres. However, according to Sjösten's survey of parish library catalogues, this seems to have been a rather common proportion in most parish libraries. In Munka-Ljungby, religious works were markedly popular and accounted for a considerable share of the loans. It even increased between 1870 and 1888, growing from around 25 to 30 per cent of loans. Missionary books, religious stories, and magazines were particularly popular.

A substantial share of the religious works in the parish library of Munka-Ljungby were written by authors of the revivalist movement, such as the preacher and editor Carl Olof Rosenius and vicar Bernhard Wadström. For a long time, Rosenius was the single most borrowed writer. The library's over 50 copies of his works were borrowed almost 1,500 times between 1870 and 1888. This is somewhat remarkable, since publications by Rosenius and his likes could not be found in the lists with recommended books for parish libraries. As the revivalists faced opposition from the Swedish state church, their publications were often avoided. Some parish library boards even considered a revivalist author such as Paul Peter Waldenström as outright dangerous.³⁶³ Worth noting is that his books *Herren är from* (1874; *The Lord is right*) and

361 In studies of Norwegian estate inventories from 1830–39, for example, only four per cent of the books mentioned were non-religious. Jostein Fet, *Lesande bønder: Litterær kultur i norske allmugesamfunn før 1840* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1995), 89; In corresponding studies of estate inventories from Västerås from the late 1820s and early 1830s, only few profane books can be found, and hardly any fiction, Åberg, *Västerås mellan Kellgren och Onkel Adam*, 93. See also Ulvros, *Fruar och mamseller*, 309.

362 Hilding Pleijel, *Från fädernas fromhetsliv* (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1939), 31.

363 Johnsson, "Min barndoms sockenbibliotek," 167.

*Brukspatron Adamsson, eller Hwar bor du?*³⁶⁴ – maybe among the overall most read books of the late nineteenth century – seemingly were not available from any of the three institutions that are studied here. However, among the revivalist literature available from the parish library in Munka-Ljungby were several annual volumes of the magazine *Pietisten* (The Pietist), edited first by Rosenius and later on by Waldenström.

The religious literature present in the library of Munka-Ljungby indicates a local interest in the revivalist movement. The great popularity of the revivalist works with readers like farmer Johannes Persson in Kroppåkra, one of the members of the parish library in Munka-Ljungby whom we will return to later on, was no doubt related to a larger popular religious movement, which permeated Swedish society by the end of the nineteenth century.

Although revivalist literature could be bought from bookshops, the ledgers from Gumpert's reveal that the sale of revivalist works was negligible. In Gothenburg, the state church was particularly strong. Furthermore, the first nonconformist churches in Gothenburg mainly attracted groups of labourers and artisans, who normally did not frequent the bookshop.³⁶⁵ In the 10 per cent sample from Gumpert's sales records there are only a few examples of customers buying revivalist literature. The Swedish pastor Hult in Scandia, Minnesota, ordered a copy of one of Rosenius's books and had it sent to the United States; school director Anton Victor Ljunggren (b. 1847) bought an unidentified book by Rosenius; engineer Johan Gonell (b. 1857) bought Waldenström's *Genom Norra Amerikas förenta stater* (1890; Through the United States of America); and the vicar and teacher Kristian Torin in Jonsered purchased two books by Waldenström: his translation of the New Testament and a bound copy of *Stycken af lifvets ord* (1878; Select pieces from the words of Life). The vicar Torin, who was evidently not afraid to buy books of an even more daring character, was known to have certain nonconformist views.³⁶⁶

By the end of the century, the popularity of the revivalist works, and edifying literature in general, was stalling.³⁶⁷ Around the turn of the century, the overall annual number of loans from the parish library in Munka-Ljungby had also

364 Hallingberg, *Läsarna*, 340–42, 397.

365 Ibid., 282–88, 292–95.

366 Robbie Lauler, "Fotbollens vagga – 1900-talets Zlatan," *Aftonbladet* 17 October 2013.

367 Hallingberg, *Läsarna*, 354–55.

dropped considerably, but the decline in the number of loans from the library's section of religious works was even greater. Between 1899 and 1903 religious works accounted for only around 16 per cent of loans, as compared to twice as much during the 1880s. Rosenius was no longer the author whose works were most often borrowed. Between 1899 and 1903, they were borrowed only 48 times, and by then, the most borrowed authors were all writers of fiction: Zacharias Topelius, Ragnar Pihlstrand, Carl Georg Starbäck, Georg Ebers, and Jon Olof Åberg. The publishing industry experienced a similar development, possibly fuelled by a growing secularisation. In terms of the number of titles, the proportion of religious literature published in Sweden decreased continuously during the entire nineteenth century. From constituting a majority of the titles at the beginning of the century, religious literature accounted for as little as 10 to 20 per cent of the titles published by the end of the century.³⁶⁸

Still, it is important to take into account that, unlike most other kinds of books, some of the religiously oriented literature was printed in immense editions and was read and re-read again and again, as Martyn Lyons has pointed out.³⁶⁹ Preserved printing accounts from Swedish publishers are scarce, but fortunately, a printer's ledger from one of the largest publishers of the time, C. W. K. Glerup in Lund, give us an insight into book publishing during the 1860s. The ledger shows that some of the more widely used religious books, for example the catechism and prayer books, were printed in editions of 10,000 or more every few months, which was only exceeded by best-selling schoolbooks (see table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Printing accounts from C. W. K. Glerup's publishing firm, Lund, from 1865 to 1867 (editions of 10,000 copies or more)³⁷⁰

Title	Date	Copies
Christian Gottlob Barth's <i>Twå gånger två och femtio bibliska historier</i> (Two times fifty-two Biblical Stories)	1865-12-08	50,000

368 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 243–44; Arne Jarrick, *Mot det moderna förnuftet: Johan Hjerpe och andra småborgare i Upplysningstidens Stockholm* (Stockholm: Tidens förlag, 1992), 91–95; Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle*, 184.

369 Lyons, *A History of Reading and Writing*, 141.

370 The archive of C. W. K. Glerup AB, LUB-1061, Lund University Library.

Nils Johan Berlin's <i>Lärobok i naturlära</i> (Textbook of Science)	1865-08-10	40,000
	1866-05-14	21,000
Lindbloms' catechism	1865-10-03	20,000
Martin Luther's catechism	1866-10-05	20,000
	1866-10-18	20,000
	1867-03-07	20,000
	1867-05-24	20,000
Per Johan Pihlstrand's <i>Lärobok i räknekonsten</i> (Textbook in Mathematics)	1867-08-10	20,000
Magnus Friedrich Roos' <i>Christelig bönebok</i> (Christian Prayer Book)	1865-08-22	30,000
Henric Schartau's catechism	1865-01-28	18,000
	1867-07-13	25,000
<i>Sententier och böner</i> (Sentences and Prayers)	1866-06-01	10,000

Looking closer at *how* the books were borrowed from the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, we see that loans of religious works can in some cases easily be differentiated from the loans of other kinds of books. Quite regularly, one and the same customer has borrowed the same book more than once, either immediately afterwards, or after a while. In many cases, this approach can probably simply be explained by the fact that the reader did not manage to finish the book on time and had to take it out again. But when it comes to certain religious works, a consumption pattern of a different nature is discernible. The same book is borrowed over and over again, sometimes for a longer period of time, particularly when it comes to books that were intended for daily reading.

The parish library had eight copies of Martin Luther's *Evangelisk själaspis för hemmet: bibliska betraktelser för hvarje dag i året* (1849; Evangelical food for the soul and the household: Biblical meditations for each day of the year), and the copies were almost constantly on loan. Teenager Nils Peter Nilsson (b. 1865) was one of those who borrowed *Evangelisk själaspis* for long periods of time. Between 26 November 1881 and 15 March 1883 he had it on loan during the entire period, except for the summer of 1882. In February 1886 he borrowed a different copy of the same book, and only returned it two years later, in February 1888. Another library member, Ola Åkesson, borrowed *Evangelisk själaspis* as many as seven times between November 1882 and January 1886, several months at the time, as did Peter Olsson in Skillinge, who borrowed

three different copies of the book altogether eight times, between August 1884 and February 1888. Olsson had at least one copy of the book on loan during almost the entire period, and on a few occasions he even took out two copies at once, which indicates that more than one person in the household was using the book.

Rosenius's *Betraktelser för hvar dag i året* (1873; Meditations for each day of the year) elicited similar borrowing patterns. *Betraktelser* was Rosenius's most popular book and it was published in a multitude of editions, in altogether over 180,000 copies.³⁷¹ The library in Munka-Ljungby had 13 copies of the book. Several of these copies were constantly on loan, sometimes for months or even years at the time. Pål Nilsson, a member of the library in Munka-Ljungby, had one copy of the book on loan during the entire period from December 1883 to July 1888, with the exception of the period from July 1886 to March 1887. During this period Nilsson renewed the loan of the book at least nine times, leaving others no chance to borrow it. Olsson in Skillinge, who took out *Evangeligisk själaspis* numerous times, also eagerly borrowed Rosenius's book. He had it on loan from October 1881 to March 1883. The most extreme example of long loans such as these is probably yeoman Per Svensson's (b. 1840) loan of Rosenius's *Betraktelser*. He had a copy of the book on loan from January 1881 and at least until July 1888, which is as far as the catalogue goes. During this period Svensson renewed the book fifteen times and had it constantly on loan, except for a brief period in 1883, when Nils Nilsson in Hillarp borrowed it.

These very long loans provide something of an insight into the daily religious practices of parts of the rural population, and into the widespread use of devotional manuals. As the titles of the books suggest, *betraktelser för hvar/hvarje dag i året* (meditations for each day of the year), these books were intended to be used on a day-to-day basis, perhaps for communal household prayers.³⁷² Some of the library members borrowing these books may well have been revivalists. The revivalists were renowned for their extensive reading of religious writings, and they were therefore nicknamed *läsare*, "readers," which was seen as something of an insult.³⁷³

371 *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon* vol. 30, edited by Göran Nilzén et. al. (Stockholm: svenskt biografiskt lexikon, 1999).

372 Åberg, "Folket läste," 396.

373 Hallingberg, *Läsarna*, 59–63; Jöran Jacob Thomæus, *Christna kyrkans historia uti Sverige*,

Although the customers who borrowed these manuals for years at the time stand out, there were many more library members who borrowed these books at least on a few occasions, in many cases for months at the time. Siljeström was well aware that the day-to-day use of devotional manuals was difficult to combine with running parish libraries. When presenting his model catalogue for parish libraries in 1859, he therefore argued that devotional literature should not be acquired by the parish libraries. Devotional manuals, he stated, "should be owned and not borrowed."³⁷⁴ Having books in the library that were on loan for such long periods of time that they were virtually privately owned by a few of the library's members was, of course, complicated. The parish library in Munka-Ljungby tried to solve the issue by acquiring additional copies of the same books, but still, they struggled to meet the needs. By comparison, when it comes to other kinds of books, additional copies of the same book were hardly ever acquired, regardless of their popularity, which further confirms the support for religiously oriented literature in Munka-Ljungby.

Rosenius and Luther's day-to-day devotional manuals were not sold in Gumpert's bookshop, and were certainly not available from Sjöblom's commercial lending library. However, at least at the bookshop, the religiously oriented literature available was more diverse. The sales of religious and philosophical literature amounted to around 5 per cent of sales at Gumpert's bookshop. Some of the most popular religiously oriented authors in the parish library of Munka-Ljungby were also available from Gumpert's bookshop. The 10 per cent sample from the bookshop suggest that the English cleric Fredric William Farrar's books were sold in around 200 copies and the German theologians Otto Funcke and Magnus Friedrich Roos's writings were sold in at least 300 and 200 copies respectively between 1879 and 1890, mostly to teachers and clerics. In some cases, large quantities were bought on a single occasion. In 1879 curate Axel Edvin Rylander bought 120 hymnbooks by Roos, and vicar C. J. Johansson bought 20 books by Johann Arndt.

Naturally, catechisms and hymnbooks were also sold in substantial numbers. The hymnbooks were available in a multitude of different versions and price ranges. The cheapest ones could be bought for as little as 37 öre, given

ifrån de äldsta, till närvarande tider (Örebro: N. M. Lindh, 1817), 453.
374 Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 14.

that six copies or more were ordered at the same time. Others were remarkably expensive and could cost as much as 12.50 kronor. Some customers paid extra to have the hymnbooks bound in elaborate bindings and to have their initials or full name embroidered in the binding. Widow Henrika Bark (b. 1828) even paid 12.35 kronor extra, on top of the cost of the hymnbook, to have initials inlaid in silver on the cover of the book. It is likely that these hymnbooks were intended to serve more as symbolic objects suitable for gifts at confirmations, weddings, and christenings rather than as articles for everyday use. Gothenburg was also home to a flourishing Jewish community, and Jewish hymnbooks, prayer books, and the Talmud were also sold in numerous copies to the bookshop's Jewish clientele. Several of these were decorated with names or other insignia.

The sample from the sales' records from Gumpert's bookshop also reveal a growing interest in books dealing with spirituality, mysticism, Eastern philosophy, and even occultism, particularly nearing the end of the 1880s. The British theosophist Alfred Percy Sinnet's books *De invigdes lära (Esoteric Buddhism)*, *Den dolda världen (The Occult World)*, and *En sierskas öden och märkliga tilldragelser i madame Blavatskys lif (Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky)*, all published in 1887, were for example sold in several copies, to judges and wholesalers among others. The teacher and occultist Johannes Sundblad's book *Andeverlden i föreställningen, folksäggen och verkligheten* (1889; *The Spirit World in the Imagination, Popular Tradition and Real life*), was sold to the mayor of Gothenburg, Gustaf Svanberg, postal executive Frans Broberg (b. 1835), and vicar Johan August Dalén in Hartlepool, England, who bought two copies of the book. The wholesaler Oscar F. Larsson, for example, was a particularly devoted reader of everything associated with mysticism and spiritualism. He bought all three of Sinnet's books, as well as various books dealing with Buddhism and theosophical mysticism: Edwin Arnold's famous book *Asiens ljus eller den stora försakelsen* (1888; *The Light of Asia: The Great Renunciation*), which was one of the first books to popularize Buddhism for a Western audience; the theosophist Mabel Collins's spiritual classic *Light on the path* (1885); as well as *Buddhistisk katekes enligt den singhalesiska canon* (1889), a Swedish translation of theosophist Henry Steel Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism*.

Schoolbooks

For both publishers and booksellers, schoolbooks were among the most profitable genres, not least after the establishment of public schools, which created an unprecedented and stable demand for textbooks.³⁷⁵ In 1887, the number of schoolchildren in Sweden exceeded 650,000, and it was estimated that every elementary school pupil on average spent between 60 öre and 1 krona 10 öre annually on textbooks. The collective annual sales of schoolbooks would thereby amount to hundreds of thousands of kronor. By the end of the nineteenth century, every tenth title published was a schoolbook. However, these publishing statistics do not take into account the size of the editions, which could be huge for standard textbooks.³⁷⁶ The printing figures from Gleerup in Lund, one of the foremost publishers of scientific and religious works at the time, provide an interesting insight into textbook publishing (see table 5.2). During 1865 and 1866, Gleerup published two editions of Berlin's *Lärobok i naturlära* in a total of 61,000 copies, and one edition of Barth's *Bibliska historier* in 50,000 copies.³⁷⁷ Successful textbooks like Berlin and Barth's were printed in hundreds of thousands of copies throughout the nineteenth century. Professor Nils Johan Berlin (1812–91) was one of the great textbook authors of the time and he played a great part in making science a permanent school subject in the public schools.³⁷⁸ Meanwhile, the catechism – “the essence of Christian faith” – which for centuries had been the starting point of children's learning, lived on as one of the most important textbooks in Lutheran societies.³⁷⁹ In the same timespan (1865–66), Gleerup published several editions of the catechism in a combined 140,000 copies. J. A. Lindblom's catechism alone was sold in 20,000 to 25,000 copies annually.³⁸⁰

375 Schück, *Den svenska förlagsbokhandels historia* II, 363, Svedjedal, *Bokens sambälle*, 88–89; Magnus Hultén, “Folkskollärarna och naturvetenskapen i 1800-talets folkskola, en professioniseringshistoria” in *Vägval – tidskriften om svensk undervisningshistoria* (2014:1).

376 Svedjedal, *Bokens sambälle*, 88–90, 182–85.

377 Printing accounts 1865–67 from the archive of C. W. K. Gleerup Publishing House, LUB-1061, Lund University Library.

378 Hultén, “Folkskollärarna och naturvetenskapen.”

379 Charlotte Appel, *Læsning og bogmarked i 1600-tallets Danmark* (København: Det Kongelige Bibliotek / Museum Tusulanums forlag, 2001), 909; Lyons, *A History of Reading and Writing*, 95; Guttormsson, “The development of popular religious literacy,” 7–35.

380 Wrangel, *C. W. K. Gleerup och det Gleerupska förlaget*, 147.

The tight relationship between schoolbooks and the parish libraries goes back to the Public Elementary School Act of 1842, where it was stated that the vicars should encourage the creation and use of parish libraries, with the aim to maintain and further the knowledge acquired in school. Although this was never fully enforced, educational reading materials still had a dedicated place in most parish library collections, and many parish library collections, including the one in Munka-Ljungby, were housed in the schools. The parish library in Munka-Ljungby boasted extensive sections on science, geography, religion, and history, but only some of these books consisted of regular textbooks, and furthermore, a significant proportion of the books were somewhat dated. K. E. Kindblad's *Handbok i svenska historien för ungdom och menige man* 1–4 (1849–55), C. L. Ström's *Naturhistorisk läsebok för ungdom* (1852), J. Bäckman's *Naturalhistoria: en läsebok för skolan och hemmet* (1867), A. Danielson's *Lärobok i praktisk geometri* (1867), G. I. Hartman's *Lärobok i geografin*, J. H. Kurtz's *Biblisk historia*, and Berlin's *Lärobok i naturlära* (two copies) were some of the books in the parish library in Munka-Ljungby that were meant to be used in schools.

The loan frequency of these books varied greatly. The four parts of Kindblad's history textbook were borrowed extensively, over 200 times between 1870 and 1888 in total. The books by Ström, Bäckman, and Berlin were borrowed between 25 and 75 times each during the same period. Kurtz's Bible history was borrowed a moderate 20 times during the 18 years and Hartman's and Danielson's geography and geometry textbooks were borrowed only once. Most of the library members who borrowed these books had school-age children, which indicates that the books were used for schooling. The reason some textbooks were not borrowed to any greater extent may have been that they were not compulsory textbooks at the schools in Munka-Ljungby. It is also highly likely that some of the textbooks in the parish library were read for non-educational purposes. The substantial number of loans of Kindblad's history textbooks, for example, suggests that some of the borrowers may have read them for entertainment purposes. As Göran Gynnerstedt has noted, in libraries with little or no fiction, non-fiction – history books in particular – was read as a substitute for fiction.³⁸¹ Historical works could cater to the same audience as the novels, as pointed out by Leslie Howsam: "Like novels, their

³⁸¹ Gynnerstedt, "Nora Solberga sockenbibliotek," 80–83.

market included the general reader of any age, who sought entertainment and diversion in truth-claiming narratives as much as in fiction.”³⁸²

Although there were no schoolbooks in Sjöblom’s lending library, buying and selling used schoolbooks was an indispensable part of Sjöblom’s trade with antiquarian books, ever since he started his business in 1867.³⁸³ For many years, his combined lending library and antiquarian bookshop was located opposite the Lund Cathedral School, one of the largest schools in Lund, and the fact that he traded in schoolbooks was well-known. He advertised that he bought and sold used textbooks in *Adress-Kalender med fullständig kalender-afdelning för Lunds Stad* as well as in the two largest local newspapers *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* and *Skånska Dagbladet*. One of Sjöblom’s schoolboy customers recalls how Sjöblom was a thrifty but secure buyer, usually bidding ten öre for what he was offered.³⁸⁴ A preserved acquisitions and sales catalogue covering the years 1873–88 shows that schoolchildren, youth, and university students frequently sold schoolbooks to Sjöblom, and an acquisitions catalogue from 1895 confirms that this group of customers eventually constituted the majority of the customers selling books to Sjöblom.

Preserved correspondence between Sjöblom and his customers also indicates that textbook requests were commonplace. On 9 September 1894, enforcement officer P. J. Östberg (b. 1837) in Jönköping sent a textbook request to Sjöblom on behalf of his fourteen-year old son, Axel Östberg (b. 1880). Enclosed in the letter was a separate list of books, compiled by the son, entitled “Inventory of books used in the sixth grade.” Among the titles listed were Norbeck’s *Dogmatik*, Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, four textbooks in French, Berlin’s *Euclides*, and one of Odhner’s books on the history of Sweden. Sjöblom was able to expedite the entire order and sold the books to Östberg for 11 kronor and 55 öre.³⁸⁵ Axel Östberg was presumably a pupil at a *läroverk*, a government-funded secondary grammar school, where annual textbook expenses were many times higher than at elementary schools. Furthermore, it seems probable that the students at *läroverken*, unlike the pupils at public elementary

382 Howsam, *Past into Print*, 7.

383 Lengertz, *Min kulörta bok*, 153.

384 Heller, *På detta tidens smala näs*, 90; Lengertz, *Min kulörta bok*, 154.

385 Letters to Sjöblom from Per Johan Östberg and Axel Östberg. The archive of Jacob Albert Sjöblom, Lund University Library.

schools, had to purchase many of the required textbooks themselves. Another textbook request was sent to Sjöblom from Göthilda Berg von Linde in Tjörnarp, in 1895. She ordered four schoolbooks: *Zwei Novellen* by Julius Stinde, an English grammar book, a French-Swedish dictionary, and Calwagen's *Engelsk språklära för skolor* (English Language Learning for Public Schools), to be sent to her 19 year old son Rudolf Berg von Linde (b. 1876), who lived in Tännö, close to Värnamo.

GUMPERTS BOKHANDEL
är, såsom vanligt, bäst sorterad med
Skolböcker
i starka band och till
Förläggarnes ovanligt låga originalpriser,
hvarunder det är omöjligt för någon att sälja.

885

Figure 5.1: Textbook advertisement from Gumpert's bookshop in Göteborgs Aftonblad 3 September 1889

In Gumpert's bookshop, schoolbooks were one of the best-selling genres, constituting c. 30 per cent of the sales in terms of the number of copies. The importance of the schoolbook trade was possibly even greater for Gumpert's bookshop than for the average bookshop. A combined bookshop-stationary shop, Gumpert's bookshop could fulfil not only the customers' need of schoolbooks, but also that of pencils, paper, notebooks, ink, maps, and other teaching materials, just like most bookshops of today. Occasionally, the bookshop also published books, by the end of the century primarily schoolbooks. In the 1890s Gumpert's even had a campaign to further the sales of textbooks: customers who bought textbooks for 20 kronor received a "small but sturdy" bookcase

for free.³⁸⁶ Most schoolbooks were rather inexpensive, but the great quantities sold, and the fact that most customers bought at least a few textbooks, ensured the bookshop a considerable profit.

Among the customers of Gumpert's bookshop were also school boards from all parts of the country, but most of them came from the vicinity of Gothenburg. A few school boards seem to have made almost all their purchases from Gumpert's bookshop and some of them were among the bookshop's most important customers. The school board in Stenkyrka on the island of Tjörn north of Gothenburg, for example, bought 80 slate boards, notebooks made from 5,000 sheets of paper, a dozen abacuses, maps of Scandinavia and Palestine, and over 1,100 textbooks and notebooks in 1881 alone, spending over 750 kronor. Our 10 per cent sample shows that in addition to the school boards, teachers also bought a great number of schoolbooks and considerable quantities of other teaching materials. Teacher Carl J. Carleman bought hundreds of schoolbooks annually, and dozens of pencils, atlases, and notebooks, as did the unmarried woman H. Mattson in Tossene, who presumably was also a teacher. Quite a few clerics also purchased textbooks, among them vicar K. Andersson from Hisingen, Gothenburg, who bought 44 copies of J. A. Karlsson's *Naturlära för folkskolans barn* and eight copies of A. Steinmetz's *Biblisk historia för folkskolan*, in 1888.

More surprising, perhaps, is the fact that some companies and wholesalers also bought large quantities of standard textbooks. During the 1880s, Aug. Abrahamsson & co, a department store in Gothenburg specialising in fabrics and buttons, bought thousands of catechisms published by Glerup, hundreds of ABCs, and dozens of Steinmetz and Åkerblom's *Biblisk historia*. The quantities indicate that they must have been intended for further sale. The trading company P. B. Olsson & co in Lilla Edet also bought large numbers of textbooks, notably Steinmetz and Åkerblom's *Biblisk historia*, textbooks in geography and dozens of ABCs. Another example is Korndals Aktiebolag, which bought 30 copies of Lindblom's *Räknelära för folkskolor och nybörjare* (Mathematics for Public Schools and Beginners) in 1888. Korndals Aktiebolag owned several industries in Mölndal, specialising in paper and textile production, and during the 1880s the company established a number of weekend schools for

386 Krantz, *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn*, 28.

the children of their employees.³⁸⁷ It is most probably in these classrooms that the textbooks from Gumpert's bookshop were used.

The purchases of schoolbooks were condensed towards the start of each semester, notably in late August/early September and at the beginning of January. These periods were particularly busy for Gumpert's bookshop. In his diary for 30 August 1888, employee Johan Lundgren noted that the sale of schoolbooks "is slowly gaining momentum," and the following day he describes the commerce as "rather extensive." A couple of weeks later, on Monday 10 September 1888, Lundgren depicts the atmosphere in the bookshop as "hectic," and the afternoon as "worse than on any previous occasion."³⁸⁸ For many customers, the purchase of schoolbooks accounted for a majority of their annual purchases. In 1880, over 30 purchases were for example recorded on the wholesaler Axel Fürstenberg's (1833–88) account. Almost all purchases consisted of schoolbooks and teaching materials and were made by one or more of his four sons, Ludvig (16), Arthur (15), Ernst (14), and Harald (9). Similarly, all books but one bought in 1880 on freeholder Axel Wilhelm Natt och Dag's account consisted of schoolbooks, and were purchased by his son, the student Bo Wilhelm Natt och Dag (19). In September 1879, the daughter of the wholesaler Anders Oscar Hertzman, Signe Maria Hertzman (10), also bought a number of schoolbooks, making up a significant proportion of the year's purchases on her father's account. Most households with school-aged children spent around 10 to 20 kronor annually on textbooks, and for families with several children the costs could be substantial. The Fürstenberg household, for example, spent between 20 and 60 kronor annually on textbooks for their children.

387 "Korndal," *Nordisk familjebok* vol. 8 (Stockholm: Gernandts boktryckeri-aktiebolag, 1884).

388 The diaries of the bookshop assistant Johan Lundgren 1883–1903, in the archive of N. J. Gumpert, GLA/C0038:1, Regional State Archives in Gothenburg.

Table 5.3: Best-selling schoolbooks at Gumpert's bookshop 1879–1890 recorded in the 10 per cent sample of customers

Author	Title	Copies
Sigfrid Almquist	<i>Geografi för folkskolan</i> (Geography for the Elementary School)	800
Martin Luther	<i>Katekes</i> (Catechism)	729
Lars Conrad Lindblom	<i>Räknekurs för småskolor och folkskolor</i> (Math Course for Junior and Elementary Schools)	678
Otto Pählman	<i>Skrifbok</i> (Copy book)	515
Magnus Roth	<i>Atlas för skolan och hemmet</i> (Atlas for the School and Home)	357
Alfred Steinmetz	<i>Biblisk historia för folkskolan/småskolan</i> (Biblical History for Elementary and Junior School)	346
	<i>ABC-bok</i> (ABC)	291
Johan Frans Åkerblom	<i>Biblisk historia: sammandragen och omarbetad</i> (Biblical History: abbreviated and revised)	290
Albrekt Segerstedt	<i>Naturlära för folkskolor och nybegynnare</i> (Science for Elementary Schools and Beginners)	202
Fredrik Sandberg	<i>Folkskolans sångbok</i> (The Elementary School Songbook)	201

Several schoolbooks were bestsellers at Gumpert's bookshop. Since these sales figures are based on only a 10 per cent sample from the sales' ledgers, all the books listed in the table were actually sold in the thousands (see table 5.3). In the top ten list, we find Sigfrid Almquist's *Geografi för folkskolan*, first published in 1886, Åkerblom's *Biblisk historia*, published in 60 editions between 1842 and 1875, and Steinmetz's *Biblisk historia*, first published in 1874, alongside ABCs and catechisms. Åkerblom's book was still bought in considerable numbers by a limited number of companies and vicars, whereas most ordinary customers bought Steinmetz's book. Among the textbooks for the study of Swedish, we find D. A. Sundén's *Svensk språklära i sammandrag* and K. O. Wessman's *Svensk rättskrifningslära*; in history, C. T. Odhner's *Lärobok i fäderneslandets historia samt grunddragen af Norges och Danmarks historia för skolans lägre klasser* and J. R. Pallin's *Lärobok i allmänna historien* stand out; in geography Almquist's *Geografi för folkskolan* and E. Erslev's *Lärobok i geografi för Sveriges folkskolor* dominate. In mathematics and science, L. Åberg's *Räknelära för folkskolor och*

nybörjare, Segerstedt's *Naturlära*, and Berlin's *Lärobok i naturlära för folkskolan* were bought in large quantities. As some of the titles suggest, several of the textbooks were intended for the Swedish elementary schools, *folkskolan*.

If we take a closer look at the purchases of textbooks among customers who seemingly bought the books for their own or their children's use, and leave aside the purchases made by school boards, teachers, clerics, and companies, a pedagogical literature of a more diverse kind emerges. Here we find books on physics, chemistry, mathematics, and foreign languages. E. G. Calwagen's textbooks for the study of English and German were bought by a particularly high number of customers, as were K. J. Ploetz's books for the study of French. A large number of books by authors of classical antiquity in the original language, as well as numerous copies of Latin textbooks and grammars, demonstrate that the study of Latin was still widespread in certain groups. Several of these specialised textbooks were used for schooling on a higher level than the elementary school, presumably at the secondary grammar schools, *läroverken*, and some books were specifically targeted at their students.³⁸⁹ The teachers at *läroverken* were academics, and saw themselves as physicists, chemists, and biologists rather than just teachers.³⁹⁰ Admission to *läroverken* was sought-after and exclusive, and around one in 40 children were taught there, mainly from more affluent families.³⁹¹ However, among the clientele of Gumpert's bookshop, it was commonplace.

In general, only boys were admitted to *läroverken*, and for a long time the gender inequality permeated the secondary education system.³⁹² In Gothenburg, however, there were a few prominent exceptions, for example a secondary grammar school for girls, Nya Elementarläroverket för flickor (established 1867) and the Kjellberg Girl School, Kjellbergsska flickskolan (established 1832). The director of Kjellbergsska flickskolan, Therese Kamph (1836–84), who has been described as an energetic and temperamental leader with an eagerness to put radical reforms and ideas into practice, was a recurring customer at

389 Calwagen's textbooks, for example, were used extensively at the grammar schools. *Nordisk familjebok* (1905), 'Calwagen, Ernst Gottfrid'.

390 Hultén, "Folkskollärarna och naturvetenskapen."

391 Gudrun Spetze, "De enskilda skolorna och dess lärare under 1800-talet," published on lararnashistoria.se (2010); Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle*, 88–89.

392 Berit Larsson, *Ljus och upplysning äfven för Qvinnan: kvinnors medborgarbildning i den svenska folkskolan 1868–1918* (Göteborg: Anamma, 1997), 29.

Gumpert's bookshop.³⁹³ Here she bought textbooks, pedagogy, and philosophy (for example Kierkegaard), alongside contemporary literature and books on women's emancipation, such as Eva Fryxell's *Qvinnofrågan* (1880; The woman question). The Kjellberg Girl School also bought books from Gumpert's bookshop. Perchance, Kamph's ideas may have influenced the school's book purchases. At Gumpert's bookshop the school purchased not only textbooks, but also the radical student organisation Verdandi's publications, historian and feminist Ellen Fries's *Märkvärdiga qvinnor* and subscribed to the magazines *Dagny* and *Ny svensk tidskrift*, which frequently published contemporary literature.

At Gumpert's bookshop, it was fairly common for children of account holders to purchase their own schoolbooks. When we study the examples in our 10 per cent sample from Gumpert's bookshop where the children of the account holders are listed as buyers, the differences in educational opportunities based on gender become very apparent. By sheer quantity, the number of purchases of textbooks by customers classified as "sons" is almost seven times as high as the number of purchases made by customers noted as "daughters." Although women did not have the same access to higher education as men, the difference is quite remarkable, especially when we keep in mind that access to public schools was equal and mandatory for everyone. Significant differences can be detected when we compare the nature of the textbooks acquired by the daughters as opposed to the sons. The daughters primarily purchased grammars and textbooks for the study of Swedish, English, German, and French, and also basic textbooks for the study of mathematics, history, and science. Essentially, the sons more or less bought the same books, but in addition to this also more advanced and specialised textbooks, such as K. E. Broman's book on ratio mechanics, W. Blomstrand's books on chemistry, G. D. Dahlander's and C. R. Ekstrand's books on thermodynamics and mechanical engineering as well as textbooks on geometry and trigonometry, astronomy, political science, botany, Latin, and Hebrew.

393 Ebba Heckscher, *Några drag ur den svenska flickskolans historia* (Stockholm: Norstedt & söner, 1914), 179–182.

Magazines and journals

Gumpert's bookshop sold a great variety of periodicals, spanning from scholarly journals to magazines offering entertainment of the lightest kind. Our 10 per cent sample indicates that the sales of magazines and journals made up nearly a sixth of the purchases from the bookshop. Although fiction and schoolbooks sold in larger numbers, the revenue from magazines sales was more substantial. The magazines and journals available at Gumpert's bookshop spanned a wide array of subjects, and some of the most popular ones managed to gain a wide readership by offering short and easily digestible articles and illustrations of all kinds. There was something for everyone in the magazines.

Every year, Gumpert's bookshop published an extensive catalogue, called *Gumpert's journalkatalog*, listing all available magazines and journals.³⁹⁴ By the 1880s, over 800 foreign and Swedish journals and magazines were listed in the catalogue, which was handed out for free. Some of the magazines were large-scale international publications while others were small ventures discontinued after only one or a little more issues. When we study the purchases of individual customers at Gumpert's bookshop, it becomes apparent just how significant the role of the magazines was. In 1879, only purchases of schoolbooks were registered on Axel Fürstenberg's account in Gumpert's bookshop, with one notable exception: magazines. In 1879 alone, Fürstenberg bought *Die Gartenlaube* (The Garden Arbor), *Ny illustrerad tidning* (New Illustrated Magazine), *Sanningssökaren* (The Truth Seeker), and *Über Land und Meer* (Over Land and Sea).

This is a frequently recurring pattern. A great many customers who otherwise only bought non-fiction or schoolbooks purchased magazines, in several languages, and the light fiction offered through the magazines seems to have been more acceptable than, for example, novels. Although it was possible to subscribe to magazines directly from the publisher, it made more financial sense to buy them at the bookshop. According to Krantz, customers who ordered their magazines via the bookshop did not have to pay extra for shipping, which made them considerably cheaper, not least when it came to foreign journals and magazines.³⁹⁵

394 Krantz, *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn*, 27.

395 *Ibid.*, 22, 27.

**Gumperts Bokhandels
Journalkatalog för 1888**

har utkommit.

Katalogen, som upptager i systematisk ordning namn på **795** olika
Tidskrifter och Journaler, framhålles som en god hjälpreda vid val af **Jour-
naler och Tidskrifter**, samt utlemnas **gratis** uti

N. J. Gumperts Bokhandel,
Göteborg.

Obs.! Prisförändringarne till förmån för den Tidskrifts-
förbrukande allmänheten torde benäget beaktas.
(G.26531)X1.)

Figure 5.2: Advertisement in Tidning för Wenersborgs stad och län 2 January 1888 for Gumpert's journalkatalog

On one and the same day, 26 May 1883, captain Berndt Gustaf Strömman (1832–1913) bought one English magazine, the *Family Herald*, one German, *Die Gartenlaube*, and one French, *Le Journal Illustré*. Although captain Strömman may have been uncommonly gifted linguistically, in general, the clientele of Gumpert's bookshop did seemingly not have any difficulties coping with foreign languages. Customers could choose from a wide variety of foreign-language magazines. Actually, only little more than half of the magazines sold at Gumpert's bookshop were Swedish. Most foreign-language magazines were German, followed by English, French, and Danish-Norwegian. Nearly every third magazine sold in the bookshop was German, and the magazine that was sold in the most copies overall was *Über Land und Meer*.

Table 5.4: Sales of magazines from Gumpert's bookshop 1879–90 recorded in the 10 per cent sample of customers, by language

Language	Copies	Proportion
Swedish	1,284	53 %
German	704	29 %
English	245	10 %
French	126	5 %
Danish/Norwegian	36	2 %
Unidentified	19	1 %
Total	2,414	100 %

Some magazines were published seasonally, such as the Swedish midsummer magazine *Från Målarstrand: en midsommartidning*. Single-issue Christmas magazines, predominantly illustrated and published in folio format, were exceedingly popular, for example *Julen*, *Jul-rosor*, and *Julqvällen*, which were sold in large numbers throughout December. Most of them were rather cheap, typically priced at 1 krona, and they reached a wide readership. Some of them, for example *Julklappen: G. Bellanders jultidning*, cost as little as 25 öre, and were bought even by maids. In some cases, customers bought several copies at once. One example is the doctor Olof Carlander (1844–99), who bought a handful of *Julqvällen* every year, just in time for Christmas. It is likely that they were intended as Christmas gifts, or that Carlander simply wanted to have enough copies to supply the whole family. From 1885 to 1890 his annual purchases of *Julqvällen* increased from three to five copies, which corresponds perfectly well to the number of family members that could presumably read.

A wide range of scientific and academic journals was also available from Gumpert's bookshop. Most of them were foreign, and they covered a multitude of different subjects. Technical journals and trade magazines such as *Postalische Nachrichten*, *Blätter für Elektro-Homöopathie*, *Centralblatt für Augenheilkunde*, *Fotografisk tidskrift*, *Le Magasin d'éducation*, *The Scientific American*, and the *Tobacco Trade Review* were bought in limited numbers by a highly specialised clientele. All the registered purchases of the Swedish medical journal *Hygiea* in the 10 per cent sample from Gumpert's bookshop, were for example made by physicians.

Some magazines were targeted specifically at women, for example *Freja: illustrerad skandinavisk modetidning*, *Dametidende*, *Frauenzeitung*, *Tidskrift för hemmet*, and *Idun: tidning för kvinnan och hemmet*. First in the list, the Swedish fashion magazine *Freja* was among the best-selling magazines of the bookshop, despite its steep price: 8 kronor for an annual subscription, and 14 kronor for the illustrated edition. Foreign fashion magazines such as *Die Modenwelt*, *Metropolitan fashion*, and *La Revue de la mode* were also sold in particularly high numbers. These luxuriously illustrated magazines, most of them with colour plates, kept the bourgeois women in Gothenburg in close touch with the latest trends in the European capitals. Interestingly, despite the fact that these magazines were targeted at women, remarkably few of them were bought directly by female customers, only around every twelfth copy. Our 10 per cent sample from the sales records reveal that only seven of the 83 copies of *Freja: illustrerad skandinavisk modetidning*, three of the 14 copies of *Frauenzeitung*, four out of the 23 copies of *Tidskrift för hemmet* and two of the nine copies of *Idun: tidning för kvinnan och hemmet* were purchased by women. This indicates that, in general, a significant proportion of the books that were read by women were purchased for them by their husbands, although we have to take into account that some of these magazines may have been read by men too.

Another series of magazines targeted children specifically, several of them displaying religious undertones: *Barnens journal*, *Barnens vän*, *Barnets tidning*, *Children's century*, *Children's friend*, *The Child's Own Magazine*, *Korn åt små fåglar*, *Linnea: tidning för barn och ungdom*, and *Snöflingan: barnens jultidning*. Most of these magazines were bought only in very limited numbers. *Barnens vän* was sold in most copies. The 10 per cent sample from the sales ledgers records the purchase of a modest fifteen copies, suggesting an overall sale of around 150 copies.

Table 5.5: Best-selling magazines in Gumpert's bookshop 1879–90 recorded in the 10 per cent sample of customers

Magazine	Copies
<i>Über Land und Meer: Allgemeine illustrierte Zeitung</i>	123
<i>Julqvällen: en tidning för alla</i>	110

<i>Fliegende Blätter & Fliegende Blätter Kalender</i>	97
<i>Freja: illustrerad skandinavisk modetidning</i>	83
<i>Svenska biblioteket</i>	72
<i>Ur dagens krönika: månadskrift för skönliteratur, teater och politik</i>	71
<i>Svea folk-kalender</i>	70
<i>Svenska Familj-Journalen & Svea: Svenska Familj-Journalen</i>	57
<i>The Graphic & The Graphic x-mas</i>	53
<i>Ny illustrerad tidning</i>	50

Ur dagens krönika was a radical cultural magazine edited by Arvid Ahnfelt and published from 1881 to 1891. It was generally associated with the Modern Breakthrough.³⁹⁶ Notable contributors include some of the foremost representatives of the literary movement, for example Strindberg, Brandes, af Geijerstam, and Ola Hansson. It is interesting to note that despite the fact that it was regarded as radical, it was still among the most successful magazines in Gumpert's bookshop. Among the subscribers of the magazine were several of Gothenburg's most prominent inhabitants, magnate Baron Oscar Dickson (1823–97), politician Gustaf Svanberg (1839–1909) who was mayor of Gothenburg from 1885 to 1904, the chief of police Anders Oscar Elliot (1840–1931), as well as numerous wholesalers, district judges, doctors, bookkeepers, clerks, etc.

By comparison, the otherwise highly successful monthly magazine *Svenska Familj-Journalen*, edited by Christian Emanuel Gernandt, was sold in surprisingly few copies at Gumpert's bookshop. The print run of the magazine peaked in the late 1870s, when it was published in over 70,000 copies. Eric Johannesson has studied the social segmentation of the subscribers of *Svenska Familj-Journalen* and was able to determine that in the course of the 1870s, the magazine increasingly reached a lower-class readership, for example manual labourers.³⁹⁷ The success of the *Svenska Familj-Journalen* went hand in hand with the use of bonus gifts and lotteries, and when this practice was finally

³⁹⁶ Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 68.

³⁹⁷ Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 136–45.

prohibited in 1881, it inflicted a heavy blow to *Svenska Familj-Journalen*.³⁹⁸

According to a letter from the publisher Fredrik Skoglund to Karl Warburg in 1879, the resistance against *Svenska Familj-Journalen*'s use of dubious sales models was particularly strong in Gothenburg. In 1869 was founded the magazine *Förr och Nu: illustrerad läsning för hemmet* (Then and Now: illustrated reading for the home), edited by vicar Bernhard Wadström. During the 1870s it emerged as a religiously oriented alternative to *Svenska Familj-Journalen*. Although it never reached the same size as *Svenska Familj-Journalen*, the magazine achieved significant success in some parts of the country and reached 20,000 subscribers by 1876.³⁹⁹ In his letter to Warburg, publisher Skoglund claimed that the booksellers in Gothenburg "do what they can for the magazine [*Förr och Nu*], primarily to oppose the lottery bate of *Svenska Familj-Journalen*."⁴⁰⁰ Skoglund was appointed head of the company publishing *Förr och Nu*, and his statement was naturally highly biased.⁴⁰¹ The 10 per cent sample from the sales' ledgers suggests that the two magazines were more or less equally successful at Gumpert's bookshop.

Some were of the opinion that magazines had no place in parish libraries, and that one of the purposes of the parish libraries was actually to replace the rural population's reading of magazines.⁴⁰² Nonetheless, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby offered a small selection of magazines. Most of the library's holdings of magazines consisted of annual volumes of *Läsning för folket* and the religious magazine *Pietisten*. The magazine *Läsning för folket* was distributed to the parishes for free, and it was by far the most common publication in Swedish parish libraries, as Sjösten has showed.⁴⁰³ The library had at least 24 annual volumes of the religious magazine *Pietisten*, some of them in several copies. In addition, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby offered a few annual volumes of two agricultural magazines, *Landtbruks-Tidning för södra och mellersta*

398 Maria Simonsen, *Den skandinaviske encyklopædi: udgivelse og udformning af Nordisk familjebok & Salmonsens konversationsleksikon* (Göteborg: Makadam, 2016), 79–82; Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 7, 104–06.

399 Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 114; Hallingberg, *Läsarna*, 196.

400 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 368–72.

401 Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 114.

402 Jarlbrink, "Lässcener," 47.

403 Sjösten has found the publication in 98 per cent of the library catalogues in his survey. Sjösten, *Sockenbiblioteket*, 298.

Sverige and *Tidskrift för svenska landtbruket och dess binäringar*, as well as the women's magazine *Tidskrift för hemmet: tillegnad Nordens kvinnor*. Most magazines were borrowed only infrequently, in many cases only a handful of times throughout the decades. A few annual volumes of *Läsning för folket* and the agricultural magazines were borrowed as much as 20 or 30 times, and the most popular volumes of *Pietisten* were borrowed 40 or even 50 times over the years.

A few magazines were also available from Sjöblom's lending library, for example *Svenska Familj-Journalen*, *Svenska familj-vännen*, and *Illustrerad familj-journal*, but magazines do not seem to have been a particularly important niche for the lending library. The magazines available from Sjöblom's lending library all contained light fiction and were richly illustrated. Most of them were borrowed only quite rarely, apart from *Svenska Familj-Journalen*, which was borrowed regularly, mostly by schoolboys. To some extent, the lack of interest in the magazines may be explained by the fact that they seem to have been a little dated: most of them were from the mid-1860s.

The Northeast Passage and The Maiden Tribute: two examples of bookshop bestsellers

This section focuses on the sales of two bestsellers of a very different kind at Gumpert's bookshop. The first example are the publications concerning Swedish explorer A. E. Nordenskiöld's voyage along the Northeast Passage, and the second example consists of a scandalous report from London's brothel world, first published in the London-based newspaper *Pall Mall Gazette*. On the one hand, the two events at centre of attention – Nordenskiöld's expedition and the issue of child prostitution in London – may seem to have little in common. But on the other hand, the way the publications regarding these two events reached Sweden, more specifically Gumpert's bookshop, was very similar. They were both events of significant news value, which made readers flock to the bookstores.

The interest in literary novelties during the 1880s was very strong, and both publishers and booksellers advertised particularly anticipated books well before they arrived. Meanwhile, the number of books bought by most people

was rather limited, and even bestsellers were generally marketable only for a short period of time. Some books were sold in truly impressive numbers, but only during a limited time period; sometimes only a few months, but in some cases only a few days. When it comes to certain particularly anticipated books, having them for sale one or two days before competitors could therefore make a huge difference. This was the case for the bookshop *Akademiska bokhandeln* in Uppsala, which chose to maintain a souring business relationship with the Danish publisher Gyldendal, in order to receive shipments one or two days early (see page 172).

Nordenskiöld and the Vega expedition

The Swedish explorer and scientist Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld's (1832–1901) ship *Vega* was the first vessel to sail the route between Europe and Asia through the Arctic Ocean, the so-called Northeast Passage. The expedition was successful and has been regarded as one of Sweden's greatest scientific achievements throughout history. Nordenskiöld's expedition was sanctioned by the Swedish king Oscar II and it received governmental support. The prestigious voyage thus turned into a project of national importance. *Vega* departed from Karlskrona in June 1878, and after a series of initial hardships such as a delay of several months due to impenetrable masses of ice, the ship passed the Bering Strait and finally conquered the Northeast Passage. In September 1879, the expedition reached Japan, where the emperor received them and hosted them for two months. The journey back to Sweden was triumphant, and a series of stops along the route were made, in for example Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, and Suez. In February 1880, the expedition reached Europe. The first stop was Italy, and the members of the expedition were well received in Rome. Some of them took the overland road north via Paris before boarding *Vega* again a few weeks later, in the Netherlands. On the evening of 24 April, the *Vega* expedition finally reached Stockholm. They were received as national heroes, greeted by gunfire, fireworks, and the cheers from thousands of spectators. In Sweden, 24 April has since 1902 been celebrated as "Vega Day."

A great variety of pamphlets, magazines, and books were published in the wake of *Vega*'s return to Stockholm. The most important publication of them all was Nordenskiöld's own account, *Vegas färd kring Asien och Europa* (1880–81). Its publisher, Frans Beijer, the former owner of Gumpert's bookshop, was a

skilled and visionary businessman. He travelled to Italy where he met up with Nordenskiöld and reached an agreement concerning Nordenskiöld's book, more than two months before the expedition had even arrived in Stockholm.⁴⁰⁴ In the days following the arrival of Nordenskiöld and his crew in Stockholm in April 1880, several Vega-related products, some of which were available from Gumpert's bookshop, flooded the book market. As early as a few weeks before the arrival of Vega in Stockholm, city broker Johan Mauritz Möller (b. 1853) bought photographs of the ship and its crew, presumably taken in Italy. The 10 per cent sample from Gumpert's sales ledgers disclose that on the very day the ship arrived in the Swedish capital, poems dedicated to the members of the expedition were selling well, for example Frans Hedberg's *Vegafärden: en diktykel, tillgnad Nordostpassagens upptäckare* (1880) and Karl Johan Ekeblad's *Helsning till Nordenskiöld, Palander, Vegas besättning, vetenskapsmännen, och verldsomseglarnes hustrur* (1880).

Already back in February, Publicistklubben (the Swedish Publicists' Association) had announced that they were going to publish a festive magazine honouring Nordenskiöld's return to Stockholm.⁴⁰⁵ The eight pages long special issue of *Ny illustrerad tidning*, entitled *Festnummer*, with a full-page portrait of Nordenskiöld by the artist Anders Zorn, was ready on time and was sold in several copies in Gothenburg as early as 29 April, five days after Vega's arrival in Stockholm. The Publicists' Association hosted a grand welcome party for Nordenskiöld in Stockholm on 30 April, and in the following week the Association published *Nordostpassagen: Vid publicistklubbens fest för Nordenskiöld den 30 april 1880*, an illustrated 24-page pamphlet. The publication was sold in numerous copies in Gumpert's bookshop during the two first weeks of May, and given its relatively affordable price, 1.25 kronor, it was probably sold in additional copies to cash-paying customers, whose purchases were not recorded in the sales ledgers. Some customers seem to have bought everything related to the Vega expedition. Wholesaler Edvard Heyman (1827–81), for example, displayed a particular interest in the expedition. In February 1880, he bought *Till Anna Nordenskiöld och Anna Palander* (1880), a two-page poem dedicated to the wives of Nordenskiöld and the captain of Vega, Louis Palander. Three

404 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 235.

405 Advertisement in the Finnish newspaper *Morgonbladet* 21 February 1880.

days after the arrival of Vega in Stockholm, on 27 April 1880, he bought a map outlining Vega's route, printed in 1879, and in addition, he bought at least two copies of the Publicists' Association's *Nordostpassagen*, which he even returned to the bookshop to have properly bound.

Nordenskiöld's own account of the expedition was published in 12 instalments between 1880 and 1881. The first instalment, recorded in Gumpert's sales catalogue simply as *Nordenskiölds resa 1* – presumably because the title had not yet been announced publicly – was ordered from Gumpert's bookshop in advance as early as in the summer of 1880. Numerous copies of the first instalment were sold in time for Christmas, and most customers seem to have bought all 12 instalments. Each instalment cost 1.50 kronor, and the final cost for the finished book, 18 kronor, made it a very expensive publication. Furthermore, a substantial proportion of the customers buying the book, in fact more than every other customer, also paid extra to have the books bound in the publisher's decorated cloth binding. For these customers, the total cost of the finished product amounted to a staggering 24.50 kronor.

Despite its steep price, Nordenskiöld's account from the expedition was an extraordinary bestseller. The 10 per cent sample of the sales records list the purchase of more than 20 complete sets of *Vegas färd*, indicating that ten times as many, or around 200 copies of *Vegas färd* could have been sold at Gumpert's bookshop alone. Apart from the notable exception of schoolbooks, Gumpert's bookshop hardly sold any other book in such high numbers. Nordenskiöld's travelogue was an immense commercial success, and the publisher Beijer also managed to secure further profits from translations of *Vegas färd*. Collectively, the author's share of the profits amounted to as much as 100,000 kronor, while the publisher's earnings were around 25,000 kronor.⁴⁰⁶ In the following years, Nordenskiöld published several additional works, for example *Studier och forskningar: föranledda af mina resor i Höga Norden: ett populärt vetenskapligt bidrag till "Vegas färd kring Asien och Europa"* (1883) and *Den andra Dicksonska expeditionen till Grönland: dess inre isöken och dess ostkust* (1885), of which dozens of copies were sold at Gumpert's bookshop, according to the 10 per cent sample.

Perhaps the appreciation of Nordenskiöld's deeds was stronger in Gothenburg than elsewhere. Gothenburg was Sweden's main port, and the history

406 *Svea Folk-kalender för 1903* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1902), 250.

of the city was intertwined with sailing and shipping. After sailing off from Karlskrona, Vega made one of its first stop-overs in Gothenburg before heading north. Gothenburg also had very strong financial ties to the expedition. The Royal Society of Sciences and Letters in Gothenburg was among those who sponsored the expedition, and more importantly, the wealthy magnate Oscar Dickson (1823–97) resided in the city. Alongside Russian industrialist Alexander Sibiriyakov (1849–1933) and king Oscar II (1829–1907), Dickson was the most important sponsor of the expedition, as he had been for several of Nordenskiöld's earlier expeditions. Dickson was also a customer of Gumpert's bookshop, and he was one of the many customers who visited the bookshop to buy a copy of *Vegas färd*. Among Gumpert's customers was also one of Nordenskiöld's former shipmates, Gerhard von Yhlen (1819–1909).⁴⁰⁷ He was an experienced sailor and zoologist who had accompanied Nordenskiöld on his expedition to Spitsbergen in 1868, which had departed from Gothenburg. At Gumpert's bookshop, von Yhlen bought navigational charts, but does not seem to have bought any of Nordenskiöld's writings.

Since Nordenskiöld's account of the Vega expedition was so expensive, few except the well-to-do could afford acquiring their own copy. But as news of the expedition was everywhere, it seems most likely that all segments of society became interested. Furthermore, ephemeral publications, such as magazine special issues, were probably aimed at a lower-class clientele. In the bookshop, several of these cheaper publications were bought by the children and wives of the account holders. For example, widow Elisabeth Krafft's son, Petrus Johannes Krafft (b. 1861) and the wife of colourist Fredrik August Uhlemann, Maria Fanny Soutter (b. 1843), both bought the Publicists' Association's *Nordostpassagen*.⁴⁰⁸

Although no copies of any of Nordenskiöld's works were available from the parish library of Munka-Ljungby, other parish libraries found it worthwhile to acquire one, despite its steep price. On 15 March 1882 the parish library

407 "Gerhard von Yhlen" in *Hvar 8 dag*, 18 July 1909.

408 On a completely different note, Krafft later ascended to world-fame as the owner of a unique Shakespeare print; the only surviving copy of the *Titus Andronicus* Quarto, which Krafft had inherited from his father. The unique book appeared in 1904, and was eventually purchased by the famous American book collector millionaire Henry Clay Folger. Andrea Mays, *The Millionaire and the Bard: Henry Folger's Obsessive Hunt for Shakespeare's First Folio* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016) 146–51.

in Tanum, Bohuslän, bought a paperback copy of *Vegas färd* from Gumpert's bookshop for 18 kronor. Even though few parish libraries could afford purchases at this price level, the library in Tanum was not the only one to acquire Nordenskiöld's book. Another example is the parish library in Västerhaninge, Södermanland, which also had a copy of *Vegas färd*, listed under the library's Geography and travelogues section.⁴⁰⁹ Apparently, some library boards must have considered Nordenskiöld's accomplishments sufficiently important to make his travelogue available to the clientele of the parish libraries. Even in Sjöblom's lending library, which scarcely acquired anything other than fiction, an account of one of Nordenskiöld's earlier expeditions was available, Frans Reinhold Kjellman's *Svenska Polar-expeditionen år 1872–1873 under ledning af A. E. Nordenskiöld* (1875), although it does not seem to have been borrowed particularly often.

The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon and other scandalous publications

Between 6 and 10 July 1885, a shocking series of articles entitled "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" was published in the respectable London newspaper *Pall Mall Gazette*. The controversial articles were written by the editor of the magazine, William Thomas Stead (1849–1912), and drew attention to the issue of child prostitution in London. Stead's exposé of the flourishing prostitution industry was highly controversial, not only because of the nature of the subject, but also due to his unconventional methods. To better prove his point, Stead had a 13-year-old girl bought from her family, and once she had been taken into prostitution he played the role as her first customer. Stead and his associates were taken to court and received a prison sentence. The shocking articles evoked a widespread moral panic in Victorian society and had an impact on British legislation regarding the age of consent, which was raised from 13 to 16 in the aftermath of "The Maiden Tribute."⁴¹⁰

Already a few days before the publication of Stead's reports, *Pall Mall Gazette* warned sensitive readers of the daring contents that were to be published

409 *Katalog öfver Westerhaninge sockenbibliotek. Upprättad år 1886* (Stockholm: Oskar Eklunds boktryckeri, 1886), 6.

410 Deborah Gorham, "The 'Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' Re-Examined: Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in Late-Victorian England" in *Victorian England* vol. 21:3, Spring, 1978, 353–79 (360–61).

in the subsequent numbers. Naturally, expectations were sky high. The report was a formidable sales success for the magazine, and the story sent ripples across large parts of the world. On 11 July 1885, the day after the final installment of “The Maiden Tribute” had been published in London, the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* reported that the *Pall Mall Gazette* issues containing the scandalous articles had been sold in hundreds of thousands of copies, and that many were fetching top prices on the second-hand market.⁴¹¹ The interest in the articles was immense, and the demand stretched well beyond the borders of the United Kingdom. American magazines even had the article telegraphed in its entirety across the Atlantic, and in Paris, as much as 50 francs were paid for a single copy of one of the sensitive numbers of *Pall Mall Gazette*, according to the Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet*.⁴¹² To be able to better satisfy the strong demand for the articles, they were soon published separately in book form.

The story had been given extensive media coverage in Sweden, and it is quite remarkable how quickly the narrative regarding Stead’s report changed. In the article in *Dagens Nyheter* published on the 11 July, it was suggested that Stead should be held accountable for the immoral contents of the articles. Less than two weeks later, however, when his amicable intent had become publicly known, he received praise in the Swedish press, and was described as a “brave newspaper man.”⁴¹³ Stead was a master of sensational writing, and in his shocking testimony from London’s underworld, the sensational elements were paired with a pornographic rhetoric, which would prove to be an ingenious sales trick.⁴¹⁴ One of Gothenburg’s largest magazines, *Göteborgsposten*, stated that they were not going to publish any of the articles’ contents. The magazine stated that it was one thing to publish it in London, where the events actually had taken place, “[b]ut in a foreign country, a more detailed account of the events is not as important. We wish to spare our readers from these unnatural horrors, whose mere mentioning is like touching a pus-filled, stinking

⁴¹¹ *Dagens Nyheter* 11 July 1885.

⁴¹² *Aftonbladet* 17 July 1885.

⁴¹³ *Hernösandsposten* 24 July 1885.

⁴¹⁴ Greta Wendelin, “A Rhetoric of Pornography: Private Style and Public Policy in ‘The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon,’” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 42:4 (September 2012), 375–96.

wound.”⁴¹⁵ In spite of the newspaper’s concern, Swedish readers were just as eager to get their hands on a copy of Stead’s now world-famous reporting as those in other parts of the world.

The book version of “The Maiden Tribute” was published in the United Kingdom on 16 July 1885. Nine days later, at the latest, the English language original was available in Gumpert’s bookshop in Gothenburg. Customers in Gothenburg were possibly the first in Sweden to get their hands on the famous articles, since that is where shipments from the United Kingdom arrived. One of the first customer who reportedly bought the infamous pamphlet at Gumpert’s bookshop was Kristian Torin (1837–1916), a vicar employed by the manufacturing company Jonsereds Fabrikers AB in Jonsered, east of Gothenburg.⁴¹⁶ It is quite remarkable that Torin purchased a book of such a daring nature, since clerics in general seem to have bought hardly any literature of dubious character. However, Torin was not like other vicars. He was a radical and controversial cleric who was not afraid to oppose even his own bishop, and he openly took a controversial stance in advocating the right of women to preach.⁴¹⁷ Torin visited Gumpert’s bookshop on Saturday 25 July 1885 and bought a copy of the pamphlet for 55 öre. Gumpert’s was closed on Sundays, but when the bookshop opened again on Monday 27 July, there was a scramble to buy the book. The 10 per cent sample from the sales ledgers records the sale of at least nine copies on that day, indicating actual sales of close to 100 copies on Monday alone. *The Maiden Tribute* pamphlets constituted more than a third of all the books sold on that day. Furthermore, given their low cost and scandalous nature, additional copies were probably bought by cash-paying customers.

The customers buying *The Maiden Tribute* came from a somewhat more diverse social background than the customers buying Nordenskiöld’s *Vegas färd*. In the 10 per cent sample we find wholesalers, a bank manager, a consul, young and old bookkeepers, an unmarried journalist, and an employee at the export firm Cassel, Hofsten & co buying the book. Some of these customers bought books only rarely. The 10 per cent sample from Gumpert’s sales ledgers records

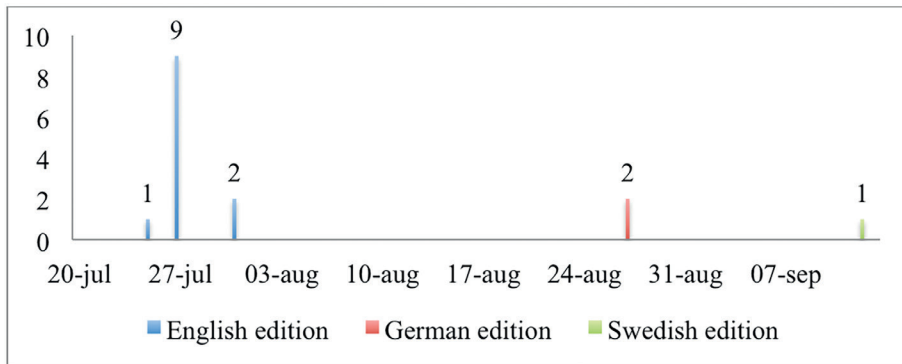
415 *Göteborgsposten* 23 July 1885.

416 C. W. Skarstedt, *Göteborgs stifts herdaminne* (Göteborg: Stiftelsen Pro Caritates förlag, 1948), 327

417 Lauler, “Fotbollens vagga – 1900-talets Zlatan.”

the purchase of 12 copies of the pamphlet during the last week of July 1885. According to the marginal scribbles in the sales ledgers, two thirds of these copies were sent directly to the customers' homes, via mail or errand boys, which otherwise happened only occasionally. It was probably a more discrete way of acquiring a book that most customers preferred not being seen buying. Moreover, none of the copies seem to have been returned to the bookshop.

Out of the four customers who did not have the book sent to their homes, at least two paid it in cash immediately. One of the cash-paying customers was the son of the translator Ino Theodor Aubourne (1818–1901), a linguistically uncommonly gifted clerk of English origin, and a well-known character in Gothenburg.⁴¹⁸ The other one was the merchant Edvard Svan (b. 1861) from Germany. Svan bought the book on 31 July, and it was the only book he paid for in cash during the entire year. Paying for the book in cash, rather than as customary on credit, may have been another attempt to conceal the purchases. Aubourne's son and Svan may well have believed that purchases that were settled immediately were not registered in the sales ledgers, but if so, they were mistaken. The clerks at Gumpert's bookshop kept the books in order, and not even the cash purchases were exempt from the records, as long as they were made by the bookshop's returning customers.



*Figure 5.3: Number of copies sold in Gumpert's bookshop of W. T. Stead's *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon* in 1885, registered in the 10 per cent sample of customers*

⁴¹⁸ Carl Rudolf A:son Fredberg, *Det Gamla Göteborg: Lokalhistoriska skildringar, personalia och kulturdrag II* (Göteborg, 1921–22), 638.

The Maiden Tribute was sold during a remarkably short timespan. All the recorded sales of the English version of *The Maiden Tribute* in our 10 per cent sample occurred within the span of a single week, between the 25 and 31 July 1885. One month later, a German translation appeared on the market, entitled *Die Londoner Skandale: Der Jungfrauen-Tribut des modernen Babylon: einzige vollständige deutsche Übersetzung*. The 10 per cent sample lists the sale of two copies, on 27 August, to 24-year-old Max Friedrich Hanke (b. 1861), from Chemnitz, Germany, and to the inspector A. Rundberg. Only a few days later, a Swedish translation also hit the stands. The book bore the title *Jungfruoffret i det moderna Babylon (Pall Mall Gazette's afslöjanden)* and was published in Stockholm, by Kungsholms bokhandel. In the following years, Kungsholms bokhandel would publish some of the most "scandalous" writings on the Swedish book market, for example part two of Strindberg's *Giftas* (1886; *Getting married*) and Knut Wicksell's pamphlets on prostitution. The Swedish translation, *Jungfruoffret*, was 162 pages long, priced at 1.50 kronor, and was widely advertised in some of the largest newspapers in Sweden, such as *Dagens Nyheter* and *Aftonbladet*. The profit from the publication was to be donated to the private foundation called "fröken Lina Nordwalls herberge för unga kvinnor," which operated a shelter in Stockholm for young women.

Despite the admirable motive and the advertisements in the newspapers, the Swedish translation of *The Maiden Tribute* was not commercially successful, at least not at Gumpert's bookshop. The only registered purchase in the 10 per cent sample occurred in early September and was made by the unmarried travelling salesman Carl Fredrik Rosenqvist (b. 1853). One might have thought that numerous customers would have been eager to get hold of a Swedish translation of the much talked-about book, but no. Despite the challenges some must have experienced in reading a book in English, the urge to read the famous book as soon as possible was apparently sufficient. Perhaps, the Swedish edition was intended to appeal to a less linguistically gifted clientele and was therefore more suitable for libraries than for bookshops. One of the libraries that acquired a copy of the Swedish edition was none other than Sjöblom's commercial lending library. A copy of *Jungfruoffret* was listed under the section for "miscellanies," in the library's 1895 catalogue. Another example was Norra järnarbetarefackföreningens bibliotek (the Northern Iron Workers' Trade Union Library) in Stockholm, which also acquired a copy of

Jungfruoffret. This library was small, consisting of roughly 50 books, mainly radical political writings and some fiction, Strindberg in particular. Most of the library's holdings were of more or less sensitive nature. It was in this literary context, alongside radical and entertaining literature, that *Jungfruoffret* was offered to some of its readers.⁴¹⁹



*Figure 5.4: Advertisement for the Swedish edition of *The Maiden Tribute*, in *Dagens Nyheter* 14 September 1885*

The Maiden Tribute was not the only book on the Swedish market highlighting the question of prostitution and sexuality, although it was probably one of the best known. The relation between prostitution and morality during the Victorian era was characterised by double standards. Prostitution was seen as an undesirable yet an inevitable part of society.⁴²⁰ Prostitution flourished in Sweden just as in London, albeit on a somewhat different scale, and in Stockholm alone around 500 prostitutes operated during the 1880s.⁴²¹ At the same time, the issue of morality and sexuality was a recurring topic and subject to heated debates. Several of the greatest Scandinavian writers of the time, such

419 John Persson and Bengt Brundin, "Bibliotekssträvanden inom socialdemokratiska föreningar i Stockholm på 1880-talet: bokbestånd, utlåning, litteratursyn" in *En bok om biblioteksforskning* (Uppsala: Avd. för Litteratursociologi vid Litteraturhistoriska institutionen, 1969), 155–206 (192–93).

420 Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 12.

421 Bertil Nolin, "Det moderna genombrottet," *Den Svenska Litteraturen: De liberala genombrotten 1830–1890*, edited by Lars Lönnroth and Sven Delblanc (Uddevalla: Bonnier-Fakta Bokförlag AB, 1989), 187.

as Ibsen, Bjørnson, J. P. Jacobsen, and Amalie Skram, depicted strong, independent women in some of their writings, and helped to spark a debate on the institution of marriage.

Among the non-fiction books on the Swedish book market dealing with sexuality and prostitution, British physician George Drysdale's *Sambällslärans grunddrag, eller fysisk, sexuel och naturlig religion* (1878; *The Elements of Social Science or Physical, Sexual and Natural Religion*), was a pioneering work.⁴²² Drysdale argued boldly that sexual abstinence could be harmful, even for women. The 10 per cent sample from Gumpert's bookshop lists the purchase of two copies of Drysdale's book, by clerks Jonsson and I. M. Berg. The German-Hungarian author Max Nordau's *Konventionella nutidslögnen* (1884; *Die konventionellen Lügen der Kultur Menschheit*), was another highly influential book. Nordau criticised marriages of convenience, and his book is reported to have attracted "enormous attention" in Sweden.⁴²³ In Gumpert's bookshop, 10 copies were registered as being sold in the 10 per cent sample, indicating a total sale of over a hundred copies, to bookkeepers, wholesalers, and tradesmen.

Numerous works of fiction also dealt directly with prostitution and sexuality. One example was Swedish author and journalist Fredrik Lindholm's *Stackars Vanadis! Verklighetstaflor ur de prostituerades lif* (Poor Vanadis! Images from the real life of the prostitutes), which was published in 1884 in a series of "realistic stories by young Swedish authors." Gumpert's bookshop sold dozens of copies of the book. The most famous Scandinavian example is arguably Norwegian author Christian Krohg's daring novel *Albertine* (1886), which was confiscated by Norwegian authorities. Krohg's book, which depicts an unmarried girl's fall into prostitution, was well received in the contemporary literary society, including by Georg Brandes. The book is said to have been smuggled across the border to Sweden and to have become something of a cult book for the Swedish writers of the Modern Breakthrough.⁴²⁴ In Gumpert's bookshop, the sale of three copies of Krohg's book were registered in the 10 per cent sample in January 1887, suggesting that it was sold in some thirty copies. The buyers of the books were wholesaler Michel Fränckel (b. 1842), the unmarried 27-year-old bookkeeper Anders Rudolf Bökman (b. 1859), and the 19-year-old son of

422 Ibid., 186.

423 Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 265; Nolin, "Det moderna genombrottet," 187.

424 Nolin, "Det moderna genombrottet," 187–89.

wholesaler L. Ph. Fürstenberg, Carl Fürstenberg (1867–1948). Bökman, however, decided to return his copy.

Some customers seem to have had a particularly strong interest in books addressing the issue of prostitution. One example was wholesaler Seth Efraim Millberg (1839–99). Millberg was one of the many customers who bought *The Maiden Tribute* and Lindholm's *Stackars Vanadis!*, but he is the only one in the 10 per cent sample who is registered as having bought the pamphlet *Hvita slafvinnor eller den offentliga auktoriserade osedligheten* (1887; White slaves or the publicly authorised immorality). Physician Seved Ribbing's book *Om den sexuella hygien och några av dess etiska konsekvenser: trenne föredrag* (1888; On sexual hygiene and some of its ethical consequences: three lectures) was also something of a bestseller in the bookshop, although it was not sold in as many copies as *The Maiden Tribute*. Ribbing argued that the advantages of regulated prostitution outweighed an unregulated one, and in his book, which was published in three editions between 1888 and 1889, he put forward the idea that contemporary literature in the style of Strindberg's *Giftas* was responsible for the moral decay of the youth.⁴²⁵ In the sales accounts of Gumpert's bookshop, Ribbing's book was recurrently recorded simply as "Hygienen," possibly in an attempt to avoid a charged word and to dodge any association between the buyers of the book and a literature of a more questionable character.

Women also evidently bought books discussing issues related to marriage, sexuality, and prostitution. One example is the journalist Emil Svensén's book *Spörssmål 1. Kvinnofrågan* (1888; Question 1: Women's Liberation). Svensén argued that the existence of prostitution in the Swedish society to a large extent could be attributed to a surplus of women. Svensén claimed that if all women would find someone to marry, prostitution would cease to exist.⁴²⁶ In Gumpert's bookshop, the 10 per cent sample records three purchases of the book, and they were all made by women. The unmarried teacher Zenobia Hero (b. 1853), Elisabeth Hedengren (b. 1863), wife of the civil engineer Axel Theodor Sievers, and unmarried 17-year-old Jenny Albertina Hennig (b. 1871) were among the customers buying the book in 1888. Hennig later returned her copy of the book. Both Hero and Hennig experienced how it was to live as independent

⁴²⁵ Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 86, 240.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 231.

women, and both bought additional books addressing women's emancipation, for example Victoria Benedictsson's *Modern* (1888). Hennig became a widow at a young age, and Hero never married.

Summary

In all three institutions, fiction was the genre most sought after. There was, however, remarkably little overlap between the fiction authors most bought or borrowed in each of the three institutions, save two notable exceptions: Topelius and Flygare-Carlén. In general, the fiction offered in the two libraries was a little dated, in particular the fiction in the parish library. Readers dependent on the libraries had to settle for novels that, in many cases, could have been bought in bookshops one full generation earlier.

The lending library and the bookshop benefited from the reading public's love for novels, and they adapted their holdings accordingly. For the parish library, however, it was more of a dilemma. Parish library members seem to have been just as interested as everyone else in reading novels, but the library statutes clearly stipulated that the objective of the library was to enlighten and educate, not to entertain. One of the main challenges of the library board was to uphold the delicate balance between the books most people wanted to read and the books that the board, in turn, wanted the members to read. Banning all fiction would have been far too perilous, but the library board seems to have found a middle-ground solution by primarily choosing fiction of a more pious and moralistic kind.

These novels were, by contrast, largely absent from the commercial lending library. Instead, it offered a great deal of "hair-raising" novels, such as the "city mysteries," robber stories, and adventurous novels, many of which were translated from French and English. The widespread popularity of these books became a matter of concern for politicians and public educators, not least since younger members of the public, as well as artisans and labourers, were among those reading them, and in no small numbers. In Munka-Ljungby, part two of *Svarta banden* by Ridderstad, one of the Swedish representatives of the "city mysteries" genre, was often borrowed, indicating that peasants also wanted to

get their hands on such novels. In general, parish libraries, alas, hardly ever acquired crime fiction and similar books, and the lending libraries remained the go-to-places for this kind of novel. Crime fiction was available from the bookshops, but was only sold in limited numbers. Although bestselling authors who were later canonized, such as Zola, Strindberg, and Dostoyevsky, were available from the lending library, their writings were certainly not as popular as the lighter novels written by de Kock, Dumas, or Sue.

The parish library in Munka-Ljungby boasted a large collection of religious books, as much as one third of the library stock, more than twice as big a proportion as the recommended one. A significant number of these books were written by revivalist preachers. For a long time, religious works were borrowed extensively, not least the day-to-day devotional manuals, which were particularly popular among a handful of devoted library members. By the end of the century, however, the members of the parish library seem to have lost most of their appetite for religious writings. At the bookshop, religious literature of a slightly different character was still sold: hymnbooks with owners' insignia, canonized theological literature by Farrar, Funcke, and Roos, alongside books on Eastern mysticism and spiritualism.

The trade in textbooks was one of the most profitable segments of the book market, and it underwent significant growth after the establishment of the public elementary school in 1842. The most widely used schoolbooks were printed in hundreds of thousands of copies, and schoolbooks constituted the single most sold category at Gumpert's bookshop in terms of the number of copies. The schoolbooks had no place in the commercial lending library, but Sjöblom, who also ran an antiquarian bookshop, managed to trade extensively in second-hand schoolbooks. The parish libraries' close ties to the school go back to the Elementary School Act of 1842, and in the case of Munka-Ljungby, the bond was particularly strong: the library was administered by the school teacher, and the book collection was housed in the school building. Some of the schoolbooks available from the parish library were almost always on loan during semesters, which may indicate that they were used for educational purposes. However, some of them, such as the history books, may also have been read as entertainment.

Magazines and journals were available in all three institutions, and the choice of magazines fit in nicely with the general selection of books in each

institution. The parish library offered mainly agricultural journals and annual volumes of *Pietisten* and *Läsning för folket*, the most common publication to be found in parish libraries. Unlike many other magazines, these publications did not contain serialized fiction, and they were not borrowed extensively. The fact that the women's magazine *Tidskrift för hemmet* could be found at the parish library is, perhaps, more of a surprise. Sjöblom's lending library offered a number of magazines, particularly those that were richly illustrated and entertainment-focused. Most of them were a little dated and were not borrowed particularly often. Gumpert's bookshop, by contrast, offered a wide range of journals and magazines, spanning from exclusive, scholarly journals to cheap children's magazines. A staggering 800 magazines and journals from a number of different countries were available at Gumpert's bookshop. The German-language magazines were among the most successful, and nearly every second magazine sold from the bookshop was written in a foreign language.

Sensational literature, such as Nordenskiöld's account from the Vega expedition and *The Maiden Tribute*, could only be found in the bookshop. Although the two libraries acquired new books every now and then, they rarely bought more than one copy of each book, and regardless of how badly the readers wanted to get their hands on the new acquisitions, they all had to wait for their turn. In many cases, it could be a very long wait. The bookshop, by contrast, made sure to acquire a number of copies sufficient to meet the demand of all customers who wanted to purchase a particular book. Sales for books related to Nordenskiöld's expedition and the *The Maiden Tribute* offer examples of how sensational literature was marketed and sold. Timing was particularly important in these cases. Most customers wanted to buy their copy as quickly as possible, preferably the same week or even the very day the book arrived in Gothenburg. The Swedish translation of *The Maiden Tribute*, available from the bookshop only a few weeks after the original English edition, was almost entirely superfluous for the Gumpert clientele. The urge to read the pamphlet immediately had trumped the challenges that quite a few must have encountered in reading the pamphlet in a foreign language.

CHAPTER 6

THE MODERN BREAKTHROUGH LITERATURE AND ITS READERS

To be a literature for the few, this is the vulnerable Achilles' heel of the new Swedish literature.

Ola Hansson, 1885.⁴²⁷

Numerous studies have been devoted to the literature of the Modern Breakthrough, but questions regarding its relation to the audience – the readers – have been exceedingly difficult to answer. In most cases, the subject has been given only passing attention. The relation between the literature of the Modern Breakthrough and its contemporary domestic audiences has been depicted as characterised foremost by disharmony and even hostility. Gunnar Ahlström emphasized the homelessness of the literary movement among its contemporary audiences in his 1947 study, and, to some extent, the narrative of a literary movement on collision course with its intended audience has lived on.⁴²⁸

A few attempts have been made at estimating the size of the reading audience of the Modern Breakthrough. In his time, Georg Brandes, and later on also the literary critic Sven Lange, estimated that the literary movement had a contemporary loyal audience of a mere “couple of hundreds” in Denmark, which seems rather consistent with Ahlström’s picture of a literature at odds with its time.⁴²⁹ Some of the authors were also quick to embrace this kind of avant-garde rhetoric, and enforced the notion of themselves as literary underdogs, misunderstood and unappreciated by their contemporaries. “The litterateur is outside of society!” Strindberg stated, in line with Ola Hansson’s moody description of the

427 Ahlström, *Det moderna genombrottet*, 424.

428 Ahlström, *Det moderna genombrottet*, 419–25; Fulsås and Rem, *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World Drama*, 1, 105–06.

429 Møller Kristensen, *Digteren og samfundet II*, 187–88.

contemporary literature and its relation to the reading audience.⁴³⁰

To some extent, this claim is contradicted by the fact that some of the members of the literary movement were formidable commercial successes. In his study of Alexander Kielland, Tore Rem points out that Kielland attracted a combined Danish-Norwegian readership of nearly 6,000, based on the print runs of his books, and for Ibsen, the corresponding figures would be some 10,000 readers.⁴³¹ From a Swedish perspective, Åke Åberg has made the most far-reaching attempt at estimating the size of the audience of the Modern Breakthrough. Åberg wanted to find out how many dedicated readers of Modern Breakthrough literature there were in the city of Västerås. His criterion for a dedicated reader was that he or she, between 1870 and 1895, should have bought at least ten books that fall into the Modern Breakthrough category. Among the clientele of Sjöberg's bookshop in Västerås, 40 customers qualified as dedicated Modern Breakthrough readers. This corresponds to one thousandth of the population of the bookshop's catchment area, and Åberg argues that transposed to the entire Swedish population, this indicates at least some 5,000 devoted readers of Modern Breakthrough literature in Sweden.⁴³² Åberg's calculation is not without weaknesses. For one, it glances over cash-paying customers as well as readers borrowing books, and it does not take into account the lack of bookshops in many parts of the country. Without aspiring to make more accurate calculations of the total number of loyal supporters in Sweden, I will take a closer look in the following chapter at the Modern Breakthrough literature available in the bookshop and the two libraries as well as at who bought or borrowed it.

430 Tjäder, 'Det unga Sverige', 113; August Strindberg, *Röda Rummet: Skildringar ur artist- och författarlifvet* (Stockholm: Albert Bonnier förlag, 1912), 19.

431 Tore Rem, *Författarens strategier: Alexander Kielland og hans krets* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2002), 223; Fulsås and Rem, *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World Drama*, 109.

432 Åberg, "Det moderna genombrottet", 72.

In the bookshop

In the bookshop, Modern Breakthrough book sales were substantial. Nearly every fifth work of fiction sold at Gumpert's bookshop between 1879 and 1890 fit into this literary movement.⁴³³ This can be compared to Lundevall's calculation that the Modern Breakthrough literature of Swedish authors accounted for nearly one fifth of all newly released Swedish fiction published in the 1880s.⁴³⁴ However, the sales from Gumpert's bookshop include Modern Breakthrough literature by Danish and Norwegian writers as well. As mentioned before, our 10 per cent sample of the sales records provide access only to the purchases of customers who had a credit account in the bookshop. Although it seems to have been the case for most customers, undoubtedly, some books were purchased in unknown numbers by cash-paying customers.

During the 1870s, sales of literature written by authors who would become associated with the Modern Breakthrough were rather modest. A letter from the proprietor of Gumpert's bookshop to Gyldendal's publishing house discloses that in 1873, for example, the bookshop sold only a few dozens of Ibsen's *Kejser og Galilæer* (1873; *Emperor and Galilean*).⁴³⁵ Even in 1879, the year initiating the "breakthrough" in Sweden, these authors sold very modestly, mainly a rather small number of copies of Strindberg's *Röda rummet*, Ibsen's *Et dukkehjem* (*A Doll's House*), and Bjørnson's *Kapten Mansana* (*Captain Mansana*) and *Leonarda*. Nonetheless, little by little, they gained momentum. It is worth noting that most copies of *Röda rummet* and *Et dukkehjem*, the latter one issued towards the end of the year (4 December 1879), were sold in 1880 or later. Only around a third of the copies were sold during the year they were published, in 1879.

The sales of these authors gained momentum and peaked in 1884: Strindberg's *Giftas* and Ibsen's *Vildanden* were bestsellers. The second half of the 1880s was an overall difficult time commercially for fiction. Between 1884 and 1889 fiction sales more than halved, which may have been correlated with the

433 The categorisation of Modern Breakthrough authors employed in this study is chiefly based on Gunnar Ahlström's and Ann-Lis Jeppsson's work.

434 However, the Modern Breakthrough literature in Gumpert's bookshop also includes foreign books. Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 190.

435 Letter from Albert Bonnier to Fredrik Hegel 17 November 1873. Gyldendalsarkivet, Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

financially unstable times.⁴³⁶ In 1886, the greatest fiction publishing house in Sweden, Albert Bonnier, had to tighten its belt; “recreational literature has become a luxury item which few or none consider themselves to be able to afford,” Bonnier stated.⁴³⁷ The same trend was observed across Scandinavia. In a letter to Henrik Ibsen dated 7 October 1885, his publisher Fredrik Hegel wrote that “book sales have never, as far as I can recall, been so insignificant as during this fall; there is almost no interest in anything.”⁴³⁸ As a consequence, in 1886 Hegel decided to publish an edition of 8,000 rather than the usual 10,000 copies of Ibsen’s new book *Rosmersholm*.

Table 6.1: Sales of books by Modern Breakthrough authors and total sales of fiction 1879–90 recorded in the 10 per cent sample of Gumpert’s customers

Year	Number of Modern Breakthrough books	Percentage of all fiction
1879	13	3.5 % [376]
1880	36	14.9 % [241]
1881	45	16.4 % [274]
1882	76	25.1 % [303]
1883	61	19.1 % [320]
1884	108	28.6 % [378]
1885	54	20.7 % [261]
1886	46	15.4 % [298]
1887	35	15.6 % [225]
1888	47	23.0 % [204]
1889	42	23.3 % [180]
1890	71	27.5 % [258]
Total	634	Average 19.1 % [3,318]

436 Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia*, 191–92.

437 Bonnier, *Bonniers: en bokhandlarefamilj IV*, 88–89.

438 Vigidis Ystad “Innledning til Rosmersholm,” *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter* http://ibsen.uio.no/DRINNL_Ro%7Cintro_publication.xhtml

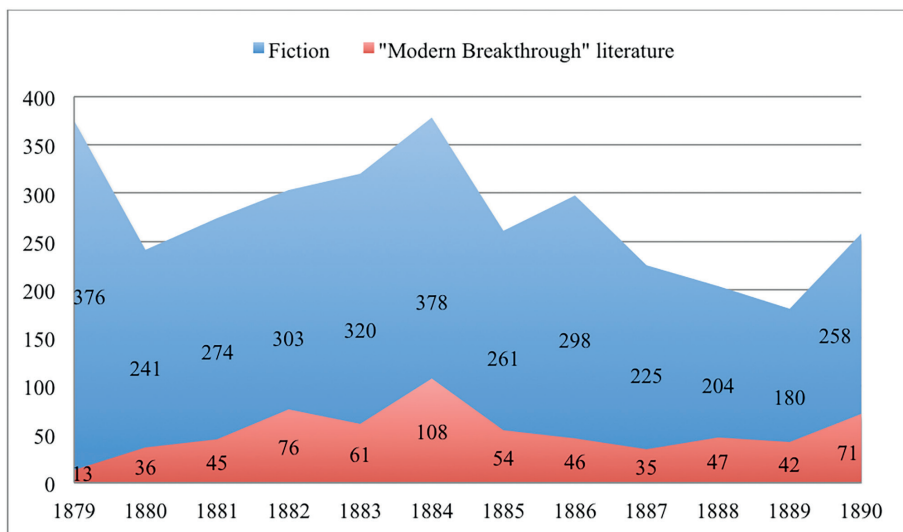


Figure 6.1: Sales of books by Modern Breakthrough authors and total sales of fiction 1879–90 recorded in the 10 per cent sample of Gumpert's customers

Between 1884 and 1887 sales of Modern Breakthrough books declined by two thirds, although the market recovered somewhat by the end of the decade. In his study of Sjöberg's bookshop in Västerås, Åke Åberg detected a similar pattern, with little or no interest in many of the works of the literary movement during the late 1880s.⁴³⁹ The diminishing sales of Modern Breakthrough literature was part of a general decline in fiction sales. However, there may have been more than one reason as to why Modern Breakthrough sales dropped. Due to accusations of blasphemy and the ensuing prosecution, Strindberg's scandalous *Giftas* (1884) earned nationwide fame. Although the book itself became quite commercially successful and Strindberg was acquitted of all charges, it has been suggested that in the long run the scandal may have tarnished the reputation of the entire group of writers known as "Young Sweden," not least because Strindberg generally was considered the unofficial leader of this literary movement.⁴⁴⁰

As Lundevall has shown, most literary works of the Modern Breakthrough

439 Åberg, "Det moderna genombrottet," 61.

440 Tjäder, 'Det unga Sverige,' 98–101; Per I. Gedin, *Litteraturens örtagårdsmästare* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 2003), 134; Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 184

received mixed but predominantly favourable reviews, at least initially.⁴⁴¹ After the publication of *Giftras*, however, public opinion was, at least temporarily, turning against Strindberg and his fellow writers.⁴⁴² According to Zacharias Topelius, the great indignation and the following critique in the wake of *Giftras* was not orchestrated by “a literary elite, but rather the general, thinking public.”⁴⁴³

In the course of the second half of the 1880s, the criticism hardened. Johan Personne’s *Strindbergs-litteraturen och osedligheten bland ungdomen* (1887; The Strindberg literature and the immorality among the youth), had a major impact on the contemporary debate. The occurrence of a few copies of Personne’s pamphlet in the 10 per cent sample indicates that it found readers among Gumpert’s clientele; two examples are the alderman Ludvig Essén and Mrs Fredrika Psilander. The debate had, however, two sides to it and Geijerstam’s response *Hvad vilja lector Personne? : ett genmåle* (1887; What does university lecturer Personne want? : a response), sold in similar numbers. Personne accused Strindberg of enticing the youth and writing nothing but pulp.⁴⁴⁴ The debate escalated and resulted in the split of the Publishers’ Association, with Albert Bonnier eventually having to step down as chairman.⁴⁴⁵

To some extent, the decline of the sales of the Modern Breakthrough books may also have had a literary explanation. Georg Brandes, the father of the literary movement, emphasised that the role of the literature was to “put problems to debate.”⁴⁴⁶ The Modern Breakthrough literature was criticized for being gloomy, marked by a hopeless pessimism and with ideas out of step with its time and audience.⁴⁴⁷ Some authors exercised self-criticism. Gustaf af Geijerstam, for one, speculated that the gap between the intellectually versed authors and their intended audience had become too wide.⁴⁴⁸

441 Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 179–84.

442 Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 297.

443 Letter from Topelius to Albert Bonnier. Bonnier, *Bonniers: en bokhandlarefamilj IV*, 101.

444 Johan Personne, *Strindbergs-litteraturen och osedligheten bland ungdomen* (Stockholm: Carl Deleen, 1887), 16, 21.

445 Rinman, *Bokens samhälle*, 406–43; Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle*, 30–32.

446 Georg Brandes, *Hovedstrømninger i det 19de Aarhundredes Litteratur. Emigrant-litteraturen*, in *Samlede Skrifter*, vols. 1–12 (København: Gyldendals forlag, 1899–1902), 5.

447 Erdmann, *Modern realism*, 34; Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle*, 42.

448 Lennart Thorsell, “Den svenska parnassens ‘demokratisering’ och de folkliga bildningsvägarna,” *Sammlaren* 1957.

How then were the sales of Strindberg's books affected by the fierce debate? The records from Gumpert's bookshop give a sense of how the sales fluctuated over the years. The 10 per cent sample records the purchase of three copies of Strindberg's books in 1879; 27 copies in 1880; 17 in 1881; 36 in 1882; six in 1883; 27 in 1884; 11 in 1885; 16 in 1886; three in 1887; two in 1888; five in 1889, and eight in 1890. The sales figures from the 10 per cent sample of his earlier works, including *Röda rummet* (1879), *I vårbrytningen* (1880; *On the seaboard*), *Det nya riket* (1882; *The New Kingdom*), and *Giftas* (1884–86) indicate that each book was sold in quite solid numbers in Gumpert's bookshop, somewhere around the 100-copy mark. The sales of his later writings, however, some of which are regarded as being his finest works, were remarkably low. In the 10 per cent sample, as little as two copies of *Hemsöborna* (1887; *The people of Hemsö*) and two copies of *I hafsbandet* (1889–90; *On the seaboard*) were recorded. A couple of his best known plays, *Fadren* (1887; *The father*), and *Fröken Julie* (1888; *Miss Julie*), cannot be found at all in the 10 per cent sample, suggesting a total sale of less than ten copies from Gumpert's bookshop. In 1887, Albert Bonnier complained that he had large residual editions in stock, and that there "was extremely little interest in Strindberg among the audience at the moment."⁴⁴⁹

The literature of the Modern Breakthrough was a recurring subject of debate and it was associated with a certain element of sensationalism. On 14 April 1883, a letter was sent from Akademiska bokhandeln in Uppsala, one of Sweden's leading booksellers, to Fredrik Hegel. The bookshop manager implied that the cooperation with Hegel was not running smoothly, and he openly discussed the possibility of terminating their business relationship. In the end, the reason that led the Akademiska bokhandeln to maintain its relationship with Hegel was timely access to shipments. Having a direct connection to the Danish publisher meant that the bookshop would receive new books one or two days earlier than its competitors.⁴⁵⁰ When it came to the works of the most sought-after authors of the Modern Breakthrough, one or two days meant a great deal. Every time a new book written by Ibsen was published, for example, it was preceded by extensive reporting and advertising in the newspa-

449 Bonnier, *Bonniers: en bokhandlarefamilj IV*, 155.

450 Letter from Akademiska Bokhandeln in Uppsala to Frederik Hegel, 14 April 1883, Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

pers.⁴⁵¹ The title was kept secret until the book was released, and the shipments from Copenhagen were coordinated so that the book would be available on the same day in the largest cities throughout Scandinavia.⁴⁵² “Ibsen’s books had to be read as soon as they were published,” an enthusiastic Swedish reader reminisced in her memoirs.⁴⁵³ When Ibsen’s *En folkefiende* (1882; *An Enemy of the People*) was published, most copies were bought at Gumpert’s bookshop within weeks, many on the very day the book arrived in Gothenburg. For many readers, Ibsen’s books were obviously must-haves.

Timing was an important issue not only for Ibsen’s books. In 1884, when the Norwegian author Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson had published *Det flager i Byen og på Havnen* (*Flags are flying in town and port*), the manager of C. W. K. Glerup’s bookshop in Lund wrote to Hegel complaining that they had sent the copies of the new book to the wrong address, and therefore they had been delayed. “It was very vexing, as many of our customers had to wait a whole week before they received their copy,” the angry bookseller noted.⁴⁵⁴ As Lundevall has pointed out, many Swedes became acquainted with the great Norwegian authors through their stage productions.⁴⁵⁵ Thus, the purchase of photographs of actors also testify to the craze for Ibsen, for example. On 30 May 1885, the unmarried woman A. Larsson visited Gumpert’s bookshop and bought two photographs of the actor August Palme (1856–1924). Palme was playing the role of Hjalmar Ekdal in Ibsen’s *Vildanden*, which was then running in the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm. A few days later, 9 June 1885, Larsson returned to Gumpert’s bookshop and bought a bound copy of the book.

In some cases Modern Breakthrough literature seems to have been able to attract customers who otherwise bought little or no fiction. Artist Fr. Wohlfarth, wholesale dealer J. Palm, doctor of medicine Ludvig Isidor Sellberg, and Göteborgs musei bibliotek (later the Gothenburg University Library) all bought Strindberg’s *Röda rummet* in 1879, and this was the only work of fiction

451 Asbjørn Aarseth, “Innledning til En folkefiende,” http://ibsen.uio.no/DRINNL_Fo%7Cintro_publication.xhtml

452 Fulsås and Rem, *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World Drama*, 113–15.

453 Lydia Wahlström, *Trotsig och försagd: mitt livs minnen* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1949), 71.

454 Letter from C. W. K. Glerup’s publishing firm and bookshop in Lund, 14 November 1884 to Fredrik Hegel. Gyldendalsarkivet. Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

455 Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 149.

they bought from Gumpert's bookshop throughout that year. Post-office clerk J. Lundblad bought Max Nordau's *Konventionella nutidslögnen* (*Die konventionellen Lügen der Kulturmenschheit*), and Strindberg's *Lycko-Pers resa* (*Lucky Pebr*) and *Giftas* in 1884, but hardly anything else.

As we have seen, Gumpert's bookshop offered all kinds of Modern Breakthrough literature, even literature of a more sensitive nature, such as Strindberg's *Giftas* and Ola Hansson's *Sensitiva amorosa*. Scandalous and particularly anticipated books often turned out to be bestsellers in the bookshop. Strindberg's *Giftas* is an excellent example. In an article run in *Dagens Nyheter* on 9 October 1884, it was stated that "an unfavourable review by C.D.W[irsén]⁴⁵⁶ in *Posttidningen* has until now been regarded as the best advertisement a book can get. But the minister of Justice did an even better job. When the news that Strindberg's *Giftas* had been confiscated reached Södertälje, it resulted in a formidable race to the bookshop to buy the book. It was, however, already sold out."⁴⁵⁷ In his diary for 4 October 1884, Johan Lundgren, who at the time was working at a bookshop in Norrköping, noted that in the afternoon the bookshop had sold "great quantities of Strindberg's *Giftas*, which has been confiscated in Stockholm."⁴⁵⁸ Obviously, the news travelled much faster than the actual execution of the confiscation order. Only two days later, Lundgren scribbled down "Strindberg's *Giftas* confiscated here."⁴⁵⁹ In the meantime, we can presume, most copies must have been sold. In the end, out of the 4,000 copies of the first edition, only 320 copies ended up actually being confiscated by the authorities. The remainder had already been sold.⁴⁶⁰ The same pattern is evident in Gumpert's bookshop, where multiple copies of *Giftas* were sold in early October.

456 Carl David af Wirsén (1842–1912), author, literary critic and the Swedish Academy's permanent secretary from 1884 until his death.

457 *Dagens Nyheter* 9 October 1884.

458 Johan Lundgren diary for October 1884, in the archive of N. J. Gumpert, GLA/C0038:1, Regional State Archives in Gothenburg.

459 Ibid.

460 Per I. Gedin, *Litteraturens örtagårdsmästare*, 136.

Table 6.2: Bestselling Modern Breakthrough authors 1879–90 recorded in the 10 per cent sample at Gumpert's bookshop

Authors			Copies
August Strindberg			148
Alexander Kielland			47
Henrik Ibsen			42
Ann Charlotte Leffler			32
Jonas Lie			31
Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson			30
Herman Bang			19
Victoria Benedictsson			18
Georg Brandes	A. U. Bååth	Georg Brandes	16
Gustaf af Geijerstam			15

Despite – and to some extent maybe thanks to – the scandals, Strindberg was still in a class of his own in terms of sales within the Modern Breakthrough movement: he was the overall bestselling fiction author of the bookshop. However, the popularity of the four great Norwegian authors, Kielland, Ibsen, Lie, and Bjørnson was also quite remarkable. In an article in *Vestmanlands Läns Tidning* in 1883, journalist Frans von Schéele claimed that Norwegian and Danish literature was read comparatively more than the Swedish and he stated that the four Norwegian authors were better known in Sweden than any domestic writer.⁴⁶¹ When Victoria Benedictsson wrote a list of recommended reading for the aspiring author Anna von Seth in 1882, she was first and foremost recommending “the Danish and Norwegian writings from the past ten years. They outperform [the Swedish books] in both number and quality.”⁴⁶² Among the Danish-Norwegian Modern Breakthrough authors, Kielland's books were the ones sold in most copies in Gumpert's bookshop. A popular author among the educated audience and an inspiration for members of the

⁴⁶¹ *Vestmanlands Läns Tidning* 11 August 1883. Quoted from Åberg, “Det moderna genombrottet,” 57. Nota Bene: Most of the Danish and Norwegian Modern Breakthrough books were not translated, thus, they were read in the original language.

⁴⁶² Victoria Benedictsson, *Stora Boken I. Dagbok 1882–1884*, edited by Christina Sjöblad (Malmö: Bo Cavefors Bokförlag, 1978), 111.

“Young Sweden,” his sales surpassed those of Ibsen.⁴⁶³ Karl Erik Rosengren has even shown that Kielland was mentioned more frequently than Strindberg in Swedish newspaper reviews during the first half of the 1880s.⁴⁶⁴ Apart from Strindberg, Ann Charlotte Leffler is the only Swedish author whose books were sold in numbers comparable to the Norwegian writers; writings by other Swedish authors were sold in half as many copies as their Norwegian counterparts.

Those opposed to modern Swedish literature wanted to emphasise that the writers of “Young Sweden” were not equal to the Brandesian authors of Norway and Denmark. Personne, for one, tried to drive a wedge between the two literary groups by repeatedly stressing the difference between the young Swedish writers and “the real representatives of modern realism,” i.e. Ibsen, Bjørnson, Kielland, Elster, etc. Personne further implied that the “Young Sweden” writers cunningly did everything in their powers to “confuse the true realists with their caricatures ... Their intention is clear. If you are bad company yourself, you will do what you can to blend in with a good crowd.”⁴⁶⁵

The dissemination of Danish and Norwegian Modern Breakthrough literature in Sweden

To some extent this distinction between the Swedish and the Danish-Norwegian literature can be discerned in the sales at Gumpert’s bookshop. Some customers bought virtually everything published by the Norwegian and Danish writers of the Modern Breakthrough but hardly anything by their Swedish counterparts. To some extent, the conception of the Danish and Norwegian literature as superior to the Swedish (as presented by Benedictsson and Personne) may well have been widespread.

463 Tore Rem, “Strindberg som Kiellands litterære agent,” *Bokhistorie*, edited by Tore Rem (Trondheim: Gyldendal 2003) 225–45 (241).

464 Karl Erik Rosengren, *Sociological Aspects of the Literary System* (Natur och Kultur: Stockholm, 1968), 99.

465 Personne, *Strindbergs-litteraturen*, 75.

Table 6.3: The reported sales of Gyldendal's books in five Swedish bookshops (*The archive of Gyldendal publishing firm, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Denmark*)

Year	Bookshop	Amount (Swedish kronor)
1876	Gumpert's bookshop, Gothenburg	548.85
1877	Johan Gustaf Hedberg, Malmö	318
1880	Gumpert's bookshop, Gothenburg	707.95
1881	Gumpert's bookshop, Gothenburg	1,003.94
1881	Fritzes hof-bokhandel, Stockholm	1,956.11
1882	Gumpert's bookshop, Gothenburg	1,413.17
1882	Akademiska Bokhandeln, Uppsala	c. 1,500
1883	Gumpert's bookshop, Gothenburg	1,119.25
1884	Gumpert's bookshop, Gothenburg	1,295.28
1885	Gumpert's bookshop, Gothenburg	705.86
1885	Cronholmska bokhandeln, Malmö	305

Although the ledgers detailing the transactions between Gumpert's bookshop and foreign publishers have been lost, some information on Gumpert's sales of Gyldendal's books can be retrieved from the partially preserved correspondence between the two companies (table 6.3). The correspondence offers valuable clues concerning the extent of the overall sales of Gyldendal's books at Gumpert's bookshop. On 17 November 1873 a letter was sent from Gumpert's bookshop to Gyldendal's complaining that a competitor in Gothenburg, Bonnier's bookshop, had received copies of Ibsen's *Kejser og Galilæer*. Meanwhile, the order from Gumpert's bookshop for eleven paperback copies and four bound copies had been rejected. Instead, Gumpert's bookshop had acquired 20 copies of the book from the Norwegian publisher Feilberg & Landmark in Kristiania (Oslo). These copies had been sold immediately, which Kindal was eager to point out to Hegel: "I inform you of this, only to prove, that I too have an outlet for your books. We await your reply."⁴⁶⁶ An answer was sent to Gumpert the very next day, and, according to the marginal scribbles on the letter, Gyldendal finally sent 25 copies of the book. Gyldendal had dismissed the initial request from Gumpert's bookshop, perhaps unimpressed by the size

⁴⁶⁶ Letter from Albert Bonnier to Fredrik Hegel 17 November 1873. Gyldendalsarkivet, Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

of the order, but the publisher may have been persuaded by the sales figures in the second letter from Gumpert's bookshop. Eventually, from 1876 at the latest, Gumpert's bookshop became one of Gyldendal's Swedish commissioners and was no longer treated like any other minor bookshop.

As noted, the sales' ledgers from Gumpert's bookshop only list purchases made by the bookshop's returning customers, but the figures in the correspondence between Gumpert's bookshop and Gyldendal account for all sales of Gyldendal's books, even the purchases made by cash-paying customers. Foreign commissioners purchasing books from Danish publishers received a discount of 25 per cent, but it remains uncertain whether or not the discount has been deducted from the amounts listed in the correspondence.⁴⁶⁷ The average price of books from Gyldendal sold in Gumpert's bookshop was around 3.25 kronor, which puts sales of Gyldendal's books at Gumpert's bookshop somewhere between 220 and 440 volumes a year between 1876 and 1885. If the discount has been deducted from the reported amounts, the sales must have been somewhat higher: between 290 and 580 copies annually. By comparison, some bookshops, for example Fritze's bookshop in Stockholm, one of Sweden's most well-stocked bookshops when it came to foreign literature, sold 600 to 800 Gyldendal books in 1881 alone, while a medium-sized bookshop such as Cronholm's in Malmö, sold around 100 volumes in 1885.⁴⁶⁸

Unfortunately, it is very hard to determine how well individual Norwegian and Danish books sold in Sweden. In a letter to Gustaf af Geijerstam, Ibsen wrote that if he allowed a Swedish translation of *Peer Gynt* (1892) he might sell 15 to 20 per cent less of the original Danish version, which tells us something about the market for Ibsen's books in Sweden.⁴⁶⁹ This would indicate that out of Ibsen's regular editions of 10,000 copies in the 1880s and 1890s, 1,500–2,000 copies were sold in the Swedish market.

From the correspondence between Gyldendal and Glerup's bookshop in Lund, the largest bookshop in southern Sweden, we also have an insight into the sales of another of Ibsen's books. The manager of Glerup's bookshop, who

467 Arthur G. Hassø, *Den danske Boghandlerforenings Historie gennem hundrede aar* (København: Den danske Boghandlereforening 1937), 28.

468 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 94.

469 Letter from Ibsen to Gustaf af Geijerstam, 29 March 1892, see Fulsås and Rem, *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World Drama*, 111.

had misinterpreted a letter from an employee at Gyldendal, thought that they had an agreement that Gleerup was going to be the Swedish main commissioner of Ibsen's *En folkefiende* (1882). The smaller Swedish bookshops did not have direct business relations with Gyldendal, and had to acquire the books from their larger Swedish competitors. By ordering a high number of copies, the manager of Gleerup's thought that all the minor Swedish bookshops could turn to them to acquire their copies of Ibsen's new book, rather than to various other major bookshops in Sweden. Gleerup therefore at first ordered 600 copies of Ibsen's new book, which was later increased to 800 copies, to be able to supply all the minor bookshops.⁴⁷⁰ After a few slightly embarrassing writings in *Svensk Bokhandels-Tidning* in October 1882, Jacob Hegel, the son of the owner of Gyldendal publishing firm, had to intervene. He settled that Gleerup enjoyed no more privileges than any of the other bookshops with direct commercial relations to Gyldendal.⁴⁷¹ The other major bookshops were unwilling to give up their piece of the cake. Although it does not bring us much closer to the actual number of copies of Ibsen's books that ended up in Sweden, these series of events still tell us something of the reception of Ibsen's books in Sweden.

Only some of the Danish-Norwegian Modern Breakthrough books were translated into Swedish. In cases in which a Swedish translation was published, it was often issued in a matter of weeks following the original version, but quite often it would take years before it came on the market, if a translation was indeed ever published. The issue of timing was crucial, as many copies were sold as soon as they were published. Danish original versions thus always had the upper hand. If the Danish edition already had been on the market for some time, the incentive to publish a Swedish edition was decimated. In January 1885, the Swedish publisher Hector in Uppsala was interested in publishing a cheap edition of a Swedish translation of Bjørnson's *Det flager i Byen og på Havnen* (1884), which hit the market five months earlier. Hector writes "this could have been a very good deal, had it not been for the fact that the book has been available for some time already. If the Danish and Swedish editions had appeared simultaneously, I would not have had any problems, but as it

470 Letter from Gleerup's bookshop to Hegel 5 October 1882.

471 *Svensk Bokhandels-Tidning*, 14, 21 and 28 October 1882. For an account of similar advertisement conflicts, see Peterson, *Välja & sälja*, 152–55.

stands now, I do not expect to make any profit from it.”⁴⁷² Conversely, Hegel was well aware that an early Swedish translation could affect the sales of the Danish original version. According to a letter from Kielland to Karl Warburg concerning a possible publication of Kielland’s *Else* (1881) in the newspaper *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, Hegel always demanded that at least one month passed between the publication of the original version and a Swedish translation.⁴⁷³

On top of the cost of publishing and translating the book, the Swedish publishers had to pay a copyright fee to the author and/or the publisher, in accordance with Scandinavian copyright agreements.⁴⁷⁴ Despite these circumstances, Swedish editions were often around 20–25 per cent cheaper than the original version.⁴⁷⁵ The original Danish version of Kielland’s *Novelletter* cost 2 kronor, compared to the Swedish version, priced at 1.25 kronor. The Danish version of Jonas Lie’s *Livsslaven* cost 2.75 kronor, the Swedish version 1.75 kronor. The Swedish publishers’ margins were therefore a lot smaller than those of the publishers of the original versions, and consequently they had to be confident that a Swedish translation would be in popular demand before deciding to publish it. The decision whether or not to translate was influenced by a number of factors, not least by the intended audience.

472 Letters to Fredrik Hegel from the publisher Hector in Uppsala, 11 January 1885, 5 February 1885 and 2 March 1885. Gyldendalsarkivet, Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

473 Letter from Alexander Kielland to Karl Warburg, 27 September 1881: “Gode Herre! ... De maa desværre ikke gjøre Regning paa *Else* for October. Thi Bogen kommer neppe før November ... desuden ved De – som jeg skrev i mit første Brev, at Gyldendal forlanger, at der hengaar en Maaned mellem Trykningen her og Trykningen i Sverige.” Quoted from Maria Purtoft’s dissertation (forthcoming).

474 Torgerson, *Översättningar*, 66.

475 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 252–57.

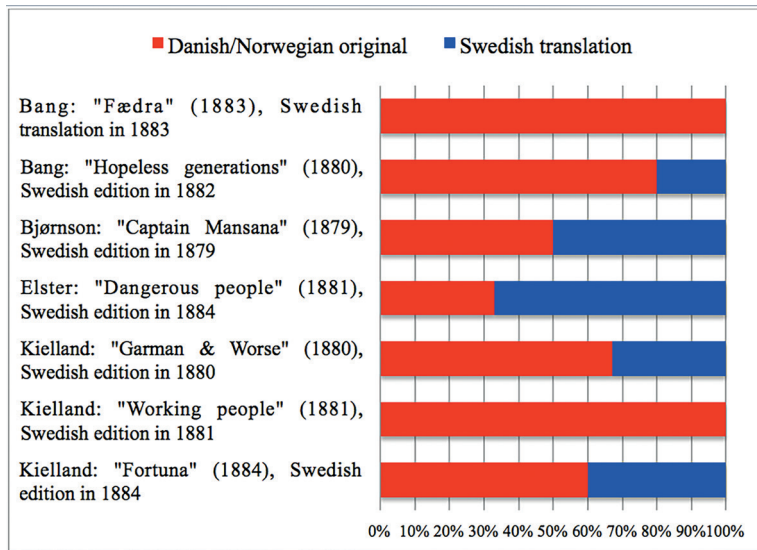


Figure 6.2: Sales of a selection of Modern Breakthrough titles available in both original Danish-Norwegian and Swedish translated version recorded in the 10 per cent sample of Gumpert's customers

Modern Breakthrough authors took different stances on allowing Swedish translations. Ibsen, for one, was on grounds of principle opposed to the idea of inter-Scandinavian translations, and further worried that Swedish translations would diminish the sales of the original edition.⁴⁷⁶ But when we look at the sales from Gumpert's bookshop of the original Danish-Norwegian versions and the Swedish translations respectively, it seems that his fears were not justified. When both Swedish and Danish-Norwegian editions were available, sales for the Swedish translations accounted for on average only around 20 per cent.

The 10 per cent sample from Gumpert's bookshop indicates that some translations did better than others, but in general, the original Danish-Norwegian versions sold better than the Swedish translations, even in the cases when a Swedish translation followed relatively shortly after the original version. Swedish editions of Herman Bang's *Haabløse Slægter* (1880; *Hopeless Generations*), and *Fædra* (1883) were published after two years and a few

⁴⁷⁶ Fulsås and Rem, *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World Drama*, 33–34; letter from Ibsen to Gustaf af Geijerstam, 29 March 1892. Letter accessed via the digital version of Henrik Ibsen's Writings (ibsen.uio.no).

months respectively. In the 10 per cent sample from Gumpert's records, the original version of *Haabløse Slægter* was sold in five times as many copies as the Swedish translation, and not a single purchase of the Swedish translation of Herman Bang's *Fædra* is recorded. Alexander Kielland's *Fortuna* and *Garman & Worse* appeared in Swedish translation a couple of months after the Danish original, and still, only around a third of the total copies sold in the sample were of the Swedish translation. The same patterns are recurring for most Swedish translations of books written by the Danish and Norwegian Modern Breakthrough authors.

In many cases, a Swedish translation was never published and, in the cases in which a Swedish translation actually was issued, its sales remained modest. What is more, many copies of the original Danish-Norwegian versions were sold in Gumpert's bookshop well after a Swedish translation had been published. Seen as a whole, the sales of the Swedish translations were rather insignificant and, when we also consider the financial aspects, we understand why Swedish publishers were cautious when publishing translations from Danish and Norwegian, and why many books were never translated. The only exception to this overall pattern among the Modern Breakthrough literature is Kristian Elster's *Farlige folk* (1881; *Dangerous People*), which fared better in Swedish translation than the original.

Modern Breakthrough customers in the bookshop

Who were the customers purchasing the literary works of the Modern Breakthrough? The general clientele of the bookshop consisted mainly of well-educated members of the middle and upper classes. But when we compare the customers buying the literature of the Modern Breakthrough with the bookshop's regular clientele, a few things stand out. In our 10 per cent sample, the wealthy and most highly educated are over-represented, for example doctors of philosophy, physicians, and company executives. Even nobility, a group described by Møller Kristensen as uninterested or even hostile towards the literary movement, bought Modern Breakthrough books rather frequently at Gumpert's bookshop.⁴⁷⁷

Other groups of regulars at the bookshop were under-represented or entire-

⁴⁷⁷ Møller Kristensen, *Digteren og samfundet II*, 182.

ly absent among the Modern Breakthrough customers, for example students, shopkeepers and teachers. There were hardly any pastors or vicars buying these books. The issues raised by the literary movement offended the church, and it is characteristic that Strindberg's *Giftas* was charged with blasphemy. Many clerics seem to actually have avoided novels altogether. Two of the exceptions from the 10 per cent sample from Gumpert's bookshop were the clergymen K. Andersson from Hisingen and Uddgren, who bought Henrik Ibsen's *Fruen fra havet* (1888; *The Lady from the Sea*), on Christmas Eve in 1888 and Herman Bang's *Fædra* (1883) in December 1883 respectively. Both, however, returned their purchases to the bookshop.

The wholesalers (*grosshandlare*) stand out as the single most important group of Modern Breakthrough consumers. In Gothenburg – trade capital of Sweden during the late nineteenth century – the wholesalers constituted the trade aristocracy of the city and represented a vital part of “Wealthy Gothenburg,” with significant purchasing power and cultural interests.⁴⁷⁸ Ironically, Strindberg seems to have despised the wholesalers, depicting them as consumers with unsophisticated literary taste.⁴⁷⁹ Rather than recognising them as among his most important customers, he mocked their presumed snobbishness and newly awakened literary interests and thus ran a great risk of alienating some of his core audience. The only group surpassing the wholesalers' average number of purchased Modern Breakthrough books at Gumpert's bookshop was the headmasters, mainly thanks to the remarkable numbers purchased by the headmaster Schiller (1829–1907), founder of the local high school Schillerska gymnasiet in Gothenburg.

478 Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia*, 189. See also Møller Kristensen, *Digteren og samfundet II*, 183.

479 Strindberg, “Den litterära reaktionen i Sverige” in *Likt och olikt II* (Stockholm: Albert Bonnier, 1913). See also Ahlström, *Det moderna genombrottet*, 344–45.

Table 6.4: The fifteen most common professions or titles recorded among the 10 per cent sample of customers of Gumpert's bookshop buying books of the authors of the Modern Breakthrough

Titles/profession	Quantity	Average number of purchases per person and year
Wholesaler	57	3.5
Bookkeeper	22	1.5
Unmarried woman	16	3
District judge	16	2.5
Doctor of philosophy	15	1.5
Doctor of medicine	11	2.5
Engineer	10	1.5
Shopkeeper	8	2.5
Company manager	8	1.5
Master builder	5	1.5
Wife	5	2.5
Captain	5	3
Count	4	2
Headmaster	4	6.5
No title	43	2.5

The bookkeepers, portrayed by Åberg as politically active members of the community and loyal readers of the Modern Breakthrough literature, constituted the second largest group buying Modern Breakthrough books at Gumpert's bookshop.⁴⁸⁰ However, most of them bought only one or a couple of books. One of few exceptions was the bookkeeper at Göteborgs mekaniska verkstad, Nils Olof Elander (b. 1857), who bought Modern Breakthrough books in quite some numbers.

One consumer group buying disproportionately many Modern Breakthrough books were women. Almost one in three women in Gumpert's clientele purchased Modern Breakthrough literature, as compared to only every fourth to fifth man. Women have often been presented as dedicated novel readers, and this claim seems to find some support in the sales' statistics from

⁴⁸⁰ Åberg, "Det moderna genombrottet," 66.

Gumpert's bookshop, although we should keep in mind that women constituted only a minority of the clientele. Women's emancipation permeated the literature following in the footsteps of Ibsen's *Et dukkehjem* (1879) and spread from the literary to the political arena. There was, however, one notable exception – Strindberg. His writings were at times downright misogynist. Initially, the women's liberation movement supported the Modern Breakthrough, but their relation eventually soured.⁴⁸¹ An anonymous article entitled "The dangers of the contemporary literature for young women," published in *Dagny*, a magazine for the Swedish women's movement, discouraged women from reading the radical contemporary literature, and emphasised that "the modern authors depict [even] the gravest sins as quite ordinary and commonplace."⁴⁸²

A number of prominent Swedish female authors, such as Alfhild Agrell and Victoria Benedictsson made their debut during the 1880s, writing books and plays on subjects such as marriage, emancipation, and female desire and sexuality.⁴⁸³ To what extent did women buy these books? Since the entire household normally used the same account, it is often impossible to determine for whom the purchased books were intended. However, the number of independent women with their own account in Gumpert's bookshop doubled during the 1880s, which makes it easier to follow at least these women's consumption. Between a seventh and a third of the copies of for example Leffler's, Benedictsson's, Agrell's, and Anna Wahlenberg's writings sold in Gumpert's bookshop were bought by female customers who had their own accounts.

Our 10 per cent sample includes some cases where it has been noted exactly who fetched a certain book in the bookshop. Thus, we can for example learn that Hilda Elfving (1827–1906), a famous educationalist who founded the Royal Advanced Female Teachers' Seminary in Stockholm and who was princess Louise's (1851–1912) personal tutor from 1857 to 1860, purchased Agrell's *Hvad ingen ser: en samling berättelser* (1885) on her husband's account.⁴⁸⁴ On 20 December 1879 one of the wholesaler Gustaf Leopold Leffler's daugh-

481 Ahlström, *Det moderna genombrottet*, 425.

482 "Faran för den qvinliga ungdomen af den nutida literaturen: Ur ett bref till Esselde [Sophie Adlersparre] af B.," *DAGNY: månadsblad för sociala och literära intressen* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & söner, 1887).

483 Forsås-Scott, *Swedish Women's Writing 1850–1995*, 20–26.

484 Wilhelmina Stålberg and P. G. Berg, *Anteckningar om svenska qvinnor* (Stockholm: P. G. Berg, 1864), 129.

ters Maria (b. 1856), Minette (b. 1857), Rosa (b. 1860), Britt Charlotte (b. 1861), or Hilma (b. 1863) bought Ibsen's famed *Et dukkehjem* (1879). Another example is Maria Clementina Tengvall (1856–1907), who purchased Benedictsson's *Från Skåne* (1884) on her husband's account. Undoubtedly, more women actually bought books at Gumpert's bookshop than what the sample from the sales records can reveal, and in many cases their husbands presumably purchased the books for them.



Figure 6.3: Chief of police Anders Oscar Elliot (1840–1931). Illustration from C. R. A. Fredberg's *Det gamla Göteborg part 2* (1919–21), 616.

As the customers of Gumpert's studied in this dissertation are randomly selected for each year, in most cases we see their purchases only from a single year. However, some customers bought considerable numbers of Modern Breakthrough books even within such a limited timeframe. A handful of customers, for example the mayor Gustaf Svanberg, wholesalers Leopold Abrahamsson, K. A. Cassel, and Albert Lamm, the architect Carl Nissen, and the unmarried woman Gunilda Wigert bought at least ten Modern Breakthrough books each in a single year. The chief of police in Gothenburg, A. O. Elliot, is yet another example. Elliot was a keen buyer of Ibsen, Kielland, Lie, and Strindberg for example, as well as of the writings of Leo Tolstoy and Max Nordau. Furthermore, he was also a subscriber of *Ur dagens krönika*, a magazine published by Arvid Ahnfelt and affiliated with the "Young Sweden" writers. If we could study all purchases from all customers from the 1880s,

and not only a limited selection, many more dedicated readers of the Modern Breakthrough literature would emerge, but unfortunately, that lies beyond the scope of the present study. The dedicated readers we *do* find, however, all belonged to the social elites. Of course, the bookshop catered mainly to the most affluent and well-educated sections of society, but still, it was mainly the elite of the elites, so to speak, that constituted the most loyal readers of the Modern Breakthrough literature.

Sophie Elkan: a Modern Breakthrough reader



Sophie Elkan.
Fotografi.

Figure 6.4: Sophie Elkan (1853–1921)

Sophie Elkan (1853–1921) has gone down in history as the companion of Nobel laureate Selma Lagerlöf (1858–1940). But in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century she too was a celebrated and popular author in her own right, writing first and foremost historical novels. She made her debut with a collection of short stories, *Dur och moll* (1889), and published a dozen novels. Elkan is said to have introduced Lagerlöf to contemporary literary currents as well as to the circle of some of the most important members of the Swedish literary field: writers, critics as well as literary patrons.⁴⁸⁵ Furthermore,

⁴⁸⁵ Eva Helen Ulvros, *Sophie Elkan: Hennes liv och vänskapen med Selma Lagerlöf* (Lund:

it was Elkan who took Lagerlöf on tours across Europe, and it was her idea to embark on their famous journey to Jerusalem in 1899–1900.⁴⁸⁶ The notion of Elkan as a literary guide to one of the foremost writers of the time adds an extra dimension to her literary consumption. I have studied all of Elkan's purchases from Gumpert's bookshop, from 1880 to 1900, and in this reader's portrait we will have a closer look at her purchases of books related to the Modern Breakthrough. The Modern Breakthrough influenced Elkan's early writings, and her debut novel, *Dur och moll* (Major and Minor), has been described by Lundevall as belonging to the "eighties" movement in Sweden.⁴⁸⁷

Elkan was born in Gothenburg in 1853 to the Jewish Salomon family. In 1872 she married her cousin Nathan Elkan (1834–79), and they had one child, the daughter Kerstin. A few years later Nathan Elkan was diagnosed with tuberculosis, and in the fall of 1879 the family moved to Italy, hoping that the mild climate would ease the symptoms. Instead, the family suffered a terrible tragedy. Christmas Day 1879, Nathan passed away, and the following day their daughter also died. On New Year's Day, Elkan's father too passed away.⁴⁸⁸ Sophie Elkan is said to never really have recovered from the tragedy, and she wore black clothes ever after. But the great trauma seems to have triggered her creativity, and it was after these life-changing events that she turned first to translating, and eventually to writing.⁴⁸⁹ Elkan returned to Gothenburg in January 1880 and moved in with her mother, sister, uncle and the family's two maids, in their apartment on Östra Hamngatan, only few blocks from Gumpert's bookshop.

Little more than four months after her return to Gothenburg, on Friday 14 May 1880, Elkan entered Gumpert's bookshop and bought a book. It was most likely not her first visit. She lived nearby, and, as the sales' ledgers from Gumpert's show, several family members as well as some of her closest friends were among the bookshop's customers, for example her brother Otto Salomon, her uncle August Abrahamsson and many of her closest friends, like the

Historiska media, 2001), 158.

486 Henrik Wivel, *Snödrottningen: en bok om Selma Lagerlöf och kärleken* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1990), 103.

487 Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 150.

488 Ulvros, *Sophie Elkan*, 29–53.

489 Ibid. 261.

families Warburg, Nissen, Atterbom, and Fürstenberg. Sophie Elkan was no ordinary book consumer. She was part of the cultural elite, and she was one of the most influential participants in intellectual life in Gothenburg.⁴⁹⁰ She was also quite wealthy, having inherited a large sum of money, and was able to live her life quite as she pleased.⁴⁹¹ In her social circle were some of the most prominent authors and literary critics of the time, for example Karl Warburg, Ellen Key, Oscar Levertin, Verner von Heidenstam, Carl Snoilsky, and Georg Brandes. She was a keen reader and a frequent visitor of the large public library, Gothenburg People's Library, and a member of reading societies. She subscribed to several of the major Swedish newspapers, for example *Svenska Dagbladet*, *Dagens Nyheter*, and *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, and even when travelling she often had the newspapers forwarded to her.

The very first book Elkan bought after becoming a registered customer was Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's play *En fallit* (1874; *The Bankrupt*). The play was greeted by Brandes as "a leap towards Modern Life."⁴⁹² Soon after this initial purchase, Elkan became a loyal customer of Gumpert's bookshop. Throughout her life, she nurtured a profound interest in history, and she attended academic lectures and seminars. In a letter to Selma Lagerlöf, she stated that she "was born to become a historian."⁴⁹³ Elkan would spend months in the archives doing background research for her novels. The books *John Hall* (1899), about Gothenburg merchant John Hall (1771–1830), and *Konungen* (1904; *The King*), about king Gustav IV Adolf, were praised, and Elkan was called a reviver of the historical novel. She received encouraging letters from professional historians both from Sweden and abroad, and was invited to publish her findings in *Historisk Tidskrift*.⁴⁹⁴ Elkan had an interest in Swedish history, in particular that of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which can be seen in many of her purchases, of which some undoubtedly went into the research for her novels.⁴⁹⁵ Elkan's purchases also display a strong interest in contemporary literature. In June 1880 she bought Brandes' *Emigrantlitteraturen* (1872; *The Em-*

490 Ibid. 207.

491 Ibid. 156–7.

492 Brandes, *Det moderne gennembruds mænd*, 47.

493 Ulvros, *Sophie Elkan*, 132–33.

494 Ibid. 128, 132–134.

495 Ibid. 126.

igrant Literature), which was the first part of his influential *Hovedstrømninger i det 19de Aarhundredes Litteratur* (Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature). Over the years, Elkan bought additional books by Brandes, for example *Indtryk fra Rusland* (1888) and his *Samlede skrifter* 1–12 (1899–1902; Collected works). Elkan admired Brandes, and when living in Copenhagen during the early 1900s, she attended his lectures.⁴⁹⁶

Elkan also used Gumpert's bookshop for bookbinding services, spending hundreds of kronor having books bound. Among these were books by George Eliot, Daudet, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Zola, and Daudet, and several of Ibsen's and Bjørnson's works: *Brand, Kejser og Galilæer, Smaastykker, Arne, Maria Stuart, Fiskerjenten, Digte, Sigurd Jorsalfar, and Sigurd Slembe*, as well as a couple of Georg Brandes' publications: *Kierkegaard* and *Tegnér*. She bought a particularly large number of books by the authors of the Modern Breakthrough, including Kielland, Lie, Tavaststjerna, J. P. Jacobsen, and Strindberg. Alexander Kielland seems to have been something of a favourite, and over the years she bought *Garman & Worse* (1880), *Nye novelletter* (1880), *Else* (1881), *Skipper Worse* (1882), *To novelletter fra Danmark* (1882), and *Professoren* (1888).

According to her letters to Lagerlöf, Elkan was also a great admirer of Strindberg, at least initially. Although she was not fond of him as a person, she saw him as a mentor and a source of inspiration and she stated that he was the greatest of all Swedish writers, a genius. In a letter from Elkan to Lagerlöf in 1911, she even revealed that she would not have turned to writing historical novels had it not been for Strindberg's *Svenska öden och äfventyr* (1882–91), even if by then her affection had been deterred by Strindberg's scandals, and by his attitude towards women. Lagerlöf was of the same mind, and in 1912 she wrote to Elkan that "it is not good for a country, that its greatest genius is a madman."⁴⁹⁷ Elkan bought some of Strindberg's books in Gumpert's bookshop, for example *Kulturbistoriska studier* (1881), the play *Lycko-Pers resa* (1882), the collection of poems *Sömngångarnätter på vakna dagar* (1884), and the autobiographical *I röda rummet* (1887).⁴⁹⁸

496 Ibid. 159, 258.

497 Ibid. 215–17.

498 Clearly, Elkan also acquired books by Strindberg from other places, for example *Svarta fanor*, which had upset both Lagerlöf and Elkan. Ying Toijer-Nilsson, *Du lär mig att bli fri* (Stockholm: MänPocket, 1993), 312.

Among the female writers of the Modern Breakthrough, Elkan seems to have preferred Anne Charlotte Leffler. She purchased *Ur lifvet 2: Aurora Bunge; "Barnet"; Ett bröllop; I krig med samhället* (1883), *Skådespelerskan & Under toffeln* (1883), two copies of *Ur lifvet 3: Kvinnlighet och erotik; Gusten får pastoret* (1889), and *Ur lifvet 5: Kvinnlighet och erotik II* (1890), which were sent to her in Venice. She also bought some of Alfhild Agrell's, Amanda Kerfstedt's, and Anna Wahlenberg's books. Most of these she chose to return, however. Elkan does not seem to have bought the most radical Modern Breakthrough books. The records leave no trace of her buying books such as Kielland's *Arbeidsfolk*, Ibsen's *Gengangere* or *En Folkefiende* or Strindberg's *Det nya riket* or *Giftas*, and thus, Elkan stands out as a somewhat cautious Modern Breakthrough reader. However, we should not jump to any steadfast conclusions. Elkan could get hold of books from other places than Gumpert's bookshop, and in the correspondence with Lagerlöf, both Ibsen and Strindberg are often referred to.⁴⁹⁹

On 15 November 1889 Elkan bought Verner von Heidenstam's *Renässans: Några ord om en annalkande ny brytningstid inom litteraturen* (1889) and Tor Hedberg's *Glädje: en fantasi* (1889). Heidenstam's short pamphlet heralded the transition from the realism of the "eighties" to the emerging romanticism of the "nineties" and prompted debate between him and the circle of writers surrounding Gustaf af Geijerstam and Strindberg. As Lundevall points out, Tor Hedberg's pamphlet, published shortly after Heidenstam's, was seen as a response from the authors of the "eighties". Hedberg's critique appeared heavy-handed and reinforced the image of the realism of the "eighties" as out of step with the times.⁵⁰⁰ Heidenstam was an acquaintance of Elkan, and his books were often referred to in Elkan and Lagerlöf's correspondence. In Gumpert's bookshop Elkan bought Heidenstam's *Vallfart och vandringsår: dikter* (1888), *Hans Alienus* (1892), *Karolinerna* (1897-98), and *Sankt Göran och draken* (1900). Oscar Levertin was another acquaintance, and she bought some of his books as well: *Legender och visor* (1891), *Nya dikter* (1894), *Diktare och drömmare* (1898), and *Magistrarne i Österås* (1900). Elkan's husband and Levertin's father had been close friends, and the two authors occasionally met at dinners

499 Toijer-Nilsson, *Du lär mig att bli fri*, 105, 261.

500 Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 320-21.

and societal get-togethers.⁵⁰¹ Elkan also bought a couple of books written by the secretary of Svenska Akademien, the conservative Carl David af Wirsén: his *Dikter* (1877), “elegantly bound” in publisher’s cloth with gilt edges, and a copy of his *Vintergrönt: dikter* (1890) in an extra fine binding.

In early January 1894, Elkan and Lagerlöf met for the first time. This was to become the start of a life-long close relation, whose nature has been subject to much discussion over the years. The two authors immediately started corresponding, and vital parts of the correspondence have been preserved.⁵⁰² Elkan and Lagerlöf spent Easter 1894 together in Gothenburg, and Lagerlöf was introduced to Elkan’s family and friends. On Monday 19 March, just a few days before Lagerlöf arrived in Gothenburg, Elkan bought a bound copy of Lagerlöf’s *Gösta Berlings saga* (1891) from Gumpert’s bookshop. Elkan had read the book before, and already in January, she had confessed in a letter to Lagerlöf that she did not like it very much. In a couple of letters to her mother, written shortly after the first meeting with Lagerlöf, Elkan mentioned that she recognised certain traits from the character Berling in Lagerlöf’s letters.⁵⁰³ Perhaps, Elkan purchased *Gösta Berling* to give the future classic a second chance, or maybe she saw rereading the book as a way of understanding Lagerlöf better, now that they were about to meet again. Over the years, Elkan also borrowed and bought books for Lagerlöf, for example from Göteborgs stadsbibliotek.⁵⁰⁴ In many cases Elkan had books sent from the bookshop, but the recipient or destination have only occasionally been noted. One of the exceptions is from September 1900. Elkan ordered *Det danska folket under 1864 års krig*, and had it sent to “miss Lagerlöf, Falun.” Undoubtedly, many other books were also sent to Lagerlöf. A few days earlier, Elkan had ordered Bengt Högrell’s *Palestinas geografi och beskrifning* (1889), for 2 kronor plus 24 öre for postage. In a letter from 30 August 1900 Lagerlöf wrote to Elkan: “Thanks for a long and pleasing letter and the postcard, and for *Palestina*, it was kind of you to think of sending it.”⁵⁰⁵

501 Ulvros, *Sophie Elkan*, 41, 79.

502 Toijer-Nilsson, *Du lär mig att bli fri*, 5–7; Ulvros, *Sophie Elkan*, 79–80; see also Marie Hjalmarsson Engelke, *Jag har en plats: Sophie Elkans liv genom brev till Selma Lagerlöf 1893–1900* (Göteborg: A-Script, 2014).

503 Ulvros, *Sophie Elkan*, 80. The letters to Henriette Salomon were sent in January 1894.

504 Ibid. 156.

505 Toijer-Nilsson, *Du lär mig att bli fri*, 151.

Elkan loved travelling. She mastered several languages and spent long periods of time abroad. She ordered books from Gumpert's bookshop and had them sent to her wherever she resided. Before going abroad, she would purchase a new travel guide, typically a Baedeker, for the region or country she was heading to. She also bought foreign-language novels and non-fiction. The Goncourt brothers seem to have been something of a favourite, and maybe an inspiration in her own writing. Furthermore, Elkan was, via the bookshop, a subscriber of several German, French, and English magazines as well as Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian ones. They covered a wide range of subjects, and focused on everything from fashion and literature to politics, science, and comedy. She also bought numerous special issues of certain magazines, not least the ones in which she or Lagerlöf had contributed. For example, she bought several copies of the sixth instalment of the 1892 issue of Karl Wählin's *Ord och Bild*, which contained texts by herself as well as by Lagerlöf. Elkan also purchased numerous special issues of Belgian and French scientific magazines, to which the Belgian pedagogue Alexis Sluys contributed. Elkan and Sluys maintained a close relationship over the years.

In December 1899, Elkan and Lagerlöf embarked on their longest journey together. They travelled through Europe and visited Greece, Turkey, Egypt, before reaching the final destination: Palestine. They were back in Sweden in June 1900, and Högrell's book was undoubtedly intended as research material for Lagerlöf. Lagerlöf's *Jerusalem* 1–2 was published in 1901–02, and in 1901, Elkan's *Drömmen om österlandet* was published. On 7 August 1900 Elkan ordered C. D. af Wirsén's *Ellen Keys livsåskådning och verksamhet som författarinna* (1900) for 1.50 kronor, and 12 öre was added for postage. Clearly, the pamphlet was intended for Lagerlöf. In an undated letter from August 1900, Lagerlöf discussed the pamphlet and stated that "I despise her [Ellen Key] to the extent that I could write a pamphlet, which would sting in a very different way than Wirsén's."⁵⁰⁶ The two friends' judgemental statements about Key, one of the most well-known supporters of women's emancipation in Sweden, may suggest that Elkan was not interested in the issue, but the purchases from Gumpert's bookshop suggest otherwise. As early as 1884, Elkan had bought an issue of the Danish magazine *Nyt tidskrift*, containing Gina Krog's famous

506 Ibid. 150.

article “Nogle Ord om Kvindesagens Udvikling” (A few Words on Women’s Emancipation). Furthermore, she bought Karl Staaf’s *Hufvudpunkterna af den svenska lagstiftningen om qvinnan* (1892; The Main Points of the Swedish Legislation on Women’s Rights) and the pamphlet *Öfversigt af den svenska kvinnans sociala ställning: utg. i anledning af verdensutställningen i Chicago år 1893* (1893; Outline of the Social Position of Swedish Women: Report for the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago 1893).

In the parish library

The literature of the Modern Breakthrough was entirely absent in model catalogues for parish libraries, contemporary fiction being generally avoided in public libraries. In some libraries, for example, anything even vaguely associated with the name Strindberg was perceived as radical.⁵⁰⁷ With reference to a Danish context, Møller Kristensen claimed that until World War I, there was “no contact whatsoever between the modern literature and the less privileged classes in the country.”⁵⁰⁸ There were, however, exceptions even among parish libraries. Although most parish libraries focused on educating and edifying literature, the selection of books varied greatly. Some libraries were very conservative, while others were considerably more liberal. Generally, parish libraries with closer ties to the church were less prone to offer fiction, whereas the more independently run libraries had more fiction on offer.⁵⁰⁹

In December 1882, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby acquired part one, and a year later part two, of Strindberg’s popular history publication *Svenska folket i helg och söken* (1881–82; Swedes on weekdays and Sundays). Although it was one of his less controversial works, it was met with harsh criticism due to its radical ideas, and Strindberg’s own ambition with the work was to “expose the entirety of Swedish nation” (“afslöja hela Svenska Nationen”), according to a letter from the author to the editor and literary critic Edvard Brandes.⁵¹⁰ In

507 Jeppsson, *Tänkar till salu*, 72 and Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 34.

508 Møller Kristensen, *Digteren og samfundet II*, 174.

509 Henning Hansen, “Landsbygds läsning” (forthcoming article).

510 Letter to Edvard Brandes 26 of June 1881. *August Strindbergs Samlade verk 10. Svenska*

Munka-Ljungby, the two volumes were popular. The first few years they were borrowed again as soon as they were returned, often on the very same day. Part one was taken out seventeen times between December 1882 and July 1888, and part two was borrowed eleven times between November 1883 and July 1888. The administration rarely abided by the maximum loan period of four weeks, and some borrowers kept the volumes for months, thereby preventing others from borrowing them; otherwise the number of loans might have been considerably higher. A few borrowers even started reading the books in the wrong order, presumably because volume one was unavailable for long periods of time. Seven members managed to borrow both parts between 1882 and 1888. Among them were farmer Anders Nilsson (1819–1903), yeomen Magnus Reuter (b. 1837) and Hans Ekdahl (b. 1828) and the unmarried working maid Johanna Svensson Hellström (b. 1846). Since the borrowers' catalogue for the years 1889–98 has been lost, information regarding this period is sparse, but sometime during this period both volumes of Strindberg's work were removed from the library.

It is important to keep in mind that not all books written by Modern Breakthrough authors were necessarily perceived as radical. Some of these books had religious undertones, consisted of humoristic descriptions of rural life, or were aimed at children, and were mostly quite harmless. By the late 1890s, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby had acquired a few additional books written by authors affiliated with the Modern Breakthrough, and most of them belonged to this category of books: Henrik Wranér's *Brokiga bilder från skånska slätten förr och nu* (1889) and *Skånska stugor* (1886); August Bondesson's *Historiegubbar på Dal* (1886); Mathilda Roos' *Från norrskanets land* (1897), *Berättelser och skizzer* (1884) and *Genom skuggor* (1901); Georg Nordensvan's *Penseldrag* (1883) and *I harnesk* (1882); Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's *Berättelser* (1874); and Strindberg's *I vårbrytningen* (1880). More surprisingly, the library also acquired French novels such as Gustave Flaubert's *Salambo: historisk roman* (1885) and Alphonse Daudet's *Det lilla annexet* (1895; *Le petit paroisse*). After the turn of the century, Ann Charlotte Leffler's *Valda romaner* (1902) and additional books by Mathilda Roos were purchased, most of them written after her religious awakening during the late 1880s.

folket II, edited by Camilla Kretz och Per Stam (Stockholm: Norstedts förlag, 2002), 407; Sven Delblanc "Folkets historia" in *Den svenska litteraturen: De liberala genombrotten 1830–1890* (Uddevalla: BonnierFakta Bokförlag AB, 1989), 226.

These books were among the most popular in the library and were borrowed over and over again. Some borrowers seem to have been particularly devoted readers. In the years from 1899 to 1903, six members of the parish library borrowed at least half of the aforementioned books. One library member borrowed all books but one. Regrettably we cannot identify these borrowers since no list of the members has been preserved from this period. Only a handful of parish libraries have received in depth scholarly attention so far, but even so it seems clear that the library in Munka-Ljungby was more liberal than most others when it comes to offering contemporary literature. It was not unique, however. The parish library in Svedvi, one of the few parish libraries that have been studied more closely, also offered a fair share of radical literature, for example by Zola and Nietzsche as well as Strindberg.⁵¹¹

In the commercial lending library

In 1887 and 1888, Louise Thornberg (b. 1833) wrote several letters to Sjöblom in Lund seeking cooperation and advice. She was about to establish a commercial lending library in nearby Helsingborg and ordered numerous books from Sjöblom's antiquarian bookshop. Her purchases give an indication of what kinds of books were most in demand in the lending libraries. In her letters, she recurrently asked for books by Tolstoy – “don't forget to send us anything you have by this author” – and she also requested Dostoyevsky, Turgenev, Benedictsson's *Pengar* (1885; *Money*) and Agrell's *Dramatiska arbeten* (1883–84; *Dramatical Works*) as well as books by Gregor Samarow, Julius Stinde, Victor Hugo, John Frederick Smith, and William Black.⁵¹²

Commercial lending libraries were crucial for the dissemination of contemporary fiction, and the literature of the Modern Breakthrough in particu-

511 Berg, "Svedvi sockenbibliotek," 126.

512 Letters to Sjöblom from the lending library proprietor Louise Thornberg and her son Harald Thornberg, dated 11 February 1887, 8 December 1887, 20 February 1888, 26 May 1888, and 1 June 1888. The archive of Jacob Albert Sjöblom, Lund University Library. Thornberg's lending library was established in 1888. A library catalogue of 34 pages was printed in 1888, with "exclusively modern fiction." Carlander, *Svenska bibliotek och ex-libris I*, 408.

lar.⁵¹³ This is especially interesting when considering the fact that these libraries were first and foremost demand-driven. In her dissertation on the Modern Breakthrough and commercial lending libraries, Ann-Lis Jeppsson shows that the literature of the Modern Breakthrough formed an important part of the library holdings. Based on the library catalogues from 24 commercial lending libraries in Sweden's three largest cities (Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö), Jeppsson showed that all libraries, albeit to a varying degree, offered the literary works of Swedish Modern Breakthrough writers, and that the number of titles increased substantially over the years. During the first few years of the 1880s, the lending libraries in Jeppsson's study each contained between one and 20 Modern Breakthrough books. In the late 1880s the average number increased to around 50 and by the turn of the century some libraries had over 100 books written by Modern Breakthrough authors.⁵¹⁴ Contemporary naturalist writing was in other words in strong demand.

Despite the fact that no catalogues from Sjöblom's lending library from the 1880s seem to have been preserved, it is possible to partly reconstruct the library's holdings from the early 1880s thanks to the sample of preserved borrowers' receipts, primarily from 1882. The lending library offered a number of books written by authors of the Modern Breakthrough, as well as a few books by naturalists, such as Émile Zola.⁵¹⁵ Strindberg's *Röda rummet* was borrowed most frequently, followed by Georg Nordensvan's *Framtidsmän*, Herman Bang's *Haabløse slægter* and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's *Fiskarflickan*. Over the years, the number of Modern Breakthrough books in Sjöblom's lending library increased substantially. The oldest preserved printed catalogue, from 1895, lists close to a total of 100 books by Drachmann, Benedictsson, Geijerstam, Hedberg, Kielland, Lie, Lundegård, Nordensvan, Wahlenberg, Ibsen, Strindberg, Bjørnson, and Gjellerup as well as dozens of books by Zola, Turgenev, Maupassant, Tolstoy, Daudet, Dostoyevsky, Flaubert, etc.

513 Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 177.

514 Jeppsson, *Tankar till salu*, 75–82.

515 The borrowers' receipts only list around 660 titles, but we know that the printed catalogue from 1889 listed over 2,600 works, so the number of Modern Breakthrough books may well have been higher, although the number corresponds rather well to the average number of Modern Breakthrough books found in lending library catalogues at the time, according to Jeppsson's survey.



Figure 6.5: Lieutenant A. M. Boltenstern (1859–1934) in 1881. Boltenstern borrowed at least 12 books from Sjöblom's lending library between 15 and 25 July 1882, including books by authors of the Modern Breakthrough. Photograph by Gösta Florman, Krigsarkivets porträttsamlingar.

As has already been noted, the clientele of commercial lending libraries was socially diverse. The identified borrowers of Modern Breakthrough literature from Sjöblom's library were all fairly young, in their early or mid-twenties or even in their teens: the unmarried Anna Fredrika Brag (1863–1944), waiter Carl Mauritz Ottergren (b. 1855), lieutenant Adolf Mauritz Boltenstern (1859–1934), seminarian Johannes Ströander (b. 1861), elementary school teacher Fritz Bergendorff (b. 1861), students Johan Berner (b. 1858) and Carl-Gustaf von Seth (b. 1858), and teenager Fredrik Emanuel Bager (b. 1868). Although the relatively low number of loans of Modern Breakthrough literature makes it difficult to draw any substantive conclusions, the limited number of loans of this literature by artisans, labourers, or peasants stand out, given the fact that in the early 1880s they made up around a quarter of the library's clientele. The only exceptions were painter's apprentice Anders Olsson (b. 1861), who borrowed Zola's *Nana* and *Ett blad ur kärlekens bok*, and sailor Johan Bengtsson, who borrowed Nordensvan's *Framtidsmän*. The preserved borrowers' receipts show only one female customer borrowing one of these books, the

above-mentioned Anna Fredrika Brag (1863–1944), the daughter of a long line of academics who later married the assistant vicar at Gothenburg Cathedral, Gustaf Ehrenfried Franck. Brag borrowed Bjørnson's *Fiskarflickan* as well as numerous books by female authors: Fredrika Bremer, E. Werner, Mrs. Henry Wood, Flygare-Carlén, etc.

Table 6.5: Customers with surnames starting with B, O, P, or S at Sjöblom's lending library borrowing Modern Breakthrough books c. 1882, by profession/title

Title	Number of customers
University student	7
Youth	3
Waiter	2
High school student	2
Bookkeeper	1
Doctor	1
Unmarried woman	1
Lieutenant	1
Painter	1
Seminarian	1
Sailor	1
Teacher	1
Shopkeeper	1

Summary

Books written by Modern Breakthrough authors could be found in all three institutions: in Gumpert's bookshop from the 1870s onward, and in Sjöblom's lending library and the parish library in Munka-Ljungby at least starting in 1882. They did not, however, offer the same books. At Gumpert's bookshop, works of the Modern Breakthrough constituted a large share of the fiction sales while, at the parish library in Munka-Ljungby and in Sjöblom's lend-

ing library, the Modern Breakthrough literature formed only an insignificant proportion of all books, at least during the early 1880s. Here it is necessary to differentiate between the radical Modern Breakthrough literature, mainly published in the early 1880s, and the other books written by Modern Breakthrough authors, many of which were perceived as being more or less harmless. The parish library, for example, primarily acquired books belonging to the second category, such as the descriptions of rural life by Henrik Wranér and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and the later, more religiously oriented writings of Mathilda Roos. The bookshop and the lending library offered both the more “scandalous” and the more “harmless” ones.

The loans and purchases from the three institutions indicate that there was, after all, a strong urge to read the literature of the Modern Breakthrough. At the bookshop, some of the Modern Breakthrough books were bestsellers, and they were also popular at Sjöblom’s lending library, Strindberg’s *Röda rummet* being one of the most frequently borrowed titles. In Munka-Ljungby the few books written by Modern Breakthrough authors were borrowed extensively, exceeding the popularity even of one of the greatest bestseller of the time, Topelius’s *Fältskärens berättelser*. However, there were important discrepancies between the number of prospective and actual readers of the Modern Breakthrough literature. A lack of interest was probably not the main source of the problem. But the economic barriers made it difficult or even impossible for most people to acquire these books. In his diary for 1884 Lundgren, the bookshop assistant, proudly noted that from now on, he received a fixed salary of three kronor per week. Although it was by no means a high salary, and he may well have received extra benefits, Strindberg’s *Giftas*, published the same year and priced at 3.75 kronor, would have cost Lundgren over a week’s pay. Although the 1880s saw an increase in real wages, the bulk of readers had to turn to libraries for their everyday reading.⁵¹⁶

Most public libraries at the time avoided Modern Breakthrough literature. Not even a celebrated institution like Gothenburg People’s Library – Sweden’s largest public library at the time – contained a single book by Strindberg, a “deliberate effort to withhold the modern literature from the public,” accord-

516 Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia*, 192.

ing to Lundevall.⁵¹⁷ Similarly, in 1886, the large workers' library in Gothenburg – Göteborgs arbetareförenings bibliotek – with over 2,000 volumes of fiction, contained four books by Bjørnson, among them *De Nygifte*, and Ibsen's *Brand* and *De unges forbund*, but not any books by Swedish Modern Breakthrough writers.⁵¹⁸ In comparison, the Lund Public Library was slightly more liberal. In 1884, it offered a number of titles by Bjørnson, Kielland, Lie and even some of Geijerstam and Leffler's writings, but yet again, no Strindberg.⁵¹⁹

The limited number of Modern Breakthrough titles in these institutions was in all likelihood not due to a lack of interest on the part of reading communities. From the 1860s to the 1880s a number of workers' libraries were established across the country, among them the above-mentioned workers' library in Gothenburg. These libraries were established *for* the workers, but the initiative and funding came from above, which implied a certain censorship and control. By contrast, at libraries where the members themselves could decide more freely which books should be acquired, such as the social democratic workers' libraries, which were established *by* rather than *for* the workers, the writings of the Modern Breakthrough were more widely represented.⁵²⁰ These libraries were, however, predominantly established during the 1880s, 1890s or even later.⁵²¹

Generally speaking, the books of the Modern Breakthrough seem to have appealed primarily to educated book consumers, at least initially. In Gumpert's bookshop, the most dedicated buyers of Modern Breakthrough literature belonged to the well-educated elite circles of society. Sophie Elkan's purchases provide a detailed insight into the literary consumption of the cultural elite in Gothenburg. The number of books she purchased from Gumpert's bookshop is quite astonishing, and via Gumpert's bookshop she was able to follow contemporary literary movements and acquire relevant reading material for her own writing. Elkan and many others from the bookshop's elite segments

517 Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 176–78.

518 Persson and Brundin, "Bibliotekssträvanden inom socialdemokratiska föreningar i Stockholm på 1880-talet," 158–59.

519 *Katalog öfver Lunds Stads Bibliotek 1864–1884*, 23–35.

520 Persson and Brundin, "Bibliotekssträvanden inom socialdemokratiska föreningar i Stockholm på 1880-talet," 157–59, 173–75; Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle*, 41; Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 52–53.

521 Leffler, *Böcker, bildning, makt*, 244–46; Jeppsson, *Tankar till salu*, 20–21.

of customers seemingly had no difficulty reading foreign languages. When buying Modern Breakthrough books, many preferred the original Danish-Norwegian versions, even when a Swedish translation was available. The translations arguably reached a different segment of readers, not least since the libraries always preferred the translations to the originals. At Sjöblom's lending library, frequented by a socially diverse clientele, it was mainly the educated customers who borrowed the literature of the Modern Breakthrough and of naturalist authors such as Zola. There were, however, exceptions, and some tendencies point towards an emerging democratisation of the Modern Breakthrough audience in the course of the 1880s. By the time the sales of the Modern Breakthrough declined and almost stalled in the bookshop – during the latter part of the 1880s – the literary movement gained a stronger foothold in the demand-driven lending libraries, thereby coming within reach of new groups of readers.

We know from Jeppsson's study of lending libraries that the books of the Modern Breakthrough were an important part of commercial lending libraries. When we factor in the fact that a handful of the less controversial books were available in at least some public libraries, and even in the occasional parish library, far more people from socially diverse backgrounds, than previously has been presumed, had access to at least a few books written by Modern Breakthrough authors. A single copy of a popular book could be borrowed dozens of times from the libraries. The "few" readers of the literary movement were probably not quite as few as Ola Hansson implied in 1885. The readers relying on libraries were, however, in many cases forced to wait years before they could access the more radical works. The news regarding the modern literature travelled much more freely and quickly than the books themselves. Owing largely to the increasing number of reviews in the newspapers and to word of mouth, the contemporary literary debate reached far beyond the bookshop's elite clientele. Even in a provincial village such as Hörby, for example, "ruffians and country bumpkins" entered Victoria Benedictsson's small bookshop in 1884, asking for Strindberg's *Giftas*, and as early as 1878, Strindberg complained that the rural population was more eager to read "insulting writings in the newspapers" than the actual books which the statements concerned.⁵²²

522 Åberg, "Det moderna genombrottet," 64; August Strindberg, *Likt och olikt I: sociala och*

We should keep in mind that book consumers known to have bought or borrowed one or a few Modern Breakthrough books were not necessarily dedicated supporters of the literary movement, nor of the ideas it represented. The verso of one of the borrowers' receipts from Sjöblom's lending library contains a fragment of a letter sent to Sjöblom with a book request (date and sender unknown). The scribbles provide some food for thought: "... *En vildhjernas memoirer* by Paul de Kock. N[ota] b[ene]! If it is not available, I'll take *Bättre slödder* by É. Zola. If you don't have that one either, I will take anything by the same author." It seems like naturalist Zola, often regarded as one of the best writers of his time, and the melodramatic author Paul de Kock – a "marker of poor taste" – seemed interchangeable to this particular, anonymous, customer.⁵²³ He or she perhaps just wanted to acquire a French book with a tempting title, but nevertheless, it is an interesting example. There were probably readers of Modern Breakthrough literature who were more interested in the entertainment than in the social criticism offered in some of these books. "[T]he audience could applaud and discuss a drama by Ibsen or enjoy the wording of a novel by Strindberg, but paid no attention whatsoever ... to the serious inherent message," Ahlström stated, in somewhat patronising terms.⁵²⁴ The "ruffians" in Benedictsson's bookshop, for example, were clearly in it for the scandalous content, according to herself.

In general, most readers mixed both high and low brow literature, and their literary preferences seem to have been far from as polarised as was the literary debate of the day.⁵²⁵ The dividing line between the conservatives on one side, among them the secretary of the Swedish Academy Carl David af Wirsén, and Strindberg and the other members of the "Young Sweden," on the other side, is hardly discernible in the purchases of the customers of Gumpert's bookshop: The count von Schwerin bought Wirsén's *Sånger och bilder* and Benedictsson's *Pengar*; director Engelbrecht bought Wirsén's *Vid juletid* and Strindberg's *Hemsöborna*; bookkeeper Fritz Abrahamsson bought *Sånger och bilder* as well as books by Bjørnson, Lundequist, Drachmann, and

kulturkritiska uppsatser från 1880-talet (Stockholm: Albert Bonnier, 1913), 130.

523 O'Neil-Henry, "Paul de Kock and the Marketplace of Culture," 97.

524 Ahlström, *Det moderna genombrottet*, 424.

525 Rose, "Rereading the English Common Reader," 58

Ibsen; engineer Bissmarck bought Wirsén's books and Strindberg's *Giftas*, and the unmarried woman M. Kobb bought *Vid juletid* and the radical magazine *Ur dagens krönika* on the same day. Even books explicitly criticising the Modern Breakthrough, such as Personne's *Strindbergs-litteraturen* and Carl von Bergen's *Vårt rektionära unga Sverige: nutidsbetraktelser* (1890), were bought by customers who were otherwise fully-fledged buyers of Modern Breakthrough literature. All customers who bought *Det unga Sverige: vers och prosa* (1883), a parody mocking the writings of Strindberg, Geijerstam, Bååth, Leffler, Levertin, and Nordensvan, were also avid Modern Breakthrough customers. Some simply bought everything related to the Modern Breakthrough, regardless of its underlying agenda.

Beyond the scholarly debate concerning the size of the literary movement's dedicated following, it seems clear that the number of people who read at least some of the writings of the authors of the Modern Breakthrough during the 1880s was larger than what has previously been assumed.

BOOK CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

Time to read

Previous studies of loans from parish libraries have displayed a rather consistent consumption pattern, with low loan figures in summertime, and high figures during winters.⁵²⁶ For those working on farms, the main clientele of parish libraries, summer working hours stretched from early mornings to late evenings, which left them little time to read. Many parish libraries that catered to peasants and agricultural workers consequently limited their opening hours in the summer, some even closing. The parish library in Munka-Ljungby, however, was open all year round, albeit only a few hours per month. When we take a closer look at the loans of a couple of the library's members, Johannes Persson and Anders Nilsson, both farmers, we notice a distinctive decline in the number of loans in the summertime. If we compare this trend to the loans of one of the library's most popular books, Emilie Flygare-Carlén's novel *En natt vid Bullarsjön* (1847) between 1871 and 1888, we notice a very similar pattern (see figure 7.1). The average number of loans peaked during the winter months, from November to March, save a drop in December. Perhaps Christmas preparations took up most of the spare time. The months of May and June also saw a slight increase in the number of loans, just before summer.

526 Gynnerstedt, "Nora Solberga sockenbibliotek," 88.

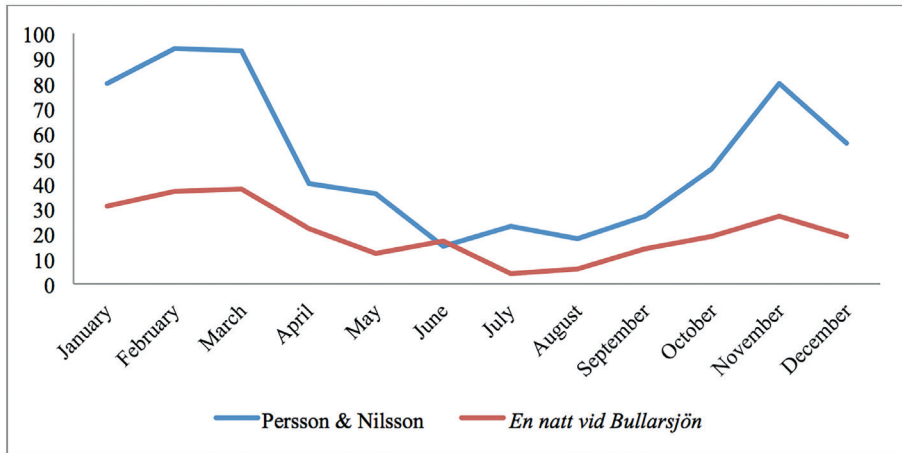


Figure 7.1: Average number of loans per month made by Johannes Persson and Anders Nilsson c. 1874–81 and average monthly loans of Emilie Flygare–Carlén’s *En natt vid Bullarsjön* c. 1871–88, at the parish library in Munka-Ljungby

In his studies of accounts of reading from a series of memoirs written in Swedish vicarages in the period 1860–1910, Eric Johansson noted that reading seems to have taken place primarily during the autumn and winter months, when chores were fewer.⁵²⁷ Time to read was largely constrained by working hours. In the wintertime, farm workers worked around six or seven hours, but during the summer, working days were often twice as long.⁵²⁸ The limited amount of leisure time did not leave many opportunities for reading to the clientele of the parish library. It was primarily during the few evening hours and on Sundays in particular that reading took place. Far from everyone could afford the luxury of reading during their work week.⁵²⁹ In other words, for most people, reading took place primarily after sunset, during the darkest time of the year. Naturally, this required external light sources. Candles and paraffin lamps were expensive, and in order to save on lighting, the household gathered around the light source.⁵³⁰ This practice went hand in hand with reading aloud, which was commonplace according to Swedish and Norwegian studies

527 Accounts from the memoir series *Minnen från gamla svenska prästhem* (1924–36). Johansson, *Den läsande familjen*, 25.

528 Lis Byberg, *Brukke bøker til bymann og bonde: bokauksjonen i den norske litterære offentlighet 1750–1815* (Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo, 2007), 124.

529 Åberg, “Folket läste,” 376.

530 Garnert, *Anden i lampan*, 78–81.

of reading practices.⁵³¹

Since summer was the busiest time for farm workers, we easily understand why this time of year was off-season for parish libraries. But was reading equally seasonal in urban settings? Among the bookshop clientele, very few were tied to the seasonality of the industry or agriculture. Most customers at Gumpert's bookshop belonged to middle classes and social elites, who could actually afford leisure. Furthermore, they were rarely hindered by long working days or limited access to light or privacy. Among senior officials, working hours of as little as four or five hours were commonplace.⁵³² Still, sales at the bookshop are definitely characterized by seasonality. Generally speaking, sales declined in the summertime, and reached their lowest levels in August. The peak in sales in September is to a large extent explained by the substantial schoolbook purchases. Since Gumpert's bookshop specialised in schoolbooks, the scale of the schoolbook sales was possibly even greater than at the average bookshop. The rush to buy schoolbooks in September was only superseded by December sales.

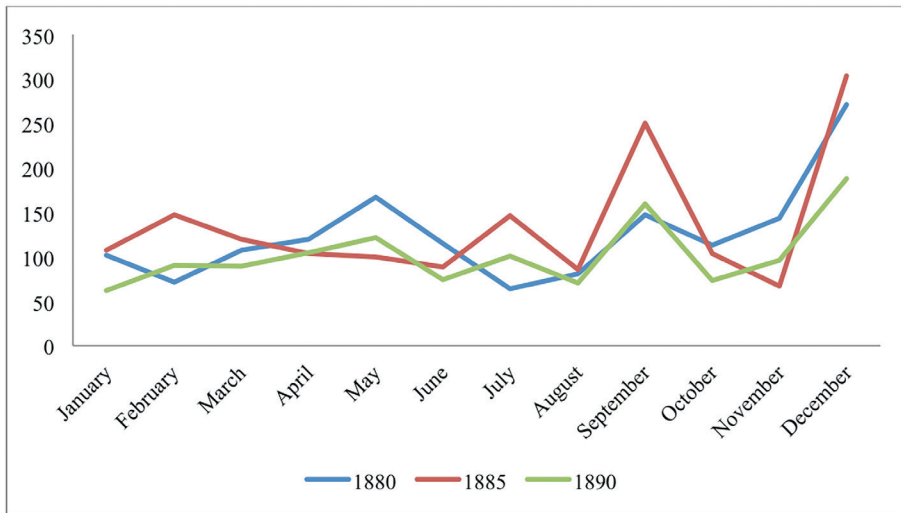


Figure 7.2: Average number of sales per month from Gumpert's bookshop in 1880, 1885, and 1890, recorded in the 10 per cent sample of customers

⁵³¹ Byberg, *Brukte bøker til bymann og bonde*, 123–26; Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 23–28; Ulvros, *Fruar och mamseller*, 289–304.

⁵³² Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle*, 36.

December was the time for Christmas shopping. In a Scandinavian context, the Christmas trade was of great importance for the book trade. Already by the mid-1800s at least a third of the books were published in time for Christmas: publishers flooded the market with books suitable as gifts, in time for the holidays.⁵³³ The Christmas trade was particularly important for fiction sales. Sales from Gumpert's bookshop show that on average around 20 per cent of all books were sold in December alone, but when it comes to fiction, as much as 30 per cent of annual sales occurred in December.

Taking a closer look at Gumpert's sales' ledgers, the seasonality of the book sales is evident even at the level of the individual customer. The wholesaler Herman Josephson's (1838–1930) purchases in 1880, for example, are typical, and follow the general ups and downs of the bookshop's sales. The household consisted of Herman and his wife Emilie (b. 1844), their four children aged nine to fourteen, and a few maids. During 1880, the household purchased books from Gumpert's bookshop for a substantial amount: 178 kronor and 75 öre. In May, Josephson bought five annual volumes of magazines, among them the German magazines *Fliegende Blätter* and *Die Modenwelt*. In September he ordered half-a-dozen schoolbooks and dictionaries and had them sent to the family's home. On 20 December, he bought a couple of art books, as well as numerous novels and children's books, for example James Fenimore Cooper's *Hjortödaren* (1880; *The Deerslayer*), Thomas Bailey Aldrich's *En stygg pojkes historia* (1880; *The Story of a Bad Boy*), two books by Frederick Marryat and part five of Topelius's *Läsning för barn* (1880; *Reading for Children*). On Christmas Eve, Josephson bought Nordenskiöld's travelogue of his journey Northeast Passage, and a photograph of a female actress.

Since the borrowers' receipts from Sjöblom's lending library constitute rather fragmentary material, it is difficult to draw any substantial conclusions when it comes to the seasonality of loans. Two thirds are dated 1882, but the preserved loans represent only a minor proportion of all loans even during this period, and it seems probable that the insignificant number of loans during some months, for example January 1882 and February 1883, may be explained by missing borrowers' receipts. We can, however, note that summers seem to have been busier for the commercial lending library than for the parish library.

533 Krantz, *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn*, 15.

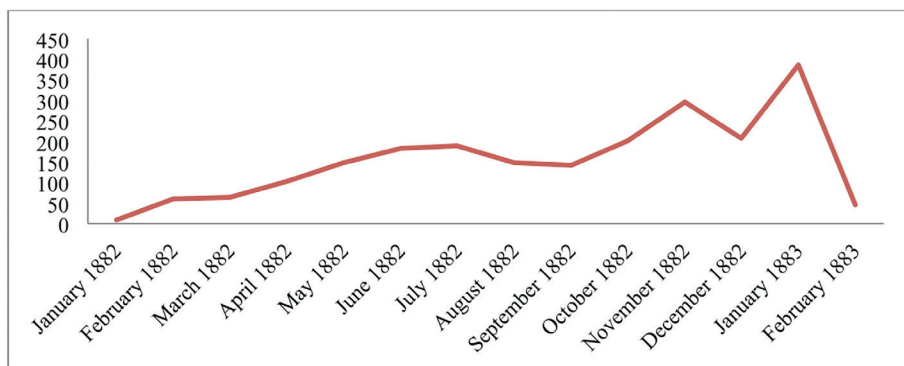


Figure 7.3: Number of loans per month from Sjöblom's commercial lending library by customers with surnames starting with letters B, O, P, or S between January 1882 and February 1883

Why, then, are we not seeing the same patterns of seasonality when it comes to the commercial lending library loans? At both the parish library and the bookshop, summers stand out as an off-peak season, but the commercial lending library records do not display the same pattern. The work situation for the latter clientele, which came from all segments of society, was clearly not as connected to the changing seasons as it was among the members of the parish library. Instead of working around the clock in the summertime, some could even take advantage of the long days with lots of natural daylight to read more. Another factor that differentiates the lending library from the other two institutions is the selection of books. The bookshop, for example, sold mainly newly published books, and their sales were largely affected by the school calendar and the Christmas gift shopping. In comparison, the lending library stock was very homogenous. It consisted almost solely of fiction, which seems to have been in more steady demand.

What can the borrowers' and sales' ledgers tell us of the pace of reading? Since records from Gumpert's bookshop only list when books were sold, they reveal practically nothing about what happened once they had left the bookshop. The only exception is when the customers decided to return their purchases, which happened rather frequently, in around 7 per cent of the cases. Records from the parish library tell us slightly more about how quickly books were read. According to the parish library statutes, borrowers were allowed to keep books for no longer than four weeks. This rule, however, was often bro-

ken. In some cases borrowers kept books for months, in exceptional cases even for years. On some occasions, the librarian lamented the borrowers' tardiness. In 1898, for example, it was recorded in the library board's minutes of proceedings that 20 members had books that were overdue three months or more. Although it was agreed that further attempts should be made to persuade them to return the books, they were not fined. Some borrowers, on the other hand, were truly voracious readers who borrowed (and returned) new books each time the library was open. The most popular books were almost constantly on loan. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred: en berättelse från det stora olycksträsket* (1857; *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*), was for example borrowed 29 times between 9 September 1876 and 9 October 1880. During these four years, the book was on loan almost 90 per cent of the time.

At Sjöblom's lending library, the commercial benefits of shorter loans had direct implications for how fast the books were read (or returned), since it was more of a pay-as-you-go system. The library rules stipulated that for a 15-öre fee, the borrower was allowed to borrow one book for a week, and he or she was also entitled to exchange it for a new book once a day. In other words, for a 15-öre fee, a dedicated reader could borrow six books per week (the library was open Monday to Saturday). If the customer preferred borrowing two volumes for a week, with the opportunity to exchange them, the fee was 20 öre, and the corresponding fee for three volumes was 30 öre. It was also possible to borrow books for longer periods of time. Borrowing one volume for a month cost 50 öre. The corresponding fee for two was 70 öre, and 1 krona for three to four volumes. A voracious reader could in other words, at least in theory, borrow over 100 books in the course of a month, for the rather modest fee of 1 krona. Short loans were rewarded. The library even had a special rule for three-day loans. For a 10-öre fee, the borrower was allowed to borrow a single volume for three days, without having the opportunity of exchanging it in the meantime. All fees were to be paid in advance. Borrowers who failed to return their books in time were forced to pay a fee of 3 öre per day per volume, and judging by the payment of odd fees in the records, such as 18 öre or 6 öre, Sjöblom enforced the rule.

5. Afgiften för **en veckas** boklån, med rättighet att göra ombyte *en* gång hvarje dag, är (om än boken — eller böckerne — återlemnas, innan **en vecka** från prenumerationsdagen är tilländalupen):
- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1) Då ett band lånas | 15 öre. |
| 2) Då två lånas | 20 „ |
| 3) Då tre eller högst fyra lånas på en gång | 30 „ |
6. Afgiften för **en månads** boklån, med rättighet att göra ombyte *en* gång hvarje dag, är:
- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1) Då ett band lånas | 50 öre. |
| 2) Då två lånas | 70 „ |
| 3) Då tre eller högst fyra lånas på en gång | 1,00 „ |
7. Afgiften för lån af **en bok** (i *ett* band), med rättighet att behålla densamma i *tre* dagar är: 10 öre.

Figure 7.4: Excerpt from rules at Sjöblom's lending library (c. 1890)

On some borrowers' receipts, it was noted how much the borrower paid, or how much the borrower owed the library. In most cases, it was very small amounts. The 15-öre fee, which covered the loan of one book for one week, with the possibility of making daily exchanges, is by far the most frequent. The 50-öre fee, which covered loans of one volume for one month, was also fairly common. Some borrowers seem to have been returning customers, who renewed their 50 or 70 öre subscription every month. One such customer was tradesman J. O. Bager. On 20 May 1882, a Saturday, Bager borrowed two books: Karl Müller's *Esperanza, eller de ungas nybygge på Pampas* (1861; *Esperanza: Oder, Die Jungen Gauchos In Den Pampas*), and one unidentified book. Two days later, on Monday, Bager returned the two books. On the same occasion Bager paid 70 öre, which enabled him to borrow two volumes at a time and to make daily exchanges for another month. Bager immediately took out a couple of new volumes, Pierre Zaccone's *Lifvet på spel* (1879; *La Vie à outrance*) and Robert Montgomery Bird's *Roland Forresters och hans systers faror och äfventyr bland Nordamerikas indianer* (1847; *Nick of the Woods*). The very next day, Bager returned the two books, and took out William Clark Russell's *Förste styrmannen* (1877) and Captain Marryat's *Sjökadetten* (1878; *Mr Midshipman Easy*) instead.

In the following weeks, Bager frequented the lending library almost daily,

eagerly borrowing and returning books. Owing to Sjöblom's generous opening hours, Mondays through Saturdays from eight o'clock in the morning till nine o'clock in the evening, even customers such as Bager, with long working days, had a good chance of making it to the lending library. Bager borrowed Johan Jolin's *Berättelser och smärre uppsatser 1* (1872), which he returned the same day as he borrowed it, he kept Jules Verne's *Jorden rundt på 80 dagar* (1872; *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours*) for four days, and Friedrich Gerstäcker's *Regulatorerna i Arkansas* (1864; *Die Regulatoren in Arkansas*) for two days, only to mention a few of the books he borrowed. The records reveal that from 22 May to 21 June 1882, Bager borrowed and returned at least sixty volumes. Did he really read all these books, or was he simply a picky reader, who preferred to find another book? We should be careful not to jump to conclusions, and it is highly likely that Bager did not finish all the books he took out. However, when we look more closely at what books he borrowed, certain discernible patterns support the assumption that Bager really read most of the books he borrowed. The same day as Bager returned Russell's *Förste styrmannnen*, he took out the sequel, Russell's *Andre styrmannen: berättelse ur sjömanslifvet* (1878). Four days after returning Verne's *Jorden rundt på 80 dagar*, he borrowed Verne's *Den hemlighetsfulla ön* (1875; *The Mysterious Island*), and after returning Marryat's *Sjökadetten*, he took out numerous books by the same author, for example *Kaparekaptenen* (1877; *The Privateersman*), *Peter Simpel 1–2* (1837) and *Percival Keen* (1847).

Short loans were very common at Sjöblom's lending library. The baroness Saint-Cyr returned Eugenie John's (pen name E. Marlitt) *Amtmannens piga* (1881; *Amtmanns Magd*) after thirteen days; farmer Hans Svensson kept Émile Gaboriau's *Andras pengar* (1877; *L'argent des autres*) for six days; bookkeeper Johan Bengtsson returned Alexandre Dumas's *De tre muskötörerna* (1846; *Les Trois Mousquetaires*) after six days; bookkeeper Albin Söderlund returned Paul de Kock's *Bror Jacques* (1872, *Frère Jacques*) after two days, and the unmarried Anna Olin returned Mrs Wood's *Rivalerna* (1872) after just one day. Some customers kept the books far longer. In certain cases, it is likely that Sjöblom cut deals with customers, especially if they lived out of town, or were travelling. On 17 January 1893, one of Sjöblom's customers, Anders Peter Wikström in Höör (b. 1868), sent a letter requesting a few books:

*I hereby have the pleasure of returning the remaining books, I apologise that they are slightly overdue. A list with new books is attached, and they should be sent to me promptly, by the railroad ... Should not all the requested books be available, would you be as kind as to send me a few other pleasant books instead? I assume the loan period is three months?*⁵³⁴

Another example can be found in a letter dated 10 October 1892 from estate owner Carl Wendt (1822–95): “Since I live so far away, I want to get a larger number of books sent to me, to avoid frequent exchanges.”⁵³⁵ Perhaps miller Oskar Sjögren, who lived in Bösmöllan, north of Lund, had a similar agreement with Sjöblom. He borrowed a number of books on 27 July 1878, and returned them on 16 December of the same year. Several letters written by customers to Sjöblom emphasize the need for a speedy delivery. In a very short letter sent from Bjärnum (approximately 80 km from Lund), railway clerk Ingvar Olin requested books from Sjöblom: “...send twelve volumes as quickly as possible.”⁵³⁶ The nature of the books or the length of the loan period are not specified. A similar request was sent by 19-year-old August W. Embring (b. 1870) in Vallkärra, a few kilometres north of central Lund. The letter was sent via a porter, alongside three books, and he asked Sjöblom to find three new books for him immediately. He preferred the books by Ragnar Pihlstrand (pen-named Lodbrok), Marryat, or Paul de Kock: “If possible, please send one of the requested books with the porter tonight.”⁵³⁷

534 Letter to Sjöblom from Anders Peter Wikström, Höör 17 January 1893. The archive of Jacob Albert Sjöblom, Lund University Library.

535 Letter to Sjöblom from Carl Wendt, 10 October 1892. The archive of Jacob Albert Sjöblom, Lund University Library.

536 Letter to Sjöblom from Ingvar Olin, Bjärnum 18 March 1893. The archive of Jacob Albert Sjöblom, Lund University Library.

537 Letter to Sjöblom from August W. Embring, Vallkärra, 7 September 1889. The archive of Jacob Albert Sjöblom, Lund University Library.

Linguistic barriers

A noteworthy difference between the bookshop and the two libraries was the availability of books in foreign languages. Since the introduction of elementary schooling in 1842, basic education was compulsory for all children, but only a minority was ever given the opportunity to study foreign languages. In private schools, German and French were introduced during the early nineteenth century, and by the end of the century, English was gaining ground at the expense of Latin. As no foreign languages were taught in elementary schools, where 90 per cent of the Swedish population was educated, the average person only knew Swedish.⁵³⁸

It is symptomatic that all books in the parish library and the commercial lending library were in Swedish, save a few volumes in Danish and German in the lending library. This seems to have been the case in general: foreign-language literature was a rare sight in libraries, in particular in public libraries, such as the parish libraries. The Scandinavian countries were highly dependent on translation, as Franco Moretti has shown in his studies of translation cultures.⁵³⁹ Publisher K. O. Bonnier lamented that the insufficient domestic literary production made the market dependent on "...translations, translations, and yet more translations."⁵⁴⁰ In 1878 August Strindberg wrote a review for the Finnish magazine *Finsk tidskrift* of the literary novelties published in time for Christmas 1877, where he also noted the great dependence on foreign books, translated works not the least:

Denmark's newest author [J. P.] Jacobsen was incorporated into Swedish literature through a most ingenious translation of Fru Marie Grubbe, and it is by incorporation [införlivningar] that we have accessed our foremost authors. People talk about Daudet as though he were a Stockholm native, and they keep a better track of his latest works than those of [Johan] Jolin or [Frans] Hedberg; Ibsen and Björnson are already "ours" through

538 Hans Albin Larsson, *Mot bättre vetande: en svensk skolhistoria* (Kristianstad: SNS Förlag, 2011), 44; Gunnar Richardson, *Svensk utbildningshistoria: skola och samhälle förr och nu* (Odder: Studentlitteratur, 2004), 61–67.

539 Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel 1800–1900* (London: Verso, 1998), 151–158, 174–184.

540 Bonnier, *Bonniers: en bokhandlarefamilj IV*, 9.

*Riksakten*⁵⁴¹; publishers fight over [Paul] Heyse and race to advertise in *Bokhandelstidningen*⁵⁴² regarding *Turgenev*.⁵⁴³

Things were, however, slowly changing. By the end of the century, the Swedish book trade was not as overwhelmingly dependent on translated literature. In a couple of letters, Elkan and Lagerlöf touched upon the role of translated literature during the 1880s. "Having been raised with foreign literature to such a great extent, it is quite surprising to find that there is a such a palpable desire among the people to read about what happens on their own turf. And when I consider the fact that, merely fifteen years ago, Swedish authors were hated by the Swedish nation, I think that we still have accomplished something."⁵⁴⁴ Almost ten years later, Lagerlöf returned to the same point. "It's really we, the nineties' authors, who have taught the Swedes to read and buy Swedish books. The young ones should have seen our time, when the entire literature was foreign."⁵⁴⁵

When it comes to the books offered in Sjöblom's lending library, only around a third of them were Swedish originals, which is fairly representative of fiction published in Sweden at the time.⁵⁴⁶ The Swedish book market was, as mentioned, dependent on translations. Of the books in Sjöblom's lending library, most were translated from French, closely followed by English and German.⁵⁴⁷ The bookshops were not quite as dependent on translations as the libraries. The former owner of Gumpert's bookshop, the publisher C. W. K. Gleerup, was the first to sell books in foreign languages to the Swedish audience on a large scale: he started in the 1830s.⁵⁴⁸ Sales of foreign works constituted a vital part of Gumpert's business ever since. According to the bookshop's annual reports, foreign book sales accounted for approximately 20 per cent of the turnover, growing from 19 per cent in 1873 to 24 per cent in 1885.

541 The 1815 Act of Union regulating the constitutional personal union between Sweden and Norway.

542 *Svensk bokhandelstidning* was the Swedish publishers' association's trade magazine.

543 Strindberg and Sandberg, *August Strindbergs samlade verk 4: Ungdomsjournalistik*, 342.

544 Letter from Lagerlöf to Elkan 2 September 1900. Toijer-Nilsson, *Du lär mig att bli fri*, 153.

545 Letter from Lagerlöf to Elkan February 1909. *Ibid.* 323.

546 Torgerson, *Översättningar*, 32–39.

547 Hansen, "Bokläsning i Lund omkring 1880," 53–54.

548 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 105–06.

Table 7.1: Book sales from Gumpert's bookshop 1879–90 by language, recorded in the 10 per cent sample of customers
(Each purchase may consist of more than one copy)

Language	Purchases	Per centage
Swedish	13,662	75.7 %
German	2,153	11.9 %
English	648	3.6 %
French	485	2.7 %
Danish/Norwegian	473	2.6 %
Other languages	66	0.4 %
Unidentified	559	3.1 %
Total	18,046	100.0 %

These figures fit in nicely with the figures from Gumpert's sales records. Approximately every fourth book sold in the bookshop during the 1880s was in a foreign language. German was the most common foreign language, followed by English, French, and Danish/Norwegian.

The balance between the different languages had prevailed at least since the 1870s and the era of pan-Scandinavism. An editorial letter to *Svensk Bokhandeltidning* in 1873 complained that the dissemination of Danish and Norwegian literature was smaller than that of "German, French, English, and even American books!"⁵⁴⁹ In the wake of the pan-Scandinavian movement, the issue of inter-Scandinavian translations was a particularly sensitive matter.⁵⁵⁰ The pan-Scandinavian movement flourished during the mid-1800s and supported cooperation between the Scandinavian countries on both a political and a cultural level. Despite efforts by the pan-Scandinavian movement to bridge the linguistic divides between the Scandinavian languages, notably through

549 Ibid. 303.

550 Kari Haarder Ekman, "Mitt hems gränser vidgades" *En studie i den kulturella skandinavismen under 1800-talet* (Göteborg and Stockholm: Makadam förlag, 2010), 122–23, 222–24, 234–35.

discouraging inter-Scandinavian translations and establishing Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish as separate *dialects* rather than *languages*, in general, most Danish and Norwegian books still appeared on the Swedish book market in translation. This was especially the case when it came to literature attracting a wider readership.⁵⁵¹ Within the publishing industry, there was fierce debate between those who were of the opinion that translations between the Scandinavian languages would further the dissemination of the books and those who believed that translations would undermine the understanding of the neighbouring languages. Bonnier, arguably the foremost Swedish publisher of the time, and furthermore also a supporter of the pan-Scandinavian movement, was of the opinion that translations between the Scandinavian countries would further rather than impede the dissemination of books.⁵⁵²

The decision to translate, or not to translate, was closely tied to the intended audience. If a foreign book was to attract readers from the lower-class segments of society, it had to be translated. This condition seems to have prevailed even in an inter-Scandinavian setting. A couple of examples from the correspondence between two of the greatest Scandinavian publishers of the time, Albert Bonnier and Fredrik Hegel, provide particularly apt illustrations. Bonnier was interested in publishing a second Swedish edition of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's *Fortællinger* (1872), and on 9 September 1884, Bonnier wrote a letter to Hegel, asking for permission. The intention was to publish a cheap and large edition of 3,000 or 4,000 copies in order to "reach even the deeper layers of society."⁵⁵³ By taking a more liberal stance on inter-Scandinavian translations, Bjørnson probably managed to attain a greater readership in Sweden than Ibsen.

A few weeks earlier Bonnier had written to Hegel about another book by Bjørnson, his latest, *Det flager i Byen og på Havnen* (1884), a voluminous psychological novel inspired by Zola and Darwinism. Bonnier had just finished reading it and had decided not to publish a Swedish translation. In a letter to Hegel, Bonnier argued "it is a book chiefly for the educated classes,

551 Fulsås and Rem, *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World Drama*, 73; Torgerson, *Översättningar*, 60.

552 Johan Svedjedal, *Frihetens rena sak: Carl Jonas Love Almqvists författarliv 1840–1866* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 2009), 142; Söderholm, "Adam Helms och skandinavismen," 49–50.

553 Letter from Albert Bonnier to Fredrik Hegel 9 September 1884. Gyldendalsarkivet, Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

who prefer buying the original version in Danish.”⁵⁵⁴ What he is implying is that in order to reach the common man, Dano-Norwegian books had to be translated, whereas there was hardly any point in translating a book that primarily appealed to the educated classes, as they preferred reading it in the original language. In other words, it is evident that an original version and a translated version would largely appeal to different customer groups. To some extent, the same applied to books in French, German, and English. Sven Rinman also singles this point out: “The selection of books that actually were translated indicates that the translations were targeting a different audience than the originals.”⁵⁵⁵

According to a 1885 newspaper article published in *Vestmanlands Läns Tidning*, it was a well-established fact that the upper classes read literature by foreign authors in the original language with great appetite.⁵⁵⁶ Some bookshops, for example Fritze’s bookshop in Stockholm, one of Sweden’s most prominent bookshops at the time, expressly targeted “an audience that did not prefer translations.”⁵⁵⁷ It is symptomatic that the foreign literature in Sjöblom’s lending library, consisting of a few Danish and German books, was borrowed only by members of the well-educated segments of the library’s customers: they were all university students or graduates, except for one woman, registered as *mademoiselle*.⁵⁵⁸ It further indicates that large parts of the Swedish population were unable, or unwilling, to read foreign books unless they were translated. Furthermore, foreign books in original language rarely made it to the libraries, which meant that they could only reach a more limited readership. This seems to have been the case even for books written in Danish and Norwegian.

When it comes to the Danish and Norwegian Modern Breakthrough books, the original language versions generally sold better than the Swedish translations, as we have already noted. But if we compare the customers buying original language books with those buying Swedish translations, there are no

554 Letter from Albert Bonnier to Fredrik Hegel 25 August 1884. Gyldendalsarkivet, Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

555 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 309

556 Åberg, “Det moderna genombrottet,” 54.

557 Silfverstolpe, *Fritzes 1837–1937*, 29.

558 Dale notes a similar pattern. The level of education, rather than income, was decisive for the reading. Johs. A. Dale, *Litteratur og lesing omkring 1890* (Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1974), 163.

obvious differences in terms of social standing or education. The customers buying the original Danish and Norwegian versions were wholesale dealers, independent women, bookkeepers, and solicitors. The customers buying Swedish translations of Modern Breakthrough literature were largely the same. It is rather safe to assume that both groups of customers were quite capable of reading the Danish and Norwegian originals. Some customers, among them bookkeeper and author Albert Cederblad (1846–1904), district court judge G. E. Giers (b. 1848), and bookkeeper Erik Mauritz Koch (b. 1848) alternated between purchasing translated and original versions of Danish and Norwegian Modern Breakthrough books. Perhaps, some customers preferred the translated version if one was available, but would otherwise settle for the original.

The fact that many Danish and Norwegian Modern Breakthrough books were not translated into Swedish ultimately means that the writings of several of the greatest contemporary Scandinavian authors were more or less out of the reach of the vast majority of the Swedish population. Most books by Ibsen, for example, were not translated into Swedish until 20–40 years after the original editions came on the market.⁵⁵⁹ The same pattern recurs for many other Danish and Norwegian Modern Breakthrough works. Consequently, merely a narrow, elite segment of the Swedish population could fully embrace the contemporary Danish and Norwegian literature. Only through translation could these books reach a more popular readership, chiefly via commercial lending libraries and workers' libraries.

Instalments: To bind, or not to bind

A considerable proportion of the books sold in Gumpert's bookshop were published and sold in separate instalments. The individual instalment was often rather inexpensive, and could sometimes be bought for as little as 15 öre a piece. Some books were published in just a handful of instalments, spanning a limited period, while others were published in hundreds of instalments, over

559 One striking exception is the unauthorised translation of Ibsen's *Et dukkehjem* (*A Doll's House*) into Swedish by Rafaël Hertzberg, which was published as a serial in the Finland-Swedish newspaper *Helsingfors Dagblad* in Helsinki 27 February to 18 March 1880.

much longer time. One such example is a collection of Emilie Flygare-Carlén's novels, which was published between 1882 and 1890 in altogether over 260 instalments. Priced at 25 öre each, individual instalments were cheap, but in the end, the final cost would be substantial. In many cases customers purchased only the first few instalments, and refrained from buying the later ones. Returning the initial instalments of any publication was very common.

The publishers' intention was that once all instalments had been issued, they should be properly bound. During the latter part of the century, it became increasingly common for the publisher to produce decorated cloth bindings, which were individually designed for a specific title.⁵⁶⁰ The publishers' bindings were often elaborate, and their appearances became more and more advanced and refined towards the end of the century. The role of the book was transforming, and it was becoming much more than just an anonymous object waiting on a shelf to be read. The book was turning into a vital part of the decoration and imagery of the bourgeois home. Perhaps more than any other kind of object, it signified culture and intellectualism, and should be put on display.⁵⁶¹ This was not least the case when it came to the fine cloth bindings. The binding could be bought separately, but it was also possible to buy ready-bound copies of a book. However, not only were the bindings getting more and more elaborate: the decorated wrappers of the individual instalment were also becoming increasingly sophisticated. The time of the anonymous, simple wrapper was coming to a close. The amount of care put into the design of the first instalment of Topelius's *Dramatiska dikter 1* (1882), for example, indicates that the instalment was turning into more of a finished product and that packaging was becoming increasingly important. Publisher Albert Bonnier employed one of the greatest illustrators of the time, Carl Larsson (1853–1919), to draw the cover illustration.

⁵⁶⁰ Lundblad, *Bound to be Modern*, 155–171.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.* 219–33.

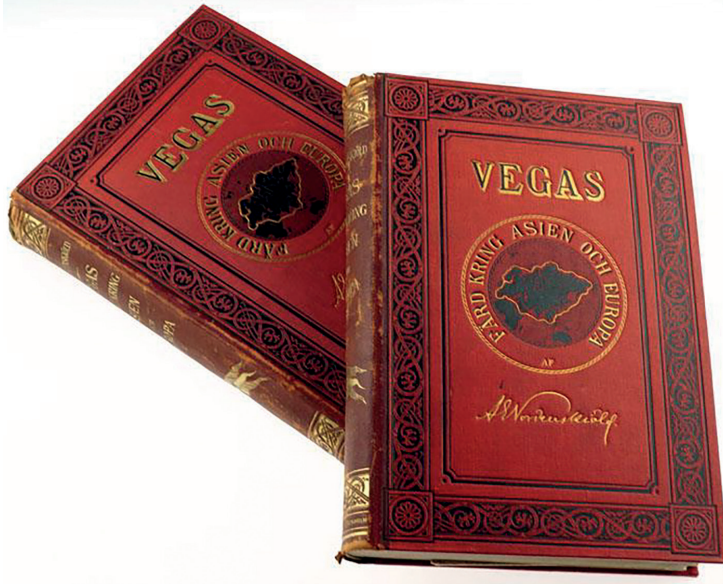


Figure 7.5: Instalment 1 of Zacharias Topelius' *Dramatiska dikter 1* (1881), priced 1 krona, in the publisher's original decorated wrappers. Illustration by Carl Larsson.

Vegas färd kring Asien och Europa 1–2 (1880–81; *The Voyage of the Vega Round Asia and Europe*), Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld's account of his journey through the Northeast Passage, was published in 12 instalments, priced at 1.50 kronor each. The first instalment was published during autumn 1880, and the last instalment was published one year later, in September 1881. The publisher's binding was available from the bookshop just in time for Christmas 1881. Of the customers buying all 12 instalments registered in the 10 per cent sample from Gumpert's bookshop, more than half bought the two accompanying decorated cloth bindings, priced at 2 kronor each. Some customers may have acquired the cloth bindings from other retailers, while others preferred keeping the books as they were, in instalments, or had them bound in bespoke bindings.⁵⁶² There was also a financial aspect to this decision: a bound copy of *Vegas färd*

562 Ibid. 37n.

would cost over 30 per cent more than an unbound copy. As Kristina Lundblad has shown, a copy bound in publisher's cloth binding in the 1870s and 1880s was often around 50 per cent more expensive than the unbound copy.⁵⁶³



*Figure 7.6: A. E. Nordenskiöld's *Vegas färd kring Asien och Europa* 1–2 (1880–81) bound in publisher's cloth bindings, priced at 2 kronor each*

Having books bound at the bookshop cost a little extra, which brought the total cost of Nordenskiöld's travelogue to 24.50 kronor. To compare, a ready bound copy of the same book from the bookshop would have cost slightly less, 24 kronor, but hardly any customers seem to have preferred this option. The same pattern recurs for most books: the ready bound books rarely sold very well. This is yet another example that shows the great importance of *timing*. Rather than waiting for a book to be completed, most of the customers in Gumpert's bookshop preferred receiving the instalments one at a time as they were being published. In that way, they were able to read the books much sooner. Quite often, the first instalments were published over a year before the ready bound book became available through the bookshop.

Sometimes, customers returned to the bookshop after a few months to

⁵⁶³ Ibid. 149.

have books properly bound, presumably after having deemed them worthy of the extra cost of binding. On 8 July 1890, for example, accountant E. Ahlsell bought the eleventh and final instalment of Claës Lundin's *Nya Stockholm* (1890) for 2 kronor. Two months later, 12 September 1890, Ahlsell returned to the bookshop and bought the accompanying publisher's binding and finally had the instalments bound, for a total cost of 3.25 kronor. Another example is unmarried teacher Gunilda Wigert (b. 1860), who visited Gumpert's bookshop in May 1890, buying a number of books, including J. P. Jacobsen's *Fru Marie Grubbe* (maybe the Swedish translation, published in 1877) and Herman Bang's *Under Aaget: noveller* (1890). A few weeks later, 16 June 1890, Wigert returned the books to the bookshop to have them bound. Similarly, district judge Carl Wilhelm Drakenberg (1829–95) bought the last instalments of Zacharias Topelius's *Vinterqvällar* (1882) in March 1882. Three months later, he visited the bookshop again and purchased the publisher's binding for the book for 1.60 kronor. Sometimes, it was the other way around. P. W. Jensen, an employee at Wettergren & Co in Gothenburg, visited the bookshop on 5 April 1884 and bought a ready bound copy of Henry Morton Stanley's *Gjennem det mørke fastland eller Nilens kilder 1–2* (1882), a Norwegian translation of *The Dark Continent* (1878), for 14.50 kronor. Less than two months later, Jensen exchanged the bound copy for a paperback version, thereby saving 4 kronor.

The books published by Gyldendal were all issued in a paperback version and a hardback version, the latter enclosed in the publisher's elaborate and easily recognisable cloth binding with gilt edges. The appearances of the Danish books were even admired abroad. In a letter to Frederik Hegel, sent from Germany, Ibsen wrote that "among literary people the material quality of Danish books is generally admired down here, and it is regularly said that you far too rarely can see anything similar in Germany."⁵⁶⁴ According to Johannes Dale, "books by Bjørnson and Ibsen in the publisher's binding with gilt edges were something many members of the bourgeoisie *had* to possess."⁵⁶⁵ When we check the sales' catalogues for books by Ibsen, for example, exactly half of the copies registered in the 10 per cent sample were paperback versions, with prices ranging from 2.25 to 3 kronor, and the other half ready bound

564 Ibsen, letter to Fredrik Hegel, 31 December 1875. See Fulsås and Rem, *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World Drama*, 109–10.

565 Dale, *Litteratur og lesing omkring 1890*, 165.

copies, with a price range of 3.50 to 4.35 kronor. Perhaps, the group of customers in Gumpert's bookshop buying the paperback version of these specific authors' books preferred the cheaper option. Still, the customers buying the paperback or the bound version seem to more or less have belonged to the same social groups. For example, cashier Anders Ahlberg bought a paperback version of Ibsen's *Vildanden* (1884) for 3 kronor, while another cashier, C. E. Andersson, bought a bound version of the same book for 4.35 kronor. Carl Wilhelm Drakenberg settled for a 2.75-kronor paperback version of Ibsen's *En folkefiende* (1882) whereas the unmarried and most likely less affluent Paulina Sofia Hedendahl (b. 1856) bought the ready bound version for 4 kronor. When it comes to books by certain authors, the proportion of ready bound copies sold at the bookshop is even higher, not least when it comes to poetry. Out of the 35 copies of books by Carl David af Wirsén registered in the 10 per cent sample, only four were not of the ready bound versions, despite prices being as high as 13.75 kronor.

Changing tastes: The decline of the parish library and the fall of the commercial lending library

Up until the early nineteenth century, the literary marketplace was completely dominated by religious literature. Literary sociologist Jostein Fet, who has studied what the rural population read in Norway from 1600 to 1850, came to the conclusion that their reading materials consisted almost exclusively of religious literature well into the nineteenth century.⁵⁶⁶ The same pattern probably recurred throughout Scandinavia. Even among the clientele that could afford buying books, religious works, such as devotional manuals, remained bestsellers for a long time.⁵⁶⁷

In the course of the nineteenth century, a change occurred. The Scandinavian book market was flooded by new genres, printed in ever-larger print runs, which made their way to both the bookshops and the libraries. This de-

⁵⁶⁶ Fet, *Lesande bønder*, 46.

⁵⁶⁷ Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 251.

velopment occurred earlier on the well-developed continental book markets, while in Scandinavia, the industrialisation of the book trade took place chiefly during the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵⁶⁸ Alongside these commercial developments, reading habits also underwent transformations. Many scholars have argued that the act of reading underwent radical change by the turn of the eighteenth century, and Rudolf Engelsing famously described these changes as a reading revolution. According to Engelsing, the tradition of intensive reading, which encompassed reading the same texts over and over again, gave way to extensive reading. Extensive reading was marked by “skimming and skipping, devouring and discarding,” as Leah Price has described it.⁵⁶⁹ Margareta Björkman has further emphasized the strong connection between extensive reading and novel reading.⁵⁷⁰

Some have opposed Engelsing’s standpoint, for example Reinhard Wittman and Robert Darnton. Wittman points out that there was definitely a strong increase in reading by the end of the eighteenth century in Germany, but that it concerned only a minuscule proportion of the population. “A truly numerical or quantitative democratization of reading did not come about for approximately another 100 years,” Wittman claims.⁵⁷¹ Darnton is more or less of the same mind. He acknowledges the important changes in the book market during the late eighteenth century, but argues that the reading revolution occurred later, during the nineteenth century, and that the expanding literacy rates and cheap mass published reading materials were of even greater importance.⁵⁷² David D. Hall has also highlighted the soaring output of prints around the mid-1800s as decisive for the changing reading habits.⁵⁷³

Even though the question of *when* the reading revolution occurred is still subject to debate, it is clear that when a great variety of books came within the reach of even the common readers, re-reading the same texts over and over

568 Eide, “Reading Societies and Lending Libraries in Nineteenth-Century Norway,” 133.

569 Leah Price, “Reading: The State of the Discipline” in *Book History* vol 7, edited by Ezra Greenspan and Jonathan Rose (2004), 303–320 (317).

570 Björkman, *Läsarnas nöje*, 350–51.

571 Wittman, “Was there a reading revolution at the end of the eighteenth century?,” 289.

572 Darnton, “First Steps Towards a History of Reading,” 152; Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourette*, 166–67.

573 David D. Hall, *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 56–57.

again lost much of its attraction. Thereby, a quantitative increase of print materials led to a qualitative change of reading.⁵⁷⁴ According to Hall, the readers abandoned their old reading habits and instead they “moved ‘hastily’ from one day’s paper to the next, and from one novel to another. No book, not even the Bible, retained the aura that certain texts had once possessed.”⁵⁷⁵

The development of the book market naturally also affected the parish libraries, and not necessarily positively. Parish libraries could no longer operate without competition, not even in the countryside, and library members would not settle for just any kind of literature. By the end of the nineteenth century, most parish libraries had deteriorated. They were used only rarely, if they were used at all.⁵⁷⁶ In this respect, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby was not any different, and the average number of annual loans dropped dramatically from 1,400 in the early 1870s to 1,000 in the mid-1880s, and to just over 600 at the turn of the century. Over the years, a significant proportion of the books in the parish library of Munka-Ljungby had ceased to attract interest, and the members of the library were becoming more and more discerning readers. Between 1899 and 1903, as much as 40 per cent of the books were not borrowed even once. In comparison, during the period 1870–76 only two of the library’s books, a missionary history, and a copy of the stern preacher Henric Schartau’s memoirs, were not borrowed a single time. The books that were least borrowed consisted mostly of educating and edifying literature, for example nonfiction and pious books. In other words, it was primarily the literature that the parish libraries were intended to disseminate that remained “honoured but unborrowed.”⁵⁷⁷ When the library board in Munka-Ljungby granted the librarian 20 kronor in 1898 to buy books from the foremost publisher of religious publications, Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen, it was probably not money well spent.

It is hard to say why the parish libraries declined. Some claimed that the reading of newspapers made the parish libraries superfluous, while others

574 Dolatkah, *Det läsande barnet*, 52.

575 Hall, *Cultures of Print*, 76.

576 Åberg, “Folket läste,” 387; Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 25; Tynell, *Folkbiblioteken i Sverige*, 65–67.

577 Berg, “Svedvi sockenbibliotek,” 124, 132.

blamed the peasants' long working hours.⁵⁷⁸ Greater purchasing power within the rural population or cheaper prints overall are also possible explanations. A vicar even suggested that the peasants' declining interest in the libraries could be explained by a lack of leisure time, which he presumed gave them "little time to read more than their bible, hymnbook, and Luther's sermons."⁵⁷⁹ Perhaps, some had borrowed religious literature in order to practice for the annual catechetical meetings, and when the catechetical meetings stopped by the end of the century, the incentive to borrow these books had also vanished. However, there are other possible explanations.

On the one hand, the change might be explained by political and demographic alterations. The late nineteenth century was characterised by intensive urbanization and emigration, not least from the countryside. As a consequence, the size of the rural population was decreasing, and the parish libraries were losing market shares. Parish libraries had to compete for funding with public and workers' libraries in the cities, and their position in the market for books was sliding.⁵⁸⁰ Most parish libraries were already struggling financially. On the other hand, the decline may to some extent have had a literary explanation. The poor selection of books in most parish libraries, particularly the lack of fiction, may have affected the members' borrowing habits. Once the readers had gotten a taste of a more varied and entertaining kind of literature, possibly through the magazines, it was hard to settle for the books the library had to offer. This explanation fits with the author Carl Larsson i By's statement: "If you ask a librarian in the countryside whether the peasants borrow any books, they respond that it occurs rarely, and when it happens it's mostly for recreational reading."⁵⁸¹

The media landscape, even in a rural setting like Munka-Ljungby, had changed profoundly since the establishment of the library in 1859. Commercial lending libraries had been established in nearby towns, books from the closest bookshop in Ängelholm had become less expensive, two local newspapers had emerged, and book auctions were arranged in Munka-Ljungby once a year. The infrastructure required for a modern book trade and new reading

578 Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 132; Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 12.

579 Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 12.

580 Tynell, *Folkbiblioteken i Sverige*, 65.

581 Carl Larsson i By, "Böndernas avtagande läslust," *Biblioteksbladet 1920*, 127–30 (129).

practices were in place, and reading materials were now easier to come by, and cheaper than ever before. Consequently, the parish libraries became subject to competition and had to adapt, or face being closed down. The library in Munka-Ljungby was among the parish libraries that actually managed to adapt. The library was larger than most parish libraries and new books, eventually even contemporary fiction, were acquired on a fairly regular basis. But even though the library holdings doubled between 1875 and 1900, the number of annual loans continued to drop.⁵⁸²

The example of Munka-Ljungby shows that simply acquiring new books was not sufficient. It had to be the right kind of books. In Munka-Ljungby it was only when out-dated literature had been culled or sold off, and was replaced by contemporary fiction and juvenile literature, by authors such as H. G. Wells, Viktor Rydberg, Georg Ebers, Rudyard Kipling, Georg Nordensvan, Marie Sophie Schwartz, Bjørnson, Jules Verne, and Alfred Hedenstierna, that the number of loans increased. Entertaining literature was more or less the only thing that managed to attract any interest, and little by little the composition of the book collection was adapted accordingly. By the turn of the century fiction loans amounted to two-thirds of all loans. In 1905, the library fee was halved. For a fee equivalent to one seventh of the cost of an annual subscription of the largest local newspaper, *Engelholms tidning*, the members could access over 1,000 books. The new strategy paid off. After a low of around 600 loans annually, the numbers eventually tripled by 1910 and the longstanding trend of decreasing numbers of loans was reversed. Many other libraries experienced a recovery at the same time, possibly fuelled by the *zeitgeist* of social movement and democratisation, which for example saw the establishment of new libraries and reading rooms by the temperance movement, the free churches and the workers' associations. From 1905 and onwards the government instigated financial support to select public libraries, and this became something of a turning point for many parish libraries.⁵⁸³

The modernisation of the book trade and reading practices had far-reaching implications for the lending libraries too. At a time when the demand for fiction as well as the literary supply was on the rise, the lending libraries pros-

582 With the reservation that the loans from 1889–98 cannot be accounted for.

583 "Folkbibliotek" i *Nordisk familjebok*, 733; Jeppsson, *Tankar till salu*, 19–21; Tynell, *Folkbiblioteken i Sverige*, 47, 94–101.

pered, but only as long as new books were still too expensive for the common man. Numerous lending libraries were established in urban areas throughout the country during the mid-1800s. The balance between a growing supply of contemporary fiction, a widespread literary interest, and the relatively high price range for new books provided excellent conditions for the lending libraries. But the same mechanisms that ensured the success of the lending libraries also became their downfall. By the turn of the century, the balance between supply and demand was broken: fiction was becoming so cheap that lending libraries were hardly profitable any more. As we have seen from the example of Sjöblom, the social composition of the lending library clientele underwent substantial change in the course of only little more than a decade, from the early 1880s to the mid-1890s. Segments of readers with limited financial means, such as children and labourers, were becoming the main customer groups. Eventually, the lending library presumably struggled to keep even these readers.

The new reading practices led to an ever-increasing demand for new books, and pioneering publishers knew how to make the most of it. New books, light fiction in particular, were printed in ever larger and more affordable editions, and the Swedish publishers were following the examples of the great publishing houses on the continent.⁵⁸⁴ No one was interested in renting a book once it had become possible to purchase a copy of the same book for only a slightly higher price. J. A. Sjöblom closed his lending library for good in 1904 and decided to focus entirely on selling antiquarian books. Many other lending libraries had already faced the same fate and eventually they would all succumb to the transformations in the book market. They were no longer able to compete with the subsidised public libraries and the cheap large-scale serialized fiction, which flooded the Swedish book market, at prices so low that they had been unheard of up until then. A new novel, which would have been priced at 2, 3, or 4 kronor only a few years earlier, could be bought for 1 krona, and eventually even as little as 50 or 25 öre, after the turn of the century.⁵⁸⁵

584 Lyons, *A History of Reading and Writing*, 142–45.

585 Lundblad, *Bound to be Modern*, 19–21, 47–48, 62–64.

Rural and urban readers

In 1884, Strindberg wrote an essay entitled “on the overestimation of cultural work,” where he presented some observations regarding an author’s difficulties in achieving a popular readership.

*Try travelling ten miles outside the city. You have been a famous author in the capital for ten years. Do you think that even a single farmer knows your name? Not at all! Not even the books you’ve written specifically for him. If he really knows your name, it is only through insulting writings in the newspapers. Oh, we authors, who think that we write for the people!*⁵⁸⁶

Strindberg concluded his statement by pointing out that newspapers could be accessed from 1,785 post offices across the country, whereas books could only be accessed from around 150 bookshops, all of which were located in the cities.⁵⁸⁷ Although Strindberg was prone to exaggeration, his outburst gives an indication of the dividing line between the availability of books in the towns and the countryside.⁵⁸⁸ The book trade was concentrated in the cities, and the vast majority of the population had to travel far, if they did not want to settle for the books offered in the parish libraries or the hymnbooks and chapbooks sold at the markets. In an article from 1907, it was stated that “[t]he bookshop is so far away, that members of the rural population many times do not know of its existence. If a young man by chance makes his way to the bookshop counter, he will be completely dumbfounded by the amount of books.”⁵⁸⁹ The urban population had easier access to literary novelties, and they had a variety of different literary institutions from which to choose: commercial lending libraries, public libraries, workers’ libraries, bookshops, and railway book stalls. The rural population’s access to books was largely concentrated in parish libraries and itinerant book peddlers.

The accounts of reading among the rural population often suggest that

⁵⁸⁶ Strindberg, *Likt och olikt I*, 130.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 130.

⁵⁸⁸ Jeppsson, *Tankar till salu*, 18.

⁵⁸⁹ ”Bekämpandet af smuts- och kolportagelitteratur,” 176.

there was a widespread unwillingness to read.⁵⁹⁰ Reading was associated with schooling and education, and young labourers and peasants whose interest for reading reached beyond the required reading for school could be perceived as stuck-up and haughty, or even crazy.⁵⁹¹ Not even the mandatory school reading was always accepted, and a general scepticism towards homework and education in general was prevalent.⁵⁹² In some places the rejection of reading was associated with the well-defined class roles presented in the “Haustafel,” or “hustavla,” in Luther’s Catechism. According to the Haustafel, each and every member of the society had a given role, and people should be satisfied with their lot and not strive to become something they were not.⁵⁹³ To some extent, the enforcement of the Haustafel may have had a correlation to fears of social unrest, in connection with growing awareness of social inequalities. Many members of the lower strata of society clearly took the message of the Haustafel to their hearts, and considered reading as not being designed for them. “Work is for you, not reading,” a girl in a workers’ home in Borås was told by her mother, when she brought home books from school, according to an interview conducted by Åke Åberg.⁵⁹⁴

Despite the fact that insufficient access to light, time, space, and proximity to libraries impeded the rural population’s access to reading, people living in the countryside irrefutably *did* read, albeit differently than the urban population. As we have seen, the workload of the rural population during the summers had implications for when they had time to read. The records from the parish library in Munka-Ljungby further reveal that a considerable proportion of the households in the village had access to the library, even some of the least affluent. According to Verner Söderberg, who presented the results of an extensive survey conducted among parish libraries in 1899, most managed to attract at least a few devoted readers, who would plough through the better part of the book collection without much effort.⁵⁹⁵ The parish library in Munka-Ljungby also had its fair share of voracious readers, some of whom

590 Dolatkah, *Det läsande barnet*, 49.

591 Furuland, *Ljus över landet*, 15.

592 Åberg, “Folket läste,” 396–97.

593 Johansson, “The history of literacy in Sweden,” 35–36.

594 Åberg, “Folket läste,” 397.

595 Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 43.

read hundreds of books during their membership period, such as neighbours Nilsson and Persson, whom we will study closer below.

How did reading preferences differ among rural and urban readers? Since it is far too large a subject to do justice to here, a few observations will have to suffice. Naturally, it is difficult to compare two such loosely defined groups of readers, who did not even have the same access to books. Since the less affluent segments of the rural population depended heavily on parish libraries, their reading habits were certainly restricted by the choices the library boards made. There was little room for literary preferences on a personal level, and at least in the early years of parish libraries, many members of the library were desperate for reading materials, and some probably read everything they could lay their hands on. In an interview, a Swedish woman from Ljungby in Småland, born in the late nineteenth century, recalls how she would read anything, “as long as it contained words.”⁵⁹⁶ However, over the years the members of the parish libraries became more discriminating, and some patterns in connection with literary preferences are therefore discernable. In the parish of Munka-Ljungby, religious literature was the most borrowed category of books. The revivalist literature that flourished in at least some parish libraries, including the one in Munka-Ljungby, had no place in the bookshops or lending libraries, the go-to places for the urban population, arguably due to a lack of interest. When it comes to fiction, the historical novels, by well-established authors such as Starbäck, Ragnar Pihlstrand, and Zacharias Topelius, were exceedingly popular among the rural readers.

By contrast, in the bookshop, the bestselling fiction literature was written by contemporary, naturalist authors such as Strindberg and Zola. These authors struggled to make their way to the clientele living in the countryside, as evidences the aforementioned Strindberg quotation. As mentioned before, Møller Kristensen argues that the Danish rural population hardly read any modern literature prior to the First World War.⁵⁹⁷ On a similar note, Lars Furuland stated that Swedish agricultural workers lived in “cultural misery” well into the twentieth century.⁵⁹⁸ Undoubtedly, there is some truth to these state-

596 Åberg, “Folket läste,” 367.

597 Møller Kristensen, *Digteren og samfundet II*, 174.

598 *Lantarbetaren och boken: minnesanteckningar*, edited by Lars Furuland (Stockholm: Nordiska museet, 1963), 12.

ments, but the question of *why* is left unanswered. To some extent, it certainly had to do with access, but it was also a social class and education issue. In Sjöblom's lending library, which was frequented by a socially diverse clientele, including peasants and manual labourers, it was solely the educated groups of readers that borrowed books by contemporary radical authors, for example the writers of the Modern Breakthrough.

Usually, it took several years or even decades for literary novelties to reach public libraries, but over the years the parish library in Munka-Ljungby acquired more and more contemporary literature. By the end of the century books by authors such as Alphonse Daudet, Strindberg, and Gustave Flaubert were introduced in Munka-Ljungby, and although they were popular, they were surpassed by well-established, but today more or less forgotten, authors such as Jon Olof Åberg, Ragnar Pihlstrand, Carl Anton Wetterbergh (pen name Onkel Adam), and Georg Ebers when it came to the number of loans. It is emblematic that the only high-end author who made it to the top-ten of most frequently borrowed books at the parish library was the Swedish author Verner von Heidenstam. His book, *Karolinerna* (1897–98; *The Charles Men*), was the eighth most borrowed book from the library. *Karolinerna* is an historical novel which displays a strong nationalistic tendency and deals with subjects that fit nicely together with the rest of the most popular books at the library: the Swedish warrior king Charles XII and the era of the Swedish Empire. The issues that much of the contemporary literature dealt with, for example women's emancipation, socialism, and a critical look at religion, were seemingly lost on the rural population. Author Gustaf af Geijerstam pondered why it was so hard to reach the popular classes: “[w]e who write and talk about the people and the working classes, we who strive for their elevation in both moral and intellectual terms, we do not know their lives, we do not understand their thoughts, their feelings, or desires.”⁵⁹⁹

Thanks to book auctions, peddlers and their likes, the rural population also had irregular access to other books than those offered at the parish library. Thereby, rural readers could get hold of literature of a nature that was normally not made available through parish libraries, for example light fiction. To

599 Gustaf af Geijerstam's *Revy* 1885, quoted from Thorsell, “Den svenska parnassens ‘demokratisering’,” *Sammlaren* (1957), 53–135 (53).

some extent, Karl-Erik Lundevall may well have been correct in assuming that the reading material of the rural population consisted largely of “the colporteurs’ crime novels and historical-romantic love stories.”⁶⁰⁰ Regular bookshops struggled in the countryside, which may suggest that the same books were not marketable everywhere. Many booksellers were forced to have secondary professions to make ends meet. One commissioner to the publisher’s association who resided in Husby, west of Stockholm, gave a testimony of the book sales in the countryside. “A further obstacle lies in the fact that I am living in a sparsely populated rural area in a sheer ‘peasant country,’ which entails that sales of course are very insignificant.”⁶⁰¹ Since bookshops in rural areas struggled, the bookshops in the cities, among them Gumpert’s, had numerous returning customers who lived hundreds of kilometres away.

Peasant neighbours reading:

Johannes Persson & Anders Nilsson in Kroppåkra

The small village of Kroppåkra, in the outskirts of Munka-Ljungby, consisted of a dozen minor households with altogether around 90 inhabitants.⁶⁰² Several of the village’s inhabitants were members of the parish library in Munka-Ljungby. Among them were two neighbours, copyholder (*åbo*) Anders Nilsson (1819–1903) and yeoman (*hemmansägare*) Johannes Persson (1847–1909). Nilsson and Persson were long-standing members of the parish library: both of them had joined the library by 1870, at the latest. Since most borrowers’ numbers changed hands at least a few times, it is often difficult to trace the loans of more than a handful of individuals. Fortunately, neighbours Nilsson and Persson were among those who retained their borrowers’ number throughout their membership period, probably because they had some of the first borrowers’ numbers attributed: one and three. Nilsson and Persson were not only two of the library’s more longstanding members; they were also among the library’s most active members. During a period of fifteen and nineteen years respectively, they borrowed over 300 books each from the library.

When studying loans from Munka-Ljungby, it is important to keep in

600 Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 176.

601 *Festskrift med anledning af Svenska Bokförläggareföreningens femtiårs-jubileum*, 87.

602 Stig Edenfur, “Ortnamn i Munka Ljungby socken,” <http://www.hembygd.se/munka-ljungby-tassjo/files/2012/11/Ortnamn-Munka-Ljungby.pdf>

mind that normally only the *paterfamilias* was listed as a member, and that he may well have borrowed books for the entire household. There is, of course, also the possibility that other members of the household borrowed books themselves, using the same account. Johannes Persson's family consisted of his wife Anna Persson (*née* Eriksson) and their three children: Alma (b. 1872), Frans Victor (b. 1873), and Esther (b. 1875). The household included a number of additional members: the farmhands Gustaf Ludvig Svensson (b. 1854), Janne Svensson (b. 1852), and August Svensson (b. 1849), and the maids, Petronella Persson (b. 1853), Cecilia Petersdotter (b. 1849), Beata Andersson (b. 1850), and Ulrika Decker (b. 1855). From the parish registers, we learn that Johannes Persson received communion in the church one to four times a year, most times accompanied by his wife, and they both attended annual parish catechetical meetings. The vicar also recorded the reading abilities of all members of the household. Most vicars used a rather detailed multi-step-grading system. *God* (good) was the best, followed by *godkänd* (approved), *försvarlig* (acceptable), *hjälpelig* (passable), and *svag* (poor). Those who achieved *hjälpelig* or above passed the test. One could also achieve a combination of two grades. According to the parish registers, the wife Anna was better than her husband at reading. Johannes's skills were recognised as *hjälpeliga*, while Anna is reported to have read *godkänt hjälpeligt*, and a few years later *godkänt försvarligt*. Johannes, by contrast, still received the grade *hjälpeligt*. By comparison, the farmhands and maids' reading abilities were recorded as *godkänd*, *försvarligt*, and in one case as *antagligt* (acceptable). Since Persson joined the library as a young man, in early 1870 at the latest, before he married his wife in August 1871, it is highly likely that he read the books himself, at least initially.⁶⁰³

Anders Nilsson's household was slightly larger than Persson's household, and he also owned more land. Nilsson owned a third of a *mantal* as compared to Persson's twelfth of a *mantal*.⁶⁰⁴ The household consisted of Nilsson and his wife Kjersti Jönsdotter (died in 1880), and their children Janne (b. 1850), Mathilda (b. 1852), Justina (b. 1855), Maria Lovisa (b. 1858), Gerda (b. 1860), Carl Justus (b. 1864), Ida (b. 1867), and Victor (b. 1870). Most of the children left home in their teens, either to get married or to work elsewhere as farm-

603 Landsarkivet i Lund, Munka-Ljungby C I 5-6: 1862-1894.

604 *Mantal* has traditionally been used as a unit form describing the wealth and taxation of a farm, based on the productivity of the land rather than its size.

hands or maids. Nilsson employed between two and five farmhands during the 1870s and 1880s, depending on the season and his needs. Between 1880 and 1885 he also hired a maid, possibly to cover the household duties after the passing of his wife. According to the parish registers, Nilsson and his wife received communion from the church once a year, and they both seem to have been rather accomplished readers. Their reading ability were both described as *godkänd*.⁶⁰⁵

When we study what books Nilsson and Persson borrowed, it becomes apparent that they had completely different literary tastes. Given the fact that both (and maybe their families too) seem to have been keen readers and that the number of volumes in the library was rather limited, the amount of overlap between the books they took out, only around 20 per cent, is remarkably small. A considerable proportion of the books borrowed on Johannes Persson's account were religiously oriented. Out of the 301 books borrowed on his account between 1870 and 1888, over 40 per cent consisted of religious literature. By contrast, Nilsson borrowed primarily entertaining books: novels, history books, and travelogues. In addition he borrowed a few books on farming, but only very few religious books.

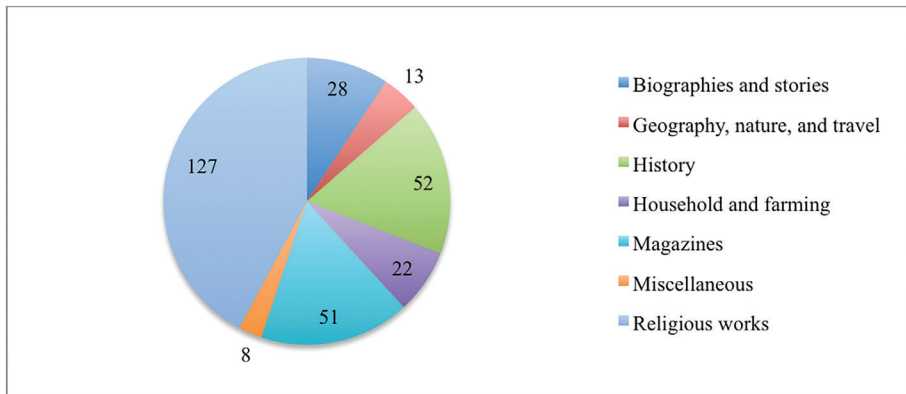


Figure 7.7: Yeoman Johannes Persson's loans c. 1870–88

Persson was a particularly keen borrower of collections of sermons, and he was one of very few members of the parish library who borrowed all 22 annual volumes in the library's possession of Rosenius's religious magazine *Pietisten*.

605 Landsarkivet i Lund, Munka-Ljungby C I 5–6: 1862–1894.

He also borrowed nearly all the library's 45 volumes of the magazine *Läsning för folket*, in many cases more than once. Persson was one of only a handful of library members who ever borrowed books from the library's stock of temperance literature. He also took out a limited amount of fiction. But when we take a closer look, the books of fiction he borrowed seem to have been mainly of the most pious type, many of which could just as well have been categorised as religious books. For example, he borrowed both the German cleric Carl Büchsel's *Minnen af en landtpastors lif* (1863–65; *Erinnerungen aus dem Leben eines Landgeistlichen*) and Elizabeth Rundle Charles' chronicle of the life of Luther, *Familjen Schönberg-Cottas krönika* (1874; *The Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family*) twice, Danish bishop Erik Pontoppidan's devout *Menoza, en asiatisk prins* (1860, first Swedish edition 1771–73; *Menoza, an Asiatic Prince*), as well as Carl August Staudenmeyer's *Blommor från Sinai eller tio Guds bud* (1863; *Blumen vom Sinai*) and books in the series *Christliga lefnadsteckningar* (1866–67; Christian biographies).

In addition to these, he also borrowed a few books by more popular authors, such as C. F. Ridderstad, Victor Hugo, Herman Bjursten, and Emilie Flygare-Carlén. But it is quite emblematic that he did not borrow more than part one of Flygare-Carlén's *En natt vid Bullarsjön* (1847; *One Night at Bullar Lake*), Hugo's *Det mänskliga eländet* (1862; *Les Misérables*), and Ridderstad's *Svarta handen* (1848; *The Black Hand*). During the 1880s, Persson also borrowed a number of books targeting children, for example a book entitled *Berättelser för barn* (*Stories for children*), and the novel *Broder Reginalds gyllene hemlighet: berättelse för ungdom* (1868; *Brother Reginald's Golden Secret: A Tale for the Young*), which were most likely intended for his children, who were now coming of age. When it comes to the history books borrowed on Persson's account, a considerable proportion consisted of ecclesiastical history, such as books on the history of the reformation and C. W. Skarstedt's *Handbok i Sveriges kyrkohistoria* (1866; *Handbook in Sweden's Church History*). He also borrowed quite a few volumes of Starbäck's popular *Berättelser ur svenska historien* 1–23 (1860–81; *Stories from the Swedish History*).

211		212		213		214		215	
Fondrag af Moody		Öfver Egypten		Besa		3te år i Sverige		Svenska falkets seder	
3 delar				fördeln / has bokst				/ has bokst	
Utg.	Ink.	Utg.	Ink.	Utg.	Ink.	Utg.	Ink.	Utg.	Ink.
7/10/77	24/11/77	29/12/76	26/7/76	20/1/77	19/1/77	17/11/76	17/11/76	17/11/76	17/11/76
5/2/77	4/7/78	27/4/76	24/11/76	28/11/76	11/7/76	4/11/76	12/7/78	28/2/78	29/11/76
2/5/78	3/2/78	7/2/76	13/7/76	11/11/76	11/11/76	14/11/77	14/11/77	17/11/77	19/1/77
2/2/78	21/7/78	12/2/77	27/7/77	11/11/77	10/1/77	11/3/77	14/7/77	11/11/77	17/1/77
8/10/78	23/12/78	7/2/77	24/7/77	13/11/77	4/1/77	12/11/77	9/5/77	11/10/78	5/1/78
8/6/77	7/8/78	2/2/78	2/2/78	2/2/77	9/7/77	7/8/77	16/7/78	11/10/78	7/1/78
3/3/78	2/11/78	1/2/78	2/2/78	2/2/77	11/7/77	1/8/77	2/5/77	8/3/78	7/1/78
7/9/77	1/11/78	1/2/78	2/2/78	1/2/77	28/11/77	28/11/77	2/2/77	1/1/79	1/1/79
5/5/78	27/8/80	1/2/78	9/5/78	5/2/77	17/7/77	18/11/77	10/1/77	1/1/79	8/2/79
7/11/80	2/8/81	1/8/78	3/1/78	2/2/77	3/1/77	9/11/77	24/7/77	4/8/77	3/2/79
12/11/80	1/12/80	1/2/78	2/2/78	1/1/77	2/1/77	11/2/77	11/2/77	11/2/77	11/2/77

Figure 7.8: Borrowers' ledger from the parish library in Munka-Ljungby with the loans and returns for five books (211–215). The first number on each row indicates the library borrower number, followed by the date of the loan and the return date of the book.

On Saturday 23 February 1878, the two neighbours both paid a visit to the parish library (see figure 7.8). Their loans on this day reflect their respective literary interests quite well. Nilsson took out three books – an anonymous book entitled “Öfver Egypten” (book number 212), the illustrated work *Sveriges prydnader och märkvärdigheter* (1848; Sweden’s ornaments and curiosities), and A. L. O. E.’s novel *Jättarnes besegrare* (1861; *The Giant-Killer*) – while at the same time returning two books: part two of P. G. Berg’s humoristic *Anekdot-Lexikon* (1847) and another novel by A. L. O. E., *Familjen Roman* (1872; *The Roby Family*). “A. L. O. E.” stood for “A Lady of England,” the pen name of prolific moralistic writer Charlotte Maria Tucker. On the same day, Persson borrowed book number 211, a collection of sermons by the evangelist Dwight Lyman Moody, Martin Luther’s *Passionspredikningar* and the ninth and tenth annual volume of Rosenius’ *Pietisten*, while also returning a few books: the first and second volume of *Pietisten* and the evangelist Brownlow North’s *Du och jag: En målning ur Israëls historia* (1868; *Ourselves, a picture, sketched from the history of the children of Israel*).

Nilsson borrowed particularly many novels and other entertaining books.

He took out almost two-thirds of all books available from the library's section of "Biographies and stories," which contained most of the library's fiction. He borrowed quite a few of these books more than once, in some cases as many as three or four times over the years. Nilsson was an eager reader of new acquisitions, particularly novels. It is characteristic that he was first in line to borrow part one of Strindberg's *Svenska folket i helg och söken* (1881–82), which was acquired in 1882, and he was the third one to take out part two, once it was added to the collection a year later. Nilsson did not, however, shun books with distinct moral contents. He borrowed numerous books by A. L. O. E., and he borrowed the evangelical writer Susan Warner's *Shatemuc höjder* (1858; *Hills of the Shatemuc*) as many as four times. Although religious fiction seems to have been easily digestible for Nilsson, he borrowed only very little from the section for religious books. Out of the library's large stock of religious books, Nilsson borrowed only 5 per cent, mainly lighter reads, such as religious calendars and missionary accounts. The more serious theological works did not appeal to him: he did not, for example, borrow a single collection of sermons or any copy of the many books and magazines published by vicar C. O. Rosenius.

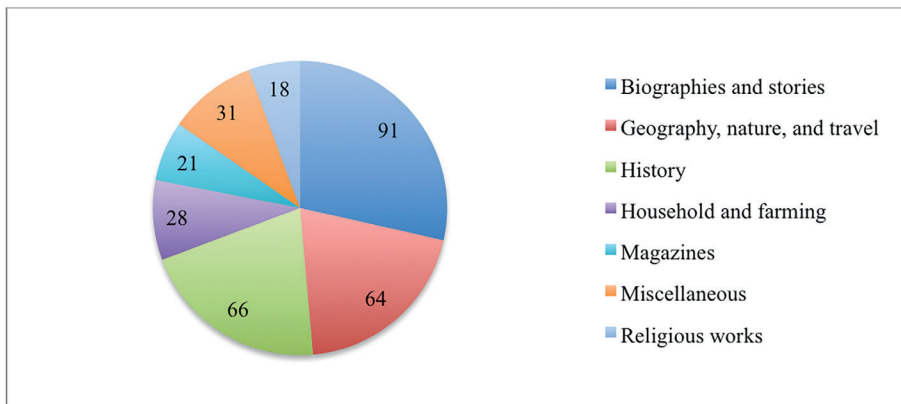


Figure 7.9: Copyholder Anders Nilsson's loans c. 1870–84

Nilsson borrowed travelogues, indicating a strong interest in exotic countries, and apart from books on Sweden and a few other European states, he borrowed numerous accounts of journeys to Central Africa, Mongolia, Tibet, North America, Colombia, the Persian Empire, and India. For example, Nilsson took out Samuel Baker's *Ismailia* (1875), an account of Baker's attempt to

trace the sources of the Nile, Henry Morton Stanley's famous travelogue of his encounter with Livingstone, *Huru jag fann Livingstone: resor, äfventyr och upptäckter i Centralafrika* (1873; *How I found Livingstone: travels, adventures, and discoveries in Central Africa*), and Jean-Baptiste Benoît Eyriès' illustrated account of historic shipwrecks, *Märkvärdiga skeppsbrott samt andra äfventyr till lands och vatten från femtonde seklet till nuvarande tid* (1859; *Histoire des naufrages*).

Naturally, we must keep in mind that the books borrowed on Persson and Nilsson's accounts might well have been intended for some other member of their households. This is especially the case when it comes to Persson, whose reading abilities were described as only *hjelpliga* (passable). But the fact that the consumption patterns displayed throughout the loans on their accounts present a high level of consistency indicates that the two account holders really read many of the books themselves. Persson, for example, joined the library when he lived alone as a bachelor and was already then a keen borrower of sermons and edifying works. Similarly, Nilsson maintained his habit of borrowing fiction and travelogues when he lived alone as a widower. The number of loans may indicate that more than one person borrowed books from the library. But nonetheless, any loans made by household members had to be registered on Persson's and Nilsson's personal accounts, and to some extent, the books other household members took out must thereby, at least indirectly, have been sanctioned by the account holders.

To a certain degree, the two neighbours, or the two neighbouring households, can be said to represent two entirely different ways of consuming literature. They certainly preferred distinct genres, but the differences did not end there. Persson often tended to borrow the same religious book more than once. Through constant renewals, he kept certain books for years, rather than weeks. He borrowed volumes 4–6 of Rosenius' *Pietisten* five times, keeping them for altogether more than two years, and he took out a collection of sermons, *Predikningar öfver de nya texterna*, nine times, keeping them for altogether three years and a half. The most extreme example is his loans of Rosenius' *Betraktelser för hvar dag i året*. Between 1877 and 1887 Persson borrowed the book 16 times, and during this timespan he had it on loan for over seven years altogether. On a couple of occasions he even had two copies on loan at the same time. Presumably, the other copy was intended for another member of the household. The book consisted mainly of excerpts from Rosenius's writings, particularly

many from *Pietisten*. The texts were intended for daily use, predominantly as a part of a household's daily domestic worship (*busedakt*).⁶⁰⁶ On the basis of the loans registered on Persson's account, it seems likely that he, or possibly the entire family, was a member of one of the free churches. If so, they were not the only ones: even in a small village like Kroppåkra, an independent church was established in 1883.⁶⁰⁷ Persson's reading and re-reading of a limited number of mainly religiously oriented texts bears a resemblance to "intensive reading," and his reading patterns may indicate that this older reading practice lingered on, at least within some sections of society.⁶⁰⁸

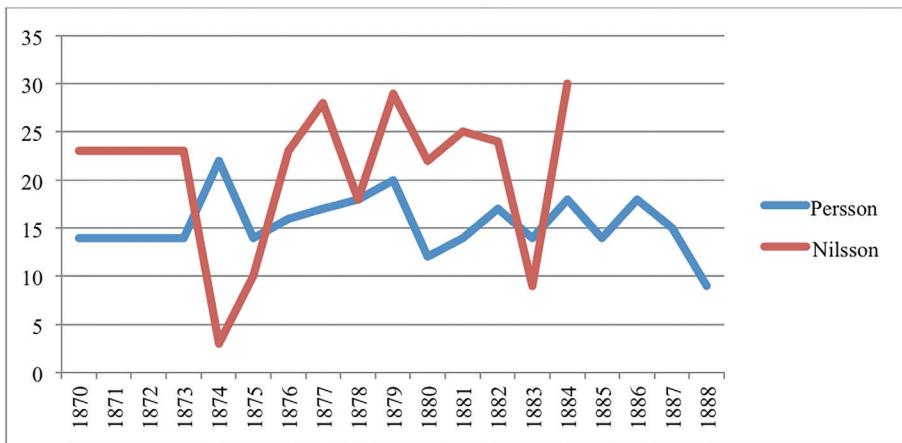


Figure 7.10: Number of loans per year made on Johannes Persson and Anders Nilsson's accounts 1870–88. The figures for 1870–73 constitute the average number of annual loans for this period, since the specific dates were not recorded for the loans made during that period.

If Persson was an "intensive" reader, did that make Nilsson more of an "extensive" reader? Demonstrably, Nilsson was a keen reader of novelties, and his reading patterns seem in many ways to have been the opposite of Persson's. But the borrowers' ledgers show that Nilsson also borrowed several books more than once, though it did not happen nearly as often as in the case of Persson,

606 Carl Olof Rosenius, *Betraktelser för hwar dag i året, samlade ur C. O. Rosenii skrifter* (Stockholm: Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsens Förlag, 1886), preface.

607 Edenfur, "Ortnamn i Munka Ljungby."

608 A more detailed version of this argument was presented at a SHARP conference in 2017: Henning Hansen, "The clergyman, the nobleman, and the peasant," presented at the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing in Victoria, BC (2017).

and years often passed between the loans.

The definition of “intensive” or “extensive” readers notwithstanding, it is safe to say that the library catered much better to Persson’s literary tastes than to Nilsson’s. Persson, who would read and re-read certain, mainly religious, books, could happily sustain his library membership for years. But Nilsson, who favoured new acquisitions, and entertaining books in particular, would eventually have trawled the collection for the books he found interesting; most of his favourites he had presumably already read more than once. During the early 1880s, the parish library collection grew very slowly. Between 1881 and 1884 the library acquired only 15 new books, and among them, there was not a single novel. On 13 December 1884, Nilsson borrowed one last book from the library, a magazine on agriculture. Shortly afterwards, he probably cancelled his membership. Persson, by comparison, retained his membership for as long as we can follow the loans, i.e. until 1888. Since no membership record has been preserved from later periods, it is impossible to say for how long Persson remained a member of the library.

More than anything else, perhaps, the example of Persson and Nilsson’s reading habits serves as a reminder of how careful we should be not to brand a reader simply on the basis of social categorization. The two neighbours were both freeholding peasants in similar financial situations, living in the same small village of Kroppåkra, and they both had access to exactly the same books in the same parish library. Despite the similarities of their social profiles, they borrowed literature of completely different natures. Since Nilsson was almost 30 years Persson’s senior and they were from two different generations, one might have thought that, if anything, Nilsson would have been the one borrowing more religious literature. But, counter-intuitively, it was the other way around. This example helps to problematize categorizations of readers based on parameters such as urban/rural or class/education. “[R]ace, class, and gender are each weak predictors of reading tastes because readers are influenced by so many other factors,” as Jonathan Rose states.⁶⁰⁹ Reading preferences do not limit themselves to such restrictive frames. It is clear that even peasants were developing their own distinct literary tastes, and Persson and Nilsson’s loans serve as a reminder that the rural reading groups were far from literary homogenous entities.

609 Rose, “Altick’s Map,” 22.

Children reading

*It is with a strange feeling that one remembers the books and libraries of ones childhood. With what wonder and joy didn't one let the gaze sweep across the more or less worn spines of the books in the well-stocked bookcase at the parish school? For this particular inquisitive boy it was as if the books embodied the treasures of all the world's knowledge. ... I have always loved books. Already as an eight-year-old I started going to the parish library. In my home there were hardly any books.*⁶¹⁰

This is how author and ethnologist Pehr Johnsson (1873–1963) recalled his first encounters with books.⁶¹¹ He grew up in Emmislöv, outside Kristianstad, and started going to the local parish library during the early 1880s. The first book he borrowed was Harriet Beecher Stowe's beloved classic *Onkel Toms stuga* (1853; *Uncle Tom's Cabin*). Johnsson recalled that he read the book in a small birch grove close to his home, and as soon as he had finished the book he went back to the library for more. After a while he had worked his way through the library and finished all books he found worthwhile reading. The parish of Emmislöv was not very different from Munka-Ljungby, and their libraries were quite similar as well. They were both situated in Scania, both were administered by an elementary school teacher, both displayed religious tendencies, and they seem to have offered books of the same type: almost every single book and magazine Johnsson mentioned reading in Emmislöv could also be found in Munka-Ljungby. Johnsson's recollection offers a rare insight into the significance of the parish library, from the, admittedly retrospective, standpoint of a small child.

Children frequented all three literary institutions studied in this dissertation: the bookshop, the lending library, and the parish library. It is clear that some of the books in the libraries and the bookshop were aimed at children. During the second half of the nineteenth century, children were increasingly being included in their family's activities, and they participated more actively in the leisure time during the evenings.⁶¹² It is also evident that for libraries as

⁶¹⁰ Johnsson, "Min barndoms sockenbibliotek," 166.

⁶¹¹ *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* vol. 20, edited by Erik Grill (Stockholm: svenskt biografiskt lexikon, 1973–75), 346.

⁶¹² Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen*, 23.

well as bookshops children were becoming a customer group to be reckoned with, and the publishers were quick to profit from this new segment of readers. As Martyn Lyons has pointed out, this development was connected to the process Philippe Ariès has described as the “invention of childhood.”⁶¹³

Children from more affluent families might even have had a small book collection of their own. In an article in *Tidskrift för hemmet*, written by the publisher Norstedt & söner and listing suitable books for the youth, it was claimed that “[f]or the intelligent youth, a bookshelf of their own with a small book collection, is among their dearest wishes.”⁶¹⁴ The children who grew up under more modest conditions could instead find increasing amounts of children’s and youth literature in the libraries. From as early on as 1878, children’s literature was given its own section in parish library model catalogues, and parish libraries expressly targeted children.⁶¹⁵ In some libraries children were even perceived as the primary consumer group, and hopes were that their parents would also venture into the library.⁶¹⁶ In other places, the fact that parish libraries were used predominantly by children was perceived as something of a failure, possibly because it indicated that the more qualified groups of readers had abandoned the sinking ship.⁶¹⁷

The parish library in Munka-Ljungby also possessed numerous books that were targeted specifically at children, for example the anonymous *Berättelser för barn* (Stories for Children) and Élise de Pressensé’s *En liten barnaverld* (1874; *Un petit monde d’enfants*). The most borrowed children’s and youth book in the library was missionary Pontus Julius Bernhard Glasell’s *Verldsligt och andeligt: läsebok för barn och ungdom* (1863–69). It was published in three parts and consisted of small anecdotes, poems, and historical and religious stories. The parish library in Munka-Ljungby had seven copies of the book, which were in all borrowed over 300 times, making it one of the most borrowed titles in the library.

Sjöblom’s lending library also offered a fair share of books that expressly targeted children and youth. Numerous books in the library had subtitles

613 Lyons, “New readers in the Nineteenth Century,” 327.

614 *Tidskrift för hemmet tillegnad Nordens qvinnor* 1880:5.

615 Söderberg, *Sveriges sockenbibliotek*, 25, 40.

616 Leffler, *Böcker, bildning, makt*, 99.

617 Åberg, “Folket läste,” 387–88.

such as “for the youth” or “for the people and the mature youth.” In the oldest preserved printed library catalogue, dating back to 1895, there was even a separate section for youth literature, with books by for example Louisa May Alcott, James Fenimore Cooper, Thomas Mayne Reid, and as much as 34 books by Jon Olof Åberg. Åberg was an immensely successful author whose books accounted for as much as 13 per cent of all Swedish fiction published 1866–1900.⁶¹⁸ His books were not considered to possess any literary quality, but they nevertheless enjoyed strong popularity among schoolboys, who would trade them, alongside old coins and stamps.⁶¹⁹

Perhaps, the decision to better meet the demands of a younger clientele may have been linked to a general change of the library’s clientele. Near the end of the century, books were – as already mentioned – becoming much cheaper, and the lending libraries were undoubtedly losing customers. Consequently, they were forced to focus increasingly on low-income groups, among them children, as we have seen on the changing social segmentation of Sjöblom’s clientele between the early 1880s and the late 1890s. Gumpert’s bookshop, which catered to children at the other end of the social ladder, also offered a multitude of children’s books, for example Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tales, books by Louisa May Alcott, the Grimm brothers, Zacharias Topelius’ *Läsning för barn*, books illustrated by Jenny Nyström as well as numerous children’s magazines.

As both Lars Furuland and Mats Dolatkah have pointed out, we must differentiate between the literature that was intended for children and the literature that children actually read.⁶²⁰ In most cases, regrettably, children’s book consumption hardly ever left any trace, since their purchases or loans were usually recorded on their parents’ or employers’ account. Fortunately, a few examples of children and youngsters’ book consumption have been preserved from the three institutions. In Munka-Ljungby there was one boy who had his own account, Nils Peter Nilsson (1865–1940).⁶²¹ He was born in Munka-Ljungby and lived his entire life in the village, working as a farmhand. He became a member of the parish library as a teenager, around 1880 at the

618 Lundblad, *Bound to be Modern*, 61.

619 Ingers, ”Bokauktionerna på landsbygden,” 134–35.

620 Lars Furuland, ”Barnlitteratur kontra barnläsning,” in *Barnboken: Information från Svenska Barnboksinstitutet* (2/3 1983), 67–68 and Dolatkah, *Det läsande barnet*, 21.

621 No known relation to the previously mentioned Anders Nilsson in Kroppåkra.

latest. He borrowed mainly travelogues, particularly of the more adventurous kind, such as Eyriès' *Märkvärdiga skeppsbrott* (1859), Jakob Veneday's *Engelska Ostindien* (1858), E. A. W. von Zimmermann's *Jorden och dess invånare* (1811–23), and a few issues of agricultural magazines.

Sjöblom's lending library was frequented by a considerable number of youngsters, predominantly schoolboys and students, but also some girls. Most children and youth borrowing books from Sjöblom would only make short-term loans, paying 10 or 15 öre for respectively a three-day or a week-long loan of a single volume, probably in an effort to keep costs down. Children and youth generally had very limited financial assets, including those who were working. The full-time employed errand boys at Gumpert's bookshop, for example, earned 3 kronor a week during the 1890s.⁶²² Like most other commercial lending libraries, Sjöblom's library offered all kinds of books, including love and adventure stories. The lending library was therefore not always perceived as a place suitable for children, at least not by their parents or guardians.

One of Sjöblom's customers, Gunnar Serner (1886–1947), better known under his pen-name Frank Heller, offers an account of a child's encounter with the lending library. Serner moved to Lund from the small village of Bosarp when he was 12 years old, to attend Lund Cathedral School. At the time, Sjöblom's lending library was situated opposite the school. In his autobiographical work *På detta tidens smala näs* (1940) Serner describes how utterly uninteresting and modest he found the parish library in Bosarp once he had discovered the treasures of Sjöblom's lending library. His accounts of his interactions with Sjöblom's library as a young boy tell us a little concerning the library's holdings, what schoolboys preferred to read, and about the reputation of the commercial lending libraries in general by the end of the nineteenth century:

Sjöblom's library was a remarkable attraction, overflowing with books ... I had managed to become acquainted with Rider Haggard, Rudyard Kipling, and Conan Doyle before fate intervened. ... [O]n this particular night, I had borrowed a far more voluminous book, Alexandre Dumas's The Three Musketeers. I was absorbed in reading ... when the voice of my aunt suddenly dragged me back to reality. – What are you reading? – It's a book I've borrowed, a historical novel... I wanted to imply that a historical novel was a bit like a history textbook, but my aunt was not easily fooled. ... She started turning

622 Krantz, *Från Sillgatan till Gumperts Hörn*, 31.

*the pages, and as fate had it, the book opened up on the chapter where d'Artagnan has a rendez-vous with Madame Bonacieux. ... I didn't get the book back until its due date. ... Later on, I borrowed The Count of Monte Cristo. The very same scene was repeated. ... It was decided that, henceforth, my aunt would read the books first, to see if they contained anything inappropriate. ... From that day on, I began to read my books at friends' who had their own rooms, or in other places, even with poor lighting, where there was no risk of getting caught.*⁶²³

Apart from the authors mentioned by Serner, the books by Frederick Marryat, Walter Scott, Jules Verne, and James Fenimore Cooper were also borrowed particularly often by youth and schoolboys. Another of Sjöblom's customers, the schoolboy, and later student, Sigfrid Adalbert Skarstedt (1867–1953), preferred historical novels as well as the infamous “Mystery” novels by for example Henrik af Trolle and Ponson du Terrail. During the few weeks before and after New Year 1882/1883 Skarstedt borrowed at least 33 books. Skarstedt later studied law at Lund University, received his PhD in 1895 and was appointed Justice of the Supreme Court in Stockholm. Some children also bought books, particularly on the second-hand market and from kiosks. Sjöblom, for one, was a well-known buyer of used schoolbooks, and according to the preserved acquisitions catalogue from Sjöblom's antiquarian bookshop as well as testimonies from customers, young boys frequently sold him books.⁶²⁴

According to Sonja Svensson, who has studied reading among children during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the contemporary conception was that the books intended for children should be selected very carefully. Fiction was not forbidden, but only books that actually meant something should be read; ideally, the books would give the children strong and lasting impressions. Reading as a pastime, however, should be opposed. Of course, it was difficult to control what children read, and it was probably hard to comply with these ideals.⁶²⁵ In a magazine article from the late nineteenth century the moral decay of the young was discussed. “Even the boys use snuff (*snus*) and smoke the pipe. Recently, a new seduction has come into play: the bad litera-

623 Heller, *På detta tidens smala näs*, 89–92.

624 Acquisitions catalogue 1882–88. The archive of Jacob Albert Sjöblom, Lund University Library, and Heller, *På detta tidens smala näs*, 90.

625 Sonja Svensson, *Läsning för folkets barn: Folkskolans Barntidning och dess förlag 1892–1914* (Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1983), 21–46.

ture that is offered from the cigar stores. Parents complain that the boys read everything they can get a hold of; all the pennies that they have saved are spent on gaudy booklets.⁶²⁶ Clearly, many children managed to get a hold of books that they were not supposed to read.

In the fall of 1886, Zacharias Topelius wrote to Albert Bonnier and told him that schoolboys were the foremost readers of Strindberg's *Tjensteqvinnans son*, which had just been published. Bonnier did not reply. In March 1887, Topelius wrote to Bonnier again: he had received a letter from a concerned mother in Vasa, Finland, who stated that her 15-year-old son and his classmates had pooled their savings and bought Strindberg's collected works, which they were now studying diligently. According to the mother, the reading of Strindberg's books already had demonstrable consequences: "One of the classmates recently told his dad: 'shut up; Father is stupid!' Another classmate has said the most terrible things to his sisters. A third classmate had laughed straight in the face of his teacher in religion and said 'there is no God!'.⁶²⁷ Of course, these statements must be taken with a grain of salt, and should be seen in the light of the fact that Topelius was urging Bonnier to cut his ties with Strindberg. But nonetheless, controversial literature – the books the parents did not want the children to read – had a way of reaching children and youth nonetheless. In a review of Ann Charlotte Leffler's *Ur lifvet II*, published in *Aftonbladet* in 1886, it was stated that the book could be harmful for youth, whereupon Oscar Levertin responded in an article in *Revy 1886* that the book was not at all intended to be read by school children.⁶²⁸

Purchases made by children at Gumpert's bookshop were usually recorded on their parents' accounts, and they were predominantly of a more harmless character. Other children may well have bought books in cash. In most cases, the children of the account holders bought schoolbooks. Visiting the bookshop on their own seems however to have been very tempting for some of children. One of the wholesaler Axel Fürstenberg's sons bought James Fenimore Cooper's *Äfventyr på sjön* (1873: Adventures at sea, an abridged version of several of Cooper's sea novels)⁶²⁹ while at the same time buying French textbooks; the

626 Atlestam, *Fullbokat*, 56.

627 Bonnier, *Bonniers: en bokhandlarefamilj IV*, 99–100.

628 Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 227.

629 Göte Klingberg and Ingvar Bratt, *Barnböcker utgivna i Sverige 1840–89: En kommenterad*

19-year-old student Gustaf Kobb, son of the tradesman August Kobb, bought Pierre Zaccone's intriguing *Cellen N:o 7* together with textbooks for the study of German and stereometry; and one of the city bailiff Alfred Almén's sons, Karl or Knut, 15 and 12 years old respectively, conveniently bought Gustave Aimard's *Äfventyr i Canada* (1879; *La Belle Rivière*) on the same day as he bought a geography textbook. But in general, children demonstrated remarkably good behaviour and rarely bought anything other than textbooks and teaching materials, besides Christmas presents in December. When it comes to a bestselling children's book like Zacharias Topelius's *Läsning för barn* (1865–96), a few of the copies sold in Gumpert's bookshop were bought by children of the account holders. Additional copies were bought by the wives, but in far most cases it seems like the account holder, usually the father, bought the books, which further underlines the challenge in capturing children's book consumption.

Women's reading habits

From the mid-1800s onwards, women in Sweden were allowed to work in new sectors and to study in universities, and the number of independent women was on the rise.⁶³⁰ The period from 1866 to 1920 saw the largest proportion of unmarried women ever recorded in Sweden, circa 40 per cent of all adult women.⁶³¹ These numbers are neither reflected in the Sjöblom or Munka-Ljungby library members' directories, nor in the statistics from Gumpert's bookshop, where female customers were but a small minority. One major problem, making it difficult to study women's reading habits, is that fathers and husbands would often be the only registered borrowers or buyers in the records.

However, numerous accounts and studies suggest that women made up the largest proportion of readers during the nineteenth century, not least when

bibliografi vol. I (Lund: Lund University Press, 1988), 312–13.

630 Jeppsson, *Tankar till salu*, 42–49; Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 229–31; Ulvros, *Fruar och mamseller*, 254, 310.

631 Gunnar Qvist, "Kvinnan i yrkesliv och kamp för likställighet (1865–1920)" in *Konsten att bli föva en god flicka. Kvinnohistoriska uppsatser* (Stockholm: LiberFörlag, 1978), 102.

it comes to fiction.⁶³² Men borrowed and bought the books, but those who ended up reading them were women.⁶³³ This is, however, a highly disputed fact. Women's reading was generally viewed upon with scepticism, not least when it comes to the lower segments of society.⁶³⁴ According to Finland-Swedish author Fredrika Runeberg (1807–79), daughter of a high-ranking official and niece of the archbishop of Finland, women's reading of more than the catechism was regarded as pernicious during her childhood.⁶³⁵ A few preserved subscription lists from lending libraries from the late eighteenth century indicate that they had a female clientele of around 10–20 per cent.⁶³⁶ One hundred years later, we find similar percentages when comes to registered female borrowers in the two libraries. It is worth noting that most of the eighteenth-century women subscribing to lending libraries belonged to the nobility and were part of the very elite of society. Even among the bourgeoisie, as we have seen from Fredrika Runeberg's writing, women were prevented from reading. Eva Helen Ulvros has shown in her study of correspondence from 1790–1870, that it is not until after 1830 that women's reading is mentioned in any letters, which indicates that it might not have been until nearing the mid-1800s that the women she studied seem to have started reading on a more regular basis.⁶³⁷ The archives from Sjöblom's lending library and the parish library indicate, as we shall see, that it took even longer for members of the working classes.

The book market was slowly adapting to the increasing numbers of independent female customers. Women's magazines were established and *kvinnoromanen* (women's novel) was gaining ground.⁶³⁸ Although the number of

632 Lisbeth Larsson, "Den farliga romanen: Läsaren, romanförfattaren och genren" in *Nordisk kvinnolitteraturhistoria 2, Faderns huset: 1800-talet* edited by Elisabeth Møller Jensen (Höganäs: Wiken, 1993), 319–27 (320).

633 Sjösten, *Sockenbiblioteket*, 262; Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (London: Peregrine books, 1963), 45; Ulvros, *Fruar och mamseller*, 307; Erich Schön, "Kvinnors läsning: romanläsare i det sena 1700-talet," in *Böcker och Bibliotek: bokhistoriska texter*, edited by Margareta Björkman (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1998), 329–52 (331).

634 Dolatkah, *Det läsande barnet*, 49.

635 Fredrika Runeberg, *Anteckningar om Runeberg: Min pennas saga* (Helsingfors: Skrifter utgivna av Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 1946), 202–03.

636 Björkman, *Läsarnas nöje*, 412–26.

637 Ulvros, *Fruar och mamseller*, 308.

638 Irene Iversen, "Vidlyftiga följdfrågor. Om kjønn, estetikk og modernitet i det norske moderne gjennombrud," *The modern Breakthrough in Scandinavian literature 1870–1905*, edited by Bertil Nolin and Peter Forsgren (Göteborg: Skrifter utgivna av

women using libraries and frequenting the bookshop was on the rise, these literary institutions were still predominantly a male environment. Even as late as 1887, director Reuterskiöld stated in the 25-year-report for Gothenburg Public Library that half the clientele of the library belonged to the working classes, and that many students and schoolboys frequented the library, but hardly any women, apart from “a few older women ... who could, with the help of an entertaining novel, shorten the many solitary moments.”⁶³⁹



*Figure 7.11: Caricature of the author and feminist Sofie Sager (1825–1902), from K. L. H. Thulstrup’s satirical *En samling skämt* (1859; *Collection of jokes*)*

The idea that women had no business reading persisted into the twentieth century. Accounts from the turn of the century testify that women participated in study circles and associations to a very modest extent, and were more likely to serve coffee rather than to participate actively.⁶⁴⁰ A female reader from Åhus stated in an interview conducted in the 1970s that she used to think that it

Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen vid Göteborgs universitet, 1988), 76

639 Atlestam, *Fullbokat*, 49.

640 Åberg, “Folket läste,” 393–94; Sven B. Ek, *14 augusti 1894: en bok om arbetarna i bokbinderi och emballageindustri i Lund* (Lund: CWK Gleerup/LiberLäromedel, 1974), 59–60.

was “better to knit socks and embroider so that something gets done.”⁶⁴¹ This seems to have been a typical opinion, and it was commonly believed that nothing should be allowed to get in the way of women’s primary obligations of managing the household and looking after the children. “Household obligations came first, and to admit to reading was tantamount to confessing neglect of the woman’s family responsibilities,” as Martyn Lyons has pointed out.⁶⁴²

The caricature of the author Sofie Sager, which depicts her lying down on a sofa, immersed in reading while not even being properly dressed, is hardly meant to be flattering. The room is a mess, and by smoking a cigar, she has even ventured into a male domain. Things are not only going downhill, they are about as bad as they can get. Clearly, the artist is projecting the image of a fallen woman, and the message is quite obvious: this is what happens when women’s reading is out of control. As Terry Lovell has pointed out, women’s relation to leisure time was “notoriously problematic.” Lovell puts into question the assumption that women had considerably more leisure time than men, and she further argues that not even among segments higher up on the social ladder, such as the middle classes, did women have more leisure time than men.⁶⁴³

A closer look at the preserved borrowers’ receipts from Sjöblom’s commercial lending library from the early 1880s shows that its female clientele stood at around 18 per cent. The customer catalogues from the 1890s reveal that the proportion female customers had, by then, grown to around a fourth of the customers. This finding can be compared to the proportion female customers at the Public Library in Lund: in 1885, the number of female customers amounted to 32 per cent.⁶⁴⁴ Unmarried women and girls constituted the single largest female customer group at Sjöblom’s library. Most female customers were recorded in Sjöblom’s catalogue only as *fröken*, i.e. an unmarried woman. Titles such as *fröken*, *fru*, and *enkefru* were, at the time, predominantly used for members of the middle classes.⁶⁴⁵ There were also female teachers, nurses,

641 Åberg, “Folket läste,” 397.

642 Lyons, “New readers in the Nineteenth Century,” 321.

643 Terry Lovell, “Kapitalismen och romanen” in *Litteratursociologi: Texter om litteratur och samhälle*, edited by Johan Svedjedal (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2012), 245–73 (263–64).

644 Leffler, *Böcker, bildning, makt*, 181

645 Sten Carlsson, *Pigor, fröknar, jungfrur och mamseller. Ogifta kvinnor i det svenska ståndssamhället* (Uppsala: Studia historica Upsaliensia, 1977), 16; Leffler, *Böcker, bildning, makt*, 144.

maids, and butchers' assistants borrowing books from Sjöblom's library.

When it comes to the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, a handful of women, close to 10 per cent of the members, had their own accounts. Most of them were widows, who seem to have taken over their husbands' accounts. Married women and girls presumably used their husband's or father's accounts. As Marion Leffler points out, some parish libraries stipulated that the *paterfamilias* should take out all loans, and she argues that borrowing books from the library may have been regarded chiefly as a man's business.⁶⁴⁶ However, there were a number of female members at the parish library in Munka-Ljungby who became members before they got married, and remained independent members even after their wedding, for example Karolina Hansson (b. 1860). In addition, there were a number of working maids who had their own accounts and evidently did not use their employer's account. In some cases, the wife was the registered account holder.

In Gumpert's bookshop too, the number of women who had their own accounts was small but we can see a steady growth in the course of the late nineteenth century. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the proportion of women among the bookshop's customers tripled, from around 4 per cent in 1875 to 11 per cent in 1900. In real terms, the increase was well over 200 per cent. The most common titles among the female customers of Gumpert's in 1875 were *enkefru* (widow), *demoiselle* (unmarried lady), and *fru* (Mrs). By the end of the century, a majority of the female customers were called *fröken* (unmarried woman).

646 Leffler, *Böcker, bildning, makt*, 128, 147.

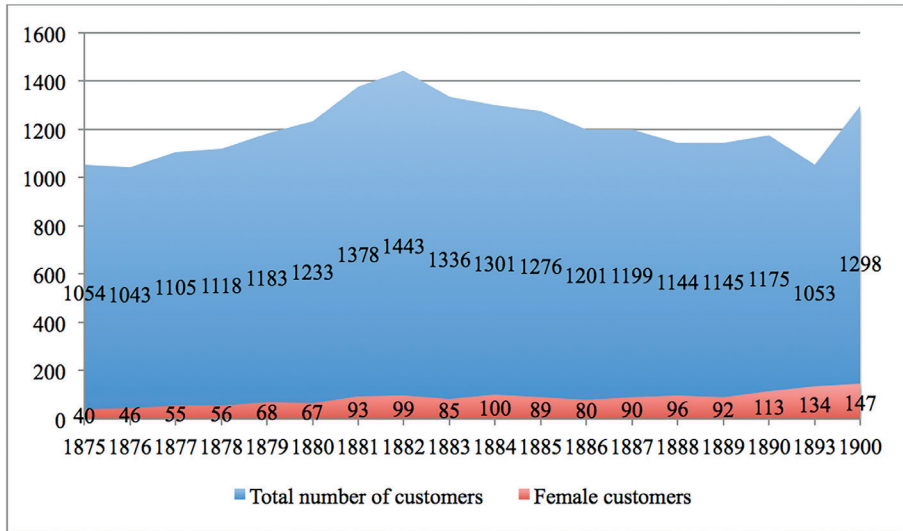


Figure 7.12: Total number of customers, and number of women with their own accounts in Gumpert's bookshop 1875–1900

Although women in late nineteenth-century Sweden had more or less the same literacy rates as men, and unquestionably *did* read, there is just not sufficient hard evidence suggesting that women read much more than men. As Jonathan Rose has pointed out, numerous studies have in fact suggested that women's reading was not that different from men's reading.⁶⁴⁷ When we study the average number of loans per person from Sjöblom's commercial lending library during the early 1880s, the loan statistics show that men borrowed on average 8 books, as compared to 6 books for women. Only a handful of female customers borrowed more than ten books from the lending library. There are numerous examples of a maid, a *fröken*, or a wife borrowing one or two volumes, only to disappear entirely from the records after the return of these individual loans (see figure 7.13). Some women borrowed substantial quantities of books, but the top five borrowers at Sjöblom's library were all men. Typically, the women who borrowed the highest number of books were a little older, or were married.

We need to take into account that many men may have borrowed and bought books for their female family members, friends, and perhaps even employees. It is further symptomatic that almost all the female members of the

⁶⁴⁷ Rose, "Altick's Map," 22.

parish library in Munka-Ljungby were widows. As long as their husbands lived, they were probably the account holders. In Sjöblom's lending library there are even a few examples of the wife borrowing the book and the husband returning it, or the other way around. On 17 June 1882, physician Per Emil Alexander Södervall (1843–1925) borrowed three books. Three days later, his wife, Fredrika Södervall (1845–1897) returned them.

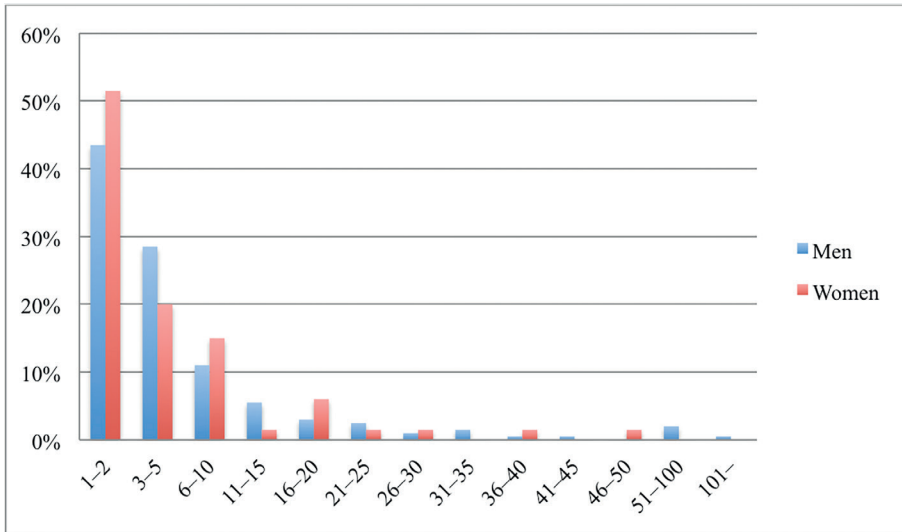


Figure 7.13: Number of loans per person by gender in Sjöblom's lending library c. 1882–83, made by customers with surnames starting on the letters B, O, P, or S

During the nineteenth century it was often stated that excessive reading of novels could be harmful, or even outright dangerous. This was not least the case when comes to women's reading.⁶⁴⁸ To some extent, female readers' longstanding – and criticised – appetite for fiction is supported by the sales and loans from the sales' and borrowers' ledgers. In Gumpert's bookshop, almost every fourth book bought by women consisted of fiction, compared to less than every fifth book bought by men, and a few of the female customers at Sjöblom's lending library even managed to live up to the French author

648 Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader 1837–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 149; Larsson, "Den farliga romanen," 319–27.

Stendhal's description of female readers: "There's hardly a woman in the provinces who doesn't read five or six volumes a month. Many read fifteen or twenty."⁶⁴⁹ In September 1882, Sara Smitt, for example, visited Sjöblom's library ten times, borrowing one or two novels each visit. Similarly, in March 1882, 20-year-old Anna Fredrika Brag visited Sjöblom's library six times, borrowing up to four novels on each occasion. These two unmarried women were among the customers who came most often into the library, and they seem to have particularly enjoyed the novels of Mrs Henry Wood, Emilie Flygare-Carlén, and Walter Scott. But it is also important to note that when it comes to the number of loans, several boys and men borrowed a similar number of books.

In Sjöblom's lending library, Emilie Flygare-Carlén was, by a large margin, the female customers' preferred author, followed by Marie Sophie Schwartz and Zacharias Topelius. Ulvros too notes that Flygare-Carlén was popular among women, according to preserved correspondence from members of the middle classes in southern Sweden from 1790 to 1870.⁶⁵⁰ This also corresponds to Marion Leffler's findings in her study of loans from Lund Public Library in 1885. Here, Flygare-Carlén and Schwartz were the female borrowers' favourite authors, and the female readers, unlike male readers, preferred novels on relationships above all.⁶⁵¹ Interestingly, in Sjöblom's library, Flygare-Carlén was also the labourers' and artisans' favourite (followed by Frederick Marryat and Ponson du Terrail). Perhaps, some of them borrowed Flygare-Carlén's novels for their wives? Marryat's novels, the overall most popular author among male customers in general, by contrast, were scarcely ever borrowed by female customers, and the same goes for the books by Dumas, de Kock, Verne, Thomas Mayne Reid, and Sue. The lack of interest in Marryat's books is also noticeable among students, and they too shared women's passion for Schwartz's books. Schwartz wrote mainly so-called *tendensromaner* "tendency novels," dealing with issues such as women's emancipation and social injustices.⁶⁵² Among the labourers, artisans, and schoolboys, Schwartz' books evoked little or no interest.

649 Quoted from Lyons, *A History of Reading and Writing*, 156.

650 Ulvros, *Fruar och mamseller*, 429.

651 Leffler, *Böcker, bildning, makt*, 186–92.

652 Gunlög Kolbe, "Marie Sophie Schwartz, August Strindberg och det moderna genombrottet," *Personhistorisk tidskrift* (2004:1): 24–35 (25–27).

Some of the female customers of Sjöblom's lending library seem to have favoured novels written by women. Anna Fredrika Brag, for example, borrowed books by a long line of female authors, both Swedish and foreign: Sophie von Knorring, Fredrika Bremer, Flygare-Carlén, Mrs. Henry Wood, E. Werner, Aurora Ljungstedt, Louise Brunius, Marie Sophie Schwartz, Mathilda Lönnberg, and Mathilda Langlet. The only books Brag borrowed written by male authors were *Vid nyårstiden i Nöddebo prestgård* (1868) by Henrik Scharling and *Fiskarflickan* by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson.

A borrower who stands out for her preferences was Kerstin Sjöberg (1845–1911). She only borrowed books by female authors, and most novels she took out had female protagonists. She borrowed books such as Louisa de la Ramée's *Puck* (Swedish edition in 1879), Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Josua Haggards dotter* (1877; *Joshua Haggard's daughter*), Amelia Ann Blandford Edwards' *Barbaras historia* (1876; *Barbara's History*), Wilhelmina Gravallius' *Upptäckten* (1864; *The Discovery*), and Julia Kavanagh's *Grace Lee* (unknown edition). The books by Kavanagh, for example, were primarily intended for female readers. Kavanagh's heroines tend to be both independent and resourceful, as John Sutherland has pointed out, and some of her books, *Grace Lee* included, were bestsellers.⁶⁵³ Unlike the heroines in the novels she read, Sjöberg did not inherit a large sum of money or climb the social ladder. Her father was a labourer, and her children were also destined to manual labour. Eventually they became seamstresses, bookbinders, and glovemakers. In one way, Sjöberg's literary preferences seem to have been slightly unusual. Five of the eight books that we know she took out were never borrowed by anyone else, as far as we can tell from the preserved borrowers' receipts. Also, she did not borrow any books by the authors that were most popular among female readers: Flygare-Carlén, Schwartz, and Topelius.

Since the number of women with their own accounts at the parish library was limited, we know only very little concerning the reading habits of the female reading community in Munka-Ljungby. One of the women who had an account at the library was the widowed Elna Hansdotter (b. 1836). She was a frequent visitor to the library and borrowed around 150 books over the years.

653 "Julia Kavanagh" in John Sutherland, *Companion to Victorian Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989); Eileen Fauset, *The Politics of Writing: Julie Kavanagh, 1824–77* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009) 73.

She seems to have been a particularly devoted reader of poetry, and borrowed the collected poems of an older generation, including P. D. A. Atterbom, Michael Franzén, Erik Gustaf Geijer, Johan Ludvig Runeberg, and Esaias Tegnér. She also seems to have enjoyed historical novels, and borrowed a surprisingly high number of Starbäck's books, and took out all the available books by Victor Hugo. In addition, she borrowed some religious writings and a handful of travelogues. The library had a copy of the 1879 issue of the women's magazine *Tidskrift för hemmet*. Between 1880 and 1888, nine borrowers took it out. At least a third of these borrowers were women: the Ekström widow, the unmarried Hulda Karolina Hansson (b. 1860), and the unmarried working maid Johanna Svensson Hellström (b. 1846). It is not unlikely that some of the remaining six borrowers borrowed the magazine for a female household member.

The female customers at Gumpert's bookshop naturally had access to a much more diverse selection of literature. They bought fiction to a greater extent than the male customers and preferred writers like Tolstoy, Topelius, Kielland, and Ibsen. Quite remarkably, in the 10 per cent sample from Gumpert's bookshop, there is hardly any woman buying August Strindberg's books, whereas among male customers, he was the overall bestselling fiction writer. The only two exceptions in the 10 per cent sample is the unmarried Jenny Cronsioe (b. 1849), who bought part two of *Likt och olikt* (1884) and the unmarried Hilma Sofia Nero (b. 1849), who bought part two of *Svenska öden och äfventyr* (1883). The overall bestselling writers among the women were Alexander Kielland and Viktor Rydberg, closely followed by the philosopher Pontus Wikner. Women also bought more schoolbooks and children's books than men, whereas men bought more non-fiction and magazines.

The well-educated segments of society were the first to embrace issues regarding women's emancipation. Numerous books and magazines addressing the topic were published during the 1880s, and public lectures advocating the issue were organized across the country. One such book, the German socialist politician August Bebel's *Kvinnan i forntiden, nutiden och framtiden* (1885; *Die Frau in der Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft*), was even branded by Strindberg as "the most atheistic, immoral and purely socialist book ever written! More dangerous than [Max] Nordau."⁶⁵⁴ Several of Gumpert's fe-

654 Persson and Brundin, "Bibliotekssträvanden," 178.

male customers bought books on these issues, particularly unmarried women, among them several teachers and writers. The unmarried teacher Gunilda Wigert bought Otto Møller's Danish play *Hun vil ikke gifte sig* (1886; *She Will Not Marry*), and Baroness Klingspor purchased Urban von Feilitzen's *Ibsen och äktenskapsfrågan* (1882; *Ibsen and the Question of Marriage*). Numerous female customers subscribed to the radical magazine *Framåt*, and bought Emil Svensén's *Spörsmål 1: Kvinnofrågan* (1888; *Question 1: The woman question*), and the magazine *Dagny: tidskrift för svenska kvinnorörelsen* (*Dagny: Journal of the Swedish Women's Liberation Movement*). The unmarried woman H. Mattsson in Tossene even bought the scandalous and widely criticised novel *Sensitiva Amorosa* (1887) by Ola Hansson, which was branded "subversive and even hazardous to health" by physician Seved Ribbing.⁶⁵⁵

In addition, in the field of fiction, numerous authors addressed the issue of women's rights and emancipation, several of whom were affiliated with the literary movement of the Modern Breakthrough.⁶⁵⁶ Åke Åberg, however, who studied the consumption of Modern Breakthrough literature at a bookshop in Västerås from 1870 to 1895, found only few examples of women buying this kind of literature.⁶⁵⁷ Perhaps the number of independent women was far greater in Gothenburg than in Västerås. There are numerous examples of women buying this kind of literature from Gumpert's bookshop on their accounts.

Summary

By the end of nineteenth century the literacy rate in Sweden was close to 100 percent, and almost everyone could access books in one way or another. However, when we study the loans from the two libraries and the sales from the bookshop, it is very clear that book consumption was affected and limited by a number of factors. *Money* was arguably the single most important factor, which basically divided the reading public into those who could afford buying books on a regular basis and those who had to borrow their books from the

655 Gedin, *Fältets herrar*, 175.

656 Iversen, "Vidlyftiga följdfrågor," 80.

657 Åberg, "Det moderna genombrottet," 71.

libraries. Another factor was *time*.

For a large proportion of the population, the rural population in particular, reading was something of a luxury, one that they could only enjoy at certain times of the year, when chores were fewer. In effect, it meant that peasants read mostly during the late autumn and in the wintertime. Summers were the busiest time for peasants, and consequently the number of loans from the parish library dropped in those months. Bookshop sales were not as clearly affected by the working season, since the clientele usually had regular working hours. Instead, the bookshop's sales were largely dependent on when new books were published. Most of them were issued in time for Christmas, boosting sales during this time of year. Textbook sales, in the late summer and early autumn, formed yet another peak in sales. The same patterns of seasonality are not as clearly visible at the lending library. They offered literature of a rather homogeneous kind, which had a steadier outlet throughout the year. At the lending library, short loans were cheaper. Consequently, younger and less affluent customers borrowed books for very short periods of time, often a week, or sometimes as little as a day. Returning customers who lived remotely were able to negotiate longer loan periods, but it is clear that Sjöblom's lending library was a place bursting with activity, thanks to the many customers popping in and out of the library to return or borrow books.

The inability of the vast majority of the Swedish population to read foreign languages was yet another limiting factor. At the bookshop, foreign-language books accounted for as much as a quarter of sales, and when it comes to journals and magazines, as much as every second copy sold from Gumpert's bookshop was written in a foreign language. A considerable proportion of books published in Sweden during the late nineteenth century consisted of translations, and most books in popular demand eventually appeared in Swedish translation. However, the books that publishers thought would interest mainly educated readers were not always deemed worth translating. This was the case for large parts of the radical Danish and Norwegian Modern Breakthrough literature, including nearly all of Ibsen's writings.

Since the Norwegian and Danish languages were, and are, similar to Swedish, it may not sound like a big deal. Anyone who wanted to read these books could easily acquire the original language edition in the bookshop, if they could afford them, that is. But the fact that the few foreign-language books

in Sjöblom's lending library were only borrowed by the educated customers, among an otherwise socially diverse clientele, indicates that readers with only basic education had a hard time coping with any foreign language, even Danish and Norwegian. Furthermore, the fact that most libraries, public libraries in particular, were reluctant to acquire any foreign-language books entailed that many of the central works of the Modern Breakthrough were out of reach of those who could not afford buying them from the bookshop.

At the same time as books remained unaffordable for large segments of the population, publishing practices were changing. New books were published in separate instalments, often at a monthly rate. The price for a single instalment could be quite affordable and not nearly as off-putting for customers as putting down the full price of the book in one go. This may have been one of the reasons why most customers preferred buying the separate instalments rather than the finished book, despite the price being more or less the same. Another reason why publishing in instalments was so successful was the issue of *time*. Just as the example of the sales of *The Maiden Tribute* showed in chapter 5, a week mattered a great deal to the bookshop clientele. Customers wanted to read the book as soon as the separate instalments were published rather than wait until the entire book was complete and sold in a bound volume. At the same time, bookbindings were becoming increasingly elaborate, something not many could afford.

Publishers were realising that by lowering the price of books in general, they could reach groups of readers that so far had been excluded from the book market due to their financial situation. With declining prices, more and more people could afford buying books, which radically changed the situation for libraries. As a consequence, many parish libraries and all commercial lending libraries eventually closed, and the remaining parish libraries had to adapt to the new book market conditions. In terms of number of loans, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby fared much better compared to other parish libraries, but the library members' literary preferences were becoming more one-sided, and they preferred fiction above anything else.

Chapter 7 also takes a closer look at certain groups of readers: the parish library clientele, and children and women from all three institutions:

The members of the parish library, predominantly peasants, had grown up in an environment with only very limited access to books. Furthermore, many

had to go against a long-standing tradition of resistance towards learning and reading. The parish libraries gave many peasants a first taste of literature other than schoolbooks and hymnbooks. In the early years of the parish library, almost all books were more or less constantly being borrowed, but in the course of a few decades, library members developed more refined literary tastes. Among the clientele of the parish library were several voracious readers. Two of them were neighbours Johannes Persson and Anders Nilsson. Their – or their families’ – library loans provide an outstanding example of just how different the literary tastes of the rural library members could be. The two neighbours, of similar socioeconomic standing, were both eager readers and favoured books of entirely different genres.

Children frequented all three institutions and were becoming an important customer group. The institutions offered books that expressly targeted children, spanning from children’s magazines and colouring books to schoolbooks. Just like the reading of peasants, the reading of children was subject to control, paired with elements of expectations. They were expected to read certain books at certain times, while staying away from other kinds of literature. It is emblematic that both the ethnologist Pehr Jonsson, who borrowed books from the parish library in Emmislöv in the 1880s, and the author Gunnar Serner, who borrowed books from Sjöblom’s lending library in the 1890s, remember that they read the books more or less in secret, away from the prying eyes of their caretakers. Textbook sales were of major importance to Gumpert’s bookshop, and both Sjöblom’s lending library and the parish library in Munka-Ljungby adapted their holdings to a younger clientele. The receipts from Sjöblom’s lending library furthermore show us that many of the young clients were voracious readers, probably spending much of their sparetime reading.

Women constituted a small minority of the clientele in all three institutions, growing steadily during the 1880s and 1890s. Traditionally, women have been described as the most important group of readers of the nineteenth century. But when we take a closer look at book consumption in the three institutions it is clear that women did not borrow or buy as many books per person as men. Of course, we need to take into account that women may well have used their husband’s or father’s accounts, but still, there is little evidence suggesting that women were actually the primary consumers of literature. However, some women read novels to a slightly higher degree than men, and, moreover, their

literary preferences were definitely different from those of men. Worth noting is the group of independent female customers at Gumpert's bookshop who bought modern and radical literature on subjects such as women's emancipation etc.

CLOSING REMARKS

Accessing books

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Swedish population's reading habits underwent fundamental transformations. The society in which only the elites had access to literature changed and eventually vanished altogether. The interdependence between a largely new reading public, on one side, and libraries and bookshops, on the other, led to the development of a dynamic book market which in time allowed all segments of Swedish society to access books in one way or another, as is evident from the clientele of the three institutions studied here: Gumpert's bookshop in Gothenburg, J. A. Sjöblom's commercial lending library in Lund, and the parish library in Munka-Ljungby.

Although access to books was being democratised, reading was, as the study highlights, still dependent on a number of factors, such as financial situation, geographic location, gender, time, education, library policies, censorship, local attitudes toward reading, and – of course – taste. The single most important factor when it came to the possibility to access books was arguably the financial situation. The Swedish reading public at the end of the nineteenth century was a very heterogeneous group, and the different institutions primarily served different segments of the society. One of the most striking findings of this comparative study is the sharp division between those who bought books and those who borrowed them. Even as late as by the end of the century, the reading public was largely divided into those who bought books and those who could only afford borrowing books. The vast majority of the population could hardly afford spending money on reading materials at all, and only the more well-to-do bought books from the bookshop. For a manual worker it was hard enough as it was to make ends meet. Saving up money to buy a new novel would be almost unthinkable. For these bookless readers, the development of

parish libraries, following in the wake of the Elementary School Act of 1842, was of the utmost importance. And even though parish libraries did not offer nearly the same literary selection as the bookshops, they certainly played an important role for many readers. The library in Munka-Ljungby attracted readers from the poorest segments of society, who would probably never have been able to afford buying books, even when book prices started dropping.

For those living in the countryside, books would have been hard to come by, regardless of financial situation. Bookshops, lending libraries, and reading societies were almost exclusively urban phenomena. However, as communications were improving rapidly during the nineteenth century, postal services were becoming cheaper and much more efficient, making it easier to order books from bookshops. Gumpert's bookshop, for example, had numerous customers living hundreds of kilometres from Gothenburg, and the extra cost of shipping rarely exceeded a modest 10–15 per cent of the book price. Sjöblom's lending library, which also offered mail order service, had several borrowers 50 to 100 kilometres away from Lund.

All books published in Sweden were subject to basic censorship, but only very rarely were books actually seized: Strindberg's *Giftas* was an exceptional case. The customers at Gumpert's bookshop could thus choose freely among a vast number of literary novelties and magazines. By contrast, the members of the parish library had to settle for the books admitted by the library board and the librarian. Most public libraries had an underlying religious-moral-political agenda and the books that were made available through these institutions were subject to control. However, as the example of Munka-Ljungby shows, at the level of the individual parish library, the control of books was not always strict. And, as Jonathan Rose has pointed out, readers often avoided the books that others implored them to read.⁶⁵⁸

If economy and geography had a decisive impact on people's access to books, time was another crucial factor, and this study shows how the parish library borrowers could wait for years for books that the bookshop customers could get hold of as soon as they were published. When it came to literary novelties, many of Gumpert's customers apparently wanted to get their hands

658 Rose, "Rereading the English Common Reader," 56. See also Lyons, "New Readers in the Nineteenth Century," 334–35.

on new books as soon as they became available, and a few days back or forth mattered a great deal. Some customers were presumably so eager to access certain new books that they would buy foreign-language originals rather than to await a Swedish translation, even in cases when only a few weeks separated the two editions. Certain books could, for certain customer groups, be must-haves.

Those who could not afford to buy a book from the bookshop had to wait until it became available in the libraries or on the second-hand market. In the two libraries, it would often take years, in some cases even decades, before literary “novelties” were acquired, and consequently, the readers who depended on the libraries had to cope with a substantial time gap. Furthermore, as the borrowers’ ledgers from Munka-Ljungby show, copies of books in popular demand were almost constantly on loan. Eager readers sometimes had to wait for months, if not years, to get a hold of particularly anticipated books even after the library had acquired them.

Furthermore, we have also seen how buying and borrowing books in and of itself could be a time-bound activity in different segments of society. The summer was the busiest time for the rural population, and few books were borrowed from the parish library during these months. For this part of the population, reading would be a recreational activity primarily during winter-time. The urban population’s reading habits were not to the same extent bound to seasonality. From the bookshop sales and the diary of Johan Lundgren, however, we can see that September and December were extremely hectic months, because of the start of school and Christmas. Worth noting is also the extensive opening hours of the two commercial institutions; books from the commercial lending library and the bookshop were almost always at hand.

By the very end of the nineteenth century, reading materials were becoming cheaper and, increasingly, people turned from borrowing books to buying them. What people read would, from now on, to a lesser extent be determined by coincidence or by the size of their wallets. Demanding consumers with refined literary tastes, harbouring a growing cultural awareness, could be found in all sections of society, and there were dedicated readers also among peasants and labourers. At the same time as book consumers were able to benefit from the cheaper book prices, public libraries were facing serious competition, and lending libraries had to turn to lower classes in order to survive. The clientele at Sjöblom’s lending library, for example, changed significantly in little over

a decade's time. In the long run, the cheap books flooding the book market would lead to the downfall of the commercial lending library, while at the same time having far-reaching consequences for the parish library.

Reading preferences

The reading masses of the late nineteenth century elicited debate, not least the reading of women, children, and labourers, which was subject to the highest levels of control. The new book consumers were looked upon with both scepticism and worry, on the one hand, and enthusiasm and curiosity, on the other. Who were they? Did they read the right kinds of things? Too little? Too much? Or, should they not be working?⁶⁵⁹ One who voiced an opinion in the debate was Reuterskiöld, the director of the public library in Gothenburg. While encouraging reading materials that would engage the mind and build character, he worried about the “voracious reading” and the desire for books on crimes and scandals. “Excessive reading puts the soul in a state of intoxication, which is fully comparable to the sensation induced by the intake of liquor,” Reuterskiöld wrote anxiously.⁶⁶⁰ Sven Rinman would, in his 1951 dissertation, claim that the groups of book consumers whose literary consumption was made possible by the economic, political, and cultural developments around the mid-1800s, bought and borrowed all kinds of different books, but “lacked originality and a taste of their own.”⁶⁶¹ Entertaining literature and light fiction were frowned upon.

But, entertaining literature and fiction was precisely what most people generally wanted to read, if they were allowed to choose freely. Sjöblom's commercial lending library was wholeheartedly devoted to fiction, and fiction did also

659 “When readers and reading was discussed by the mid-1800s it was often in terms of problems that needed to be taken care of. People either did not read enough, or they read too much, or they read the wrong writings in the wrong way,” as Johan Jarlbrink points out. Jarlbrink, “Lässcener,” 51.

660 Heribert Adam Reuterskiöld, *Några ord med anledning af Göteborgs stads folk-biblioteks tioåriga verksamhet* (Göteborg 1872). Quoted from Atlestam, Bergmark, and Halász, *Fullbokat*, 52.

661 Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel*, 448.

constitute the best-selling genre at Gumpert's bookshop. Even at the parish library in Munka-Ljungby, the most frequently borrowed books were novels. Parish libraries were supposed to provide the rural population with useful and edifying literature, but over the years, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby deviated more and more from these expectations. In order to thrive, it had no choice but to adapt to the readers' literary tastes. Initially, the members of the parish library would read whatever was offered to them, but in time, they seemed to lose interest in books with a strong inherent political or religious message, and turned to entertaining literature. In other words, they avoided the books the library was supposed to disseminate. By the turn of the twentieth century, fiction accounted for two thirds of loans whereas the interest in religious works, for example revivalist literature, had fallen drastically. Meanwhile, the library members were borrowing fewer and fewer books. To a certain degree, the need to adjust the library's holdings to the members' tastes, in order not to have to close down, may have been perceived as something of a failure. The trend of declining numbers of loans at the parish library in Munka-Ljungby was only reversed once the library started buying more fiction.

The historical novel was particularly popular in all three institutions; the books by Topelius, Starbäck, and Marryat reached a wide readership. Crime fiction and books associated with France in general, and Paris in particular, were surrounded by an air of mysticism and sin, and were sought-after. "City mysteries" enjoyed significant popularity among the male clientele of Sjöblom's lending library. The light, adventurous stories and historical fiction, much of which has since been forgotten, was often borrowed and sold in great numbers. Female borrowers tended to prefer the writings of Flygare-Carlén and Schwartz. In Gumpert's bookshop, Strindberg was the bestseller among fiction authors, and writers such as Ibsen and Zola were also popular. But, interestingly, some of the books from the 1880s that we today regard as classics, such as Strindberg's *Fröken Julie* (1887) or Amalie Skram's *Constance Ring* (1885), were not at all to be found in the 10 per cent sample.

At Sjöblom's lending library, which had the most socially diverse clientele of all three institutions, several of the best-selling contemporary authors in the bookshop, Zola, Strindberg, Daudet, and Turgenev, were also represented during the early 1880s. However, the books by these authors only appealed to well-educated segments of the clientele: students, clerks, and doctors. Apart

from the painter Anders Olsson, who borrowed books by Zola, not a single labourer, artisan, or farmer reportedly borrowed any literature by these authors. It is worth noting that these groups of readers constituted a significant proportion of the members of Sjöblom's lending library. In the late 1890s, when Strindberg had attained something of the status of a national writer, the parish library in Munka-Ljungby finally acquired a copy of one of his novels, *I vår-brytningen* (1880). It was borrowed 13 times in the course of five years, more than most novels. And yet, Strindberg, the bookshop's bestseller, was surpassed in popularity in the parish library by a number of ten to sixty years old historical novels and adventure stories.

The parish library members' penchant for older literature seems by no means to have been unique. According to the article from 1885 in *Västmanlands Läns Tidning*, the Swedish common readers generally favoured the older, well-established authors, whereas the upper classes preferred reading books by foreign authors in the original language. Although there is clearly some truth to this statement, it needs to be nuanced. For several reasons, as we have already seen, new books were, for a long time, simply out of reach for the common reader, and literature in foreign languages was really no option. Many readers had to settle for the books presented to them by a library board. Still, within this given frame, be it the parish library with its limited amount of books, or in a context offering more varied and newer literature, the findings of this study indicate that borrowers and buyers made their own choices. Most readers portrayed in this study belonged to what Rinman refers to as an "addition of new readers," the ones he claimed lacked taste. However, contrary to Rinman's statement, the borrowers' and sales' records from the three institutions show that many readers, if not most, had distinctive literary preferences, at times independent from their socio-economic background. The example of the reading neighbours Persson and Nilsson shows that even within a very limited setting, readers of similar background could display completely different literary tastes. This is only one example from the archives showing that readers of the same social standing who had access to the same kinds of literature did not necessarily have the same preferences.

At the same time, the sales' and borrowers' records from the three institutions indicate, maybe unsurprisingly, that certain groups were more likely to consume certain kinds of literature. Women were in general slightly more

prone than men to buy novels, the rural population read, at least to a certain extent, devotional literature, and school-age boys and labourers were particularly fond of adventurous stories, and so forth. Similar results have been outlined in previous studies. But this study also shows that among these groups of readers there were always some, if not many, who did not follow the general patterns of consumption. There were men borrowing more novels than any of the women, peasants reading everything but devotional literature, vicars buying juicy stories from London's underworld, and artisans reading Zola. The stakes are that the individual readers presumably did not see themselves as a woman reader, a peasant reader, or a bourgeoisie reader. They were just readers, each one with his or her own literary preferences.

A modern breakthrough in Swedish reading history?

Empirical studies of bookshop sales and library loans add another dimension to the reception of the Modern Breakthrough literature. In Gumpert's bookshop, the sales of Modern Breakthrough literature were substantial and peaked in the mid-1880s, only later to decline. As we have seen, some groups of customers bought large amounts of Modern Breakthrough literature. Almost every third woman with a credit account in Gumpert's bookshop bought books by Modern Breakthrough authors – although not by Strindberg – as compared to only every fourth or fifth male customer. Instead, they seem to have preferred the writings of Kielland.

But the clientele of the bookshop did not, as has been noted, constitute the great mass of readers. Buying new novels was expensive, and even an unthinkable cost for large parts of the population. Additional segments of readers would be able to access the Modern Breakthrough literature once it had made its way to the commercial lending libraries and the second-hand markets. But on the basis of the findings from the archives, I would argue that the Modern Breakthrough literature was not within reach of all layers of society before the turn of the century, when even some of the more controversial books had found their way to public libraries and workers' libraries, and cheaper editions had made the texts affordable even for many readers of limited means. Some of the

ideas and debates surrounding the Modern Breakthrough, the scandals not the least, arguably reached larger parts of the population quite quickly through the periodical press or through the grapevine, but the books themselves did not succeed in reaching a popular readership among the contemporary audience.

For an emerging generation of readers – the readers of the first decades of the twentieth century – there would be no literary lag, no time gap; they would have access to contemporary literature.⁶⁶² When the large-scale cultural debate called the “Strindberg feud” erupted in 1910, thousands of workers showed support for Strindberg’s side, and in the spring of 1912 Strindberg received an “Anti-Nobel Prize,” to which tens of thousands of people had contributed.⁶⁶³ A torchlight procession was arranged through Stockholm to Strindberg’s home to celebrate the occasion. Later in the same year thousands also attended Strindberg’s funeral, spanning from members of the royal family to manual labourers.⁶⁶⁴ In the 20 years following the death of Strindberg in 1912, Bonnier sold 1.7 million copies of his books.⁶⁶⁵ The authors and the books of the Modern Breakthrough had finally come within the reach of everyone. By contrast, the eight books written by Strindberg and published by Bonnier from 1887 to 1890 only amounted to 22,150 copies in total, and during the 1890s his works were printed in altogether almost 50,000 copies – not a lot compared to the almost one million copies per decade following the years after his death.⁶⁶⁶

In many ways, the Modern Breakthrough was clearly more of a Danish-Norwegian cultural movement than a Swedish phenomenon.⁶⁶⁷ Strindberg was the number one bestseller in Sweden, but if we compare his publishing figures with those of Ibsen they appear quite modest. Ever since the late

662 Åberg, “Folket läste,” 372–76.

663 Åberg, “Det moderna genombrottet,” 71; Anderas Nyblom, “Strindbergsfejden 1910–1912” (litteraturbanken.se).

664 Per I. Gedin, *Verner von Heidenstam – ett liv* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 2006), 179.

665 Per I. Gedin, *Litteraturens örtagårdsmästare*, 174–77.

666 Svedjedal, *Bokens samhälle*, 43; Hansson, “Läsarnas litteraturhistoria,” 432.

667 Interestingly, the difference can still be noted in the amount of attention that for example Ibsen and Strindberg have been given even later on. For the 100th anniversary of Ibsen’s death, the Norwegian state set aside 42 million Norwegian kronor for the celebrations. Five years later, for the 100th anniversary of Strindberg’s death, the Swedish state chose to spend 1 million Swedish kronor. Ricki Neuman, “Fattigt jubileum för Strindberg,” *Svenska Dagbladet*, 8 January 2012.

1860s, Ibsen had enjoyed growing attention and rising sales, and by the late 1870s most of his books were printed in first editions of 10,000 copies, whereas Strindberg's books were published in editions of a few thousand copies.⁶⁶⁸ Even the best-selling *Röda rummet*, which was published in four editions between 1879 and 1880, was not issued in more than altogether 6,000 copies during those two years.⁶⁶⁹ In terms of sales, the Modern Breakthrough in Sweden was of minor importance as compared to that in Norway. Some of the most prominent Norwegian authors even sold better in Gumpert's bookshop than many of the domestic Modern Breakthrough writers. As Lundevall points out, Ibsen, Kielland, Bjørnson, and Lie enjoyed a strong popularity throughout Scandinavia by the end of the century and in the three decades between 1870 and 1900 all their books combined were printed in over 700,000 copies.⁶⁷⁰ The Swedish Modern Breakthrough authors' collective editions, by contrast, only amounted to a fraction of these numbers. Furthermore, many Swedish Modern Breakthrough authors are today arguably more or less forgotten.

It was hard for the Danish and Norwegian authors to find readers in Sweden, especially among the lower classes. Many of the Danish and Norwegian books in question were not translated into Swedish, largely because the Swedish publishers thought that they would only be read by a clientele who preferred the original edition. What is more, foreign-language books were seldom acquired by libraries. Consequently, most of the Swedish readers dependent on the libraries were presumably completely isolated from the Dano-Norwegian Modern Breakthrough literature. Authors taking a stance against inter-Scandinavian translations – among them Ibsen himself⁶⁷¹ – may have excluded large groups of the Swedish population from reading their books and getting in touch with their ideas.

It is easy to get the impression that the Modern Breakthrough literature was a separate genre, quintessentially different from other kinds of books, and that the Modern Breakthrough readers were set apart from other groups of

668 Fulsås and Rem, *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World Drama*, 109.

669 The book was published in four editions between 1879 and 1880. A fifth edition was published in 1886 and a sixth in 1899. Per I. Gedin, *Litteraturens örtagårdsmästare*, 109–13.

670 Lundevall, *Från åttital till nittital*, 165; Henning Fenger, "Naturalismen i sociologisk be-lysning," *Orbis litterarum* (1948), 159–208 (194).

671 Fulsås and Rem, *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World Drama*, 33–34.

readers by sharp distinctions. This was not the case. Modern Breakthrough literature was treated by most like novels of any other sort, often having to compete on equal terms with all other kinds of entertaining literature. In some cases, the literary context in which these books were bought or borrowed is quite striking. The naturalist and Modern Breakthrough literature was, as we have seen from several examples, bought and borrowed alongside quite ordinary entertainment literature, some of the very lightest kind. Many Modern Breakthrough readers, mostly men, would gladly acquire books by the likes of Paul de Kock at the same time as Zola and Strindberg, thus mixing highbrow and lowbrow literature. This however applies more to the well-to-do readers. Readers from less affluent sections of society, for example labourers, artisans, and peasants, who would also gladly read Paul de Kock, do not seem to have had the same level of interest in the Modern Breakthrough literature.

Another kind of breakthrough?

The range of different topics that were available from the two libraries and the bookshop, as well as the sheer number of books people would borrow or buy from these institutions, is quite humbling. The book market of the late nineteenth century had undergone fundamental development in just a few decades. During the early nineteenth century, the great mass of the Swedish population could only access a highly limited selection of books – religious works in particular – but by the end of the century they could get their hands on books from a variety of genres and authors, at a quite reasonable cost.

A new generation of readers, including children, immersed themselves in thrilling novels, stories from exotic places, historical accounts and much more; it was a wealth of literature that their parents or grandparents could only have dreamt of. Perhaps we should see the 1880s as a breakthrough not only when it comes to the nature of the literature that was read, but even more importantly in regard to the expansion of reading *per se*. Development was swift, and in the course of a few decades, almost everyone would be able to access reading materials and new ideas in some way. Reading was democratising, along with society as a whole, and not least to the benefit of children. We have seen how

all three institutions increasingly catered to the young members of the public. What the improved access to books meant to children and young people in terms of intellectual stimulation and knowledge, is hard to estimate.

Much of what common people preferred reading has fallen completely into oblivion, whereas parts of the Modern Breakthrough literature have endured and become canonized. Perhaps the latter was simply of a more enduring quality, but the socio-economic status of its readers may also have played a part. Gunnar Hansson has pointed out that traditionally it has been the reading of the elite that has characterized literary history.⁶⁷² This is especially interesting when we consider that the Modern Breakthrough literature was embraced primarily by the elites of society, at least initially. First and foremost, it was the reading of the male members of the elites that was eventually canonized. As we have seen in the study, the Modern Breakthrough literature was to a great extent out of reach of the general reading public during the 1880s, and Strindberg, the over-all best-selling fiction author, was – as already mentioned – not particularly successful among the female customers of the bookshop.

The notion of “popular culture,” by comparison, which arguably can be used to describe most of the books the great mass of readers preferred to read, is a category invented by the elites, as Chartier has noted.⁶⁷³ In this context, it is important to remember that in Sjöblom’s lending library, which offered entertaining literature of all sorts and was frequented by a socially diverse clientele, the naturalist and Modern Breakthrough literature had a hard time competing with lighter fiction. Apart from the writings of Zola and Strindberg, contemporary, radical literature was not borrowed to any greater extent.

Over the years, though, some of the Modern Breakthrough authors managed to secure a more general audience, and were able to move beyond the elite segments of the bookshop clientele. The number of Modern Breakthrough books in commercial lending libraries and public libraries increased steadily during the 1890s, and at the same time, many Modern Breakthrough books were finally published in new, and often cheaper, editions. In some ways, it might even be more fruitful to think of the 1890s or the early 1900s as something of a *delayed Modern Breakthrough*.

672 Hansson, *Den möjliga litteraturhistorien*, 46.

673 Chartier, *Forms and Meanings*, 83.

“The sources fail us”

Readers, their reading options and preferences in Sweden during the late nineteenth century are at centre of attention in this study. While the literature and the book market of the late nineteenth century have been widely studied, the individual reader has, seemingly, been out of reach. Questions regarding the composition of the reading public and its reading habits have been put forward numerous times, but hardly any satisfactory answers have been presented. In his study of Hallman’s lending library in Uddevalla, Sten Torgerson mentions the difficulties in tracing readers and reading in the nineteenth century. “The sources fail us,” Torgerson claims.⁶⁷⁴

However, contrary to what Torgerson and others have implied, this study shows that rich sources have been preserved. Humble as some of them may seem at first glance, these sources have allowed me to track a number of individual readers, to reveal patterns of book consumption, and to begin to define and reconstruct “past audiences,” as scholar of French literature James Smith Allen has put it.⁶⁷⁵ It is striking that none of the three archives that form the basis for the present study have been used for research before. The stacks of receipts from Sjöblom’s lending library have been collecting dust for more than 130 years, out of everyone’s sight, while the Munka-Ljungby archive has lived a hidden life in a basement in nearby Ängelholm. The fact that even the vast archive from Gumpert’s bookshop, one of the largest bookshops in Sweden at the time, has remained virtually unnoticed for decades, is more surprising.

The three archives are extremely rich in details, and, as this study has shown, they provide valuable and unique insights into the book consumption of thousands of readers, from all levels of society, from *statare* in Munka-Ljungby to the mayor of Gothenburg. We can see what kinds of books the painter’s apprentice Anders Olsson borrowed, what books the novelist Sophie Elkan chose to buy and to send to Selma Lagerlöf, and what were the literary preferences of the unmarried working maid Johanna Svensson Hellström, only to mention a few examples.

On another level, this comparative history of reading, and the data from

674 Torgerson, *J. F. Hallmans lånebibliotek*, 43.

675 Allen, *In The Public Eye*, 16–17.

the archives, have made it possible to detect consumption patterns for entire groups of readers, defined by parameters such as socio-economic standards, education, geographical location, age, gender, etc. Since the entire family or household often shared the same account, we are not always able to trace the book consumption of women and children. Many presumably borrowed or bought books on the husband's or father's account, and they may well have been more active book consumers than the archives indicate. Furthermore, the archives offer glimpses into the book market as a whole, including sales strategies, distribution, customer management, etc.

The empirical core of the study is comprised of nearly 44,000 purchases and loans, made by over 2,000 customers: about 2,800 loans from Sjöblom's commercial lending library; 25,000 loans from the parish library; and 16,000 purchases from Gumpert's bookshop – and yet, only a 10 per cent sample of the sales' ledgers from Gumpert's bookshop from the years 1879–90 has been analysed. The empirical data from the study will eventually be publicly available in transcription from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD).

Sources such as the ones studied in the present study provide a unique opportunity to map the complex and transforming relationship between the book market and the readers during the late nineteenth century. Not only can they help to determine who read what, and get closer to the personal history of individual readers; they may even shed light on the reception of individual literary works, as well as add missing pieces to the puzzle of economic and social history, on both a macro and a micro level. Whether small and inconspicuous, or overwhelmingly big, as the Gumpert archive, sources like these constitute a gold mine for future research. Most probably, there are more archives out there, waiting to be transcribed and made publicly available. Finally, a database for Gumpert's bookshop as a whole, listing close to one million purchases made during the years 1870 to 1917, would constitute an indispensable and unique resource, even in an international perspective.

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 A:1–2: Minutes of proceedings 1859–1886.
 D 1: Members' list
 D 2:1–3: Borrowers' ledgers 1870–1888, 1899–1903
 F:1: Regulations

Regional State Archives in Gothenburg

- The Archive of N. J. Gumpert (GLA/Co038:1)*
 F:1–2: The diaries of the bookshop assistant Johan Lundgren (1883–1903)
 G I a:1–4: Main ledgers (1865–1912)
 G II a:1–31: Customer sales' ledgers (1870–1900)
 G II b: 1: Transactions with Swedish and foreign publishers (1870–1902)

The Royal Danish Library

- The Gyldendal Archive (Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk forlag A/S)*
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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Number of books, members and loans in the parish library of Munka-Ljungby 1860–1910 (blanks indicate missing information)

Year	Books	Members	Number of loans
1860	–	77	–
1861	–	77	–
1862	–	80	–
1863	–	85	–
1864	–	91	–
1865	–	95	–
1866	–	–	–
1867	–	96	–
1868	–	97	–
1869	351	99	–
1870	386	102	9,870 loans 1870–76 <i>(1,410 loans annually on average)</i>
1871	–	103	
1872	–	108	
1873	–	111	
1874	512	117	
1875	553	122	
1876	651	123	
1877	659	–	7,710 loans 1877–81 <i>(1,542 loans annually on average)</i>
1878	708	132	
1879	741	135	
1880	760	142	
1881	782	144	

1882	792	149	7,070 loans 1882–88 <i>(1,010 loans annually on average)</i>
1883	795	150	
1884	797	152	
1885	798	154	
1886	808	158	
1887	844	159	
1888	869	161	
1889	–	166	–
1890	–	173	–
1891	–	175	–
1892	–	184	–
1893	–	195	–
1894	–	201	–
1895	–	202	–
1896	–	204	–
1897	–	210	–
1898	–	213	–
1899	1,102	213	3,007 loans 1899–1903 <i>(601 loans annually on average)</i>
1900	1,116	215	
1901	1,151	217	
1902	1,169	218	
1903	1,187	222	
1904	–	–	–
1905	–	–	–
1906	1,017	–	665
1907	1,080	–	1,177
1908	1,172	–	1,256
1909	1,239	–	1,690
1910	1,377	–	1,859

Appendix 2: Swedish Modern Breakthrough authors (listed by Ann-Lis Jeppsson)

- Alfhild Agrell
- Victoria Benedictsson (pen name Ernst Ahlgren)
- August Bondeson
- Albert Ulrik Bååth
- Amalia Fahlstedt
- Daniel Fallström
- Gustaf af Geijerstam
- Albert Theodor Gellerstedt
- Ola Hansson
- Tor Hedberg
- Ernst Josephson
- Anne Charlotte Leffler (Edgren)
- Oscar Levertin
- Vilma Lindhé
- Johan Lindström (pen name Saxon)
- Axel Lundegård
- Ernst Lundquist
- Mathilda Malling (pen name Stella Kleve)
- Bernhard Meijer
- Georg Nordensvan
- Johan Nordling
- Mathilda Roos
- Algot Sandberg
- Pehr Staaff
- Ina Lange (pen name Daniel Sten)
- Hilma Strandberg
- August Strindberg
- Elna Tenow
- Anna Wahlenberg
- Henrik Wranér