Possibilities, Silences

The Publishing and Reception of Queer Topics in Finland during the Interwar Years (and Beyond)

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

To be publicly discussed, by due permission of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Helsinki in auditorium XIV on the 27th of November 2015 at 12 o’clock.
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1 Introduction

“Den som skriver blir den som anger gränserna för världen; han som
nedtecknar sin berättelse blir den som skapar verkligheten, allt annat
är bara dagg, fuktigt gräs i svag vind.”

Kristian Lundberg: Och allt skall vara kärlek (2011)

1.1 Background and Aims of the Study

Those who write indicate the borders for the world; they create reality by
writing down their stories, as the Swedish author Kristian Lundberg (*1966)
states. His words also describe the frameworks of this study. Authors write,
and always have written, about the way they see the world and about their own
realities. Literature is always also social, since it never arises in a vacuum but
develops within its surroundings. An author writes in a certain tradition and
communicates with and through it: either in adapting herself to it, or in
opposing its conventions. Every work is an intertext, conscious or not, in a
dialogue with the works which have preceded it or are yet to come. Also the
influence of publishers is a part of this interaction: both their influence on
authors and on their works. The realities Lundberg names have always
included topics that opposed the conventions at the time they were written
down and/or experienced. Some of them never found their way into the public
sphere and might still lie undiscovered in some archive; others were published,
often in a modified version. One of these unwelcome topics, in Finland as
elsewhere, has long been anything queer, i.e. anything that is beyond what is
perceived as “normal” and that questions heteronormative standards and
values (i.e. those that see heterosexuality as the only “normal” and “natural”
expression of sexuality).

If we do not only mean canons and published works when talking about
literary history, but also silenced voices, we will see that these silenced voices
tell as much as canonised literature about the society behind the books, its
expectations in terms of literature, and its norms and values. Therefore, this
study focusses on different norms and values regarding sexuality and gender,
and on the question how they are conveyed by literature. The literary works
that will be analysed all raise the question which topics could be published,

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1 “The one who writes will be the one who indicates the boundaries for the world; the one who writes
down his story will be the one who creates reality, everything else is only dew, moist grass in a shallow
wind.” (My translations throughout the text, if not mentioned otherwise.)
which voices have remained visible in literary history, and which have been silenced. Which roles were ascribed to women, and what expectations did society and literature have? The term decency has long played a central role with regard to the expectations of women and set the standards for them; moreover, especially in the first decades of Finnish independence, being a decent woman was closely connected to motherhood. If thus heteronormality was the standard, in which way was literature able to undermine or how did it confirm this standard, with the help of queer topics?

The time span of the literary works analysed in this study from the first decade of the 20th century to the mid-1930s (and an excursion to the 1950s) is meaningful from two points of view. First, the time around the Finnish independence in 1917 meant a strong nationalist movement and a continuous discussion about and forming of gender roles. Especially the role of motherhood was central in this context – both for the understanding of femininity and for the nation – and will thus be in the focus of this study. Secondly, the wars – the First World War and the Finnish Civil War – also left a significant mark on Finnish society and gender roles, especially concerning the importance of the continuity of the nation and the struggles about a new definition of it. In general, the 1930s in Europe with the rise of Nazism also marked a decisive negative turn in relation to the attitude towards homosexuality. Yet, since Finland criminalised both male and female homosexuality in the Penal Code of 1889 (until 1971) and also any kind of encouragement of it, the country takes up a special position in the context of queer topics in literature.

The material analysed in this thesis consists of literary works by established, yet not necessarily canonised authors that deal with queer topics in different ways, along with archival material related to these works: Finnish, Finland-Swedish and foreign books which are exemplary for different ways of dealing with queer topics in Finland especially in the 1920s and 1930s. Having examined a large amount of works with queer content published during that time in Finland, as well as works published abroad that have become classics, it became clear that some selecting criteria was needed. The criteria behind the selection of the fictional material for this thesis were the following: a first criterion was to choose the most central works of published literature in Finnish during the time in question which both contain queer content and focus on female literary characters. The same applied to Finland-Swedish literature. Another criterion was the status of the authors and/ or their works: the works I examine were either written by established authors (some were already well-known by their contemporaries, others are today), or they are works that have become modern classics. With regard to foreign literature, this last criterion was even more decisive, since it is usually the success and degree

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3 The term “relates how heterosexuality and complementary masculine and feminine gender roles are established, discursively and politically, as normal and natural was coined in 1991 by Michael Warner, though it draws on Adrienne Rich’s notion of ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ and Gail Rubin’s concept of a ‘sex/gender system’, in which certain sexual practices and gendered behaviours are considered acceptable and others less so or not at all.” Cuddon 2013.
of popularity of an author or a certain book that are crucial for a decision to translate. The selection of the literary works for this study thus scrutinises the question of the diverse possibilities of literature as a means to deal with discussions in society. Consequently, the literary texts to be analysed are the following: Ain’Elisabet Pennanen’s Voimahmisiä (“Strong People”, 1906) and Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin (“And the Ship Left Nonetheless”, 1919), Elsa Soini’s Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit (“The Favourites of the Gods and Men”, 1926) and Uni (“Uni/ “Dream”, 1930), Mika Waltari’s Suuri illusioni (“The Great Illusion”, 1928) and Yksinäisen miehen juna (“A Lonely Man’s Train”, 1929), Rosamond Lehmann’s Dusty answer, Alma Söderhjelm’s Kärlekens väninna (“Love’s Girlfriend”, 1922), Hagar Olsson’s Pä Kanaanexpressen (“On The Express Train to Canaan”, 1929), Helvi Hämäläinen’s Kaunis sielu (“Beautiful Soul”, 1928/ 2001), Margareta Suber’s Charlie (1932), Radclyffe Hall’s The Well of Loneliness (1928, Swedish 1932, Finnish 2010), and Émile Zola’s Nana (1880/ 1930/ 1952). Since it is rather uncommon that a novel was translated anew within such a short period of time, the chapter on Zola’s novel will also include an outlook on the 1950s and the publishing policies of this time, and thereby suggest a starting point for an additional study that covers the time from the Second World War onwards.

An only superficial look at the Finnish book market during the first decades of the 20th century, however, leaves the impression that queer topics in fiction could hardly be found in the Finnish language (be it originally in Finnish or translations) until late. In contrast to Finland, Radclyffe Hall’s English classic The Well of Loneliness came out in Great Britain in 1928 and caused an instantaneous scandal. It was not translated into Finnish until 2010. As we know today, Helvi Hämäläinen’s novel Kaunis sielu (“Beautiful Soul”), which addresses female same-sex desire was already written in 1928, but several publishers considered the novel not worth publishing. While literature in Finnish could have been as “progressive” as its Anglo-Saxon counterpart, the novel got published only in 2001. With the selection of literary works, I therefore do not only want to show the impossibilities of queer topics within a rather male, nationalist literary field, but I also want to explore the possibilities of not following prevailing values that works, authors and publishers had. Many of the texts in this study are critical of the role that decency and motherhood played in defining social norms for women. Elsa Soini’s novels would be a very good example for this. While some texts are openly critical, like the (untranslated) works by the Finland-Swedes Alma Söderhjelm and Hagar Olsson, other works contain between the lines a rather hidden critique, like the translation of Rosamond Lehmann’s Dusty answer;

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4Another unpublished manuscript which might have become a play with queer content, maybe even with female same-sex desire as the main topic is called “Keksijän kengissä. Hattukauppias ja hänen haaveensa” (“In the Inventor’s Shoes. The Hat Seller and her Dreams”) and can be found in the archive of the Finnish Literature Society. The draft was written by the author Siiri Kiikka (born 1902, date of death unknown) who published one novel in 1941 with the title Auneelan pojat (“The Boys from Auneela”) that however does not hint at anything queer. Why this manuscript was not published or finalised, remains unclear. I thank Katri Kivilaakso from the Literary Archive at SKS for this reference (see: Siiri Kiikan arkisto at SKS/KIA).
or they use literary techniques like irony when presenting queer topics, like Ain’Elisabet Pennanen’s play *Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin*. Other works concentrate on tools like language and style, of which Helvi Hämäläinen’s rejected novel is exemplary. The works written by male authors represent different attitudes towards the topic: while Émile Zola’s classic *Nana* mocks both men and women and their relationships with each other as well as with their own sex, the queer characters in Waltari’s novels are connected to unpleasantness. All these works thus function as examples of the different levels of addressing queerness and of different literary tools that were used to deal with queer topics. I will also analyse how these works were received and whether or how their queer topics had been recognised.

So far there has been no relevant research on the analysis of publishing policies from a queer perspective in Finland. My aim is to show the connections between different fields of society and their effects on queer topics in literature. I will thereby provide an insight into the workings of the literary field and its relationship to society in general. I will also explore the distribution of power within the literary field and its different parties. Accordingly, one objective of this study is to trace the processes that have produced apparent silences in publishing in Finnish in terms of queer topics. I will examine prevailing social discourses in Finland from the beginning of the 20th century to the 1930s to find answers to the question why publishing novels with queer topics, especially those referring to female same-sex desire, seems to have been difficult. A second objective is to ask and show by which means it was nevertheless possible to introduce queer topics into literature in Finnish. Queerness was not totally absent from literature, but rather needed to be introduced in a subtle way. Queer characters that have emerged in canonised literature can often be regarded as a “warning”, and/or the (mostly male) implied author or narrator is being disgusted by the mere thought about the otherness implied. Yet, through a so-called queer reading other, more subtle examples of the possibility of queer topics can be found. Such a queer reading analyses the heteronormativities which a literary text communicates, as well as its possibilities of questioning and undermining them. It reads beyond the text and against it and its former interpretations, and it has its basis in the idea that no meaning of a text is final, but can change from reader to reader and with time. To avoid anachronisms, this method requires knowledge of the historical and cultural context of a text, as well as of its localisation in space and time.

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[D]en queera läsningen skiljer sig från traditionella motströmsläsningar genom att det queera placeras sida vid sida med det icke-queera, att sexualiteten och dessoupplösiga relation till kön satts i centrum (liksom relationen mellan norm och avvikelse avseende sexualiteten), samt slutligen att det queera förutsätts

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5The term “field” was coined by Pierre Bourdieu and is a tool to define a group of individuals to map their social relationships, positions, etc. Important here are the literary field, including publishers, authors and critics, and the social and political field. I will explain the term in detail in Chapter 2.
potentiellt existera i vilket verk som helst. [...] Det är en läsning som tar fasta på textens tystnader, det den samtidigt avslöjar och döljer, och inte minst det som framstår som avvikande och udda och som bryter mot normativa uppfattningar om kön och sexualitet.6

Additionally, a queer (political) reading has an intertextual reading as its premise that combines texts, compares and examines them against their societal background. Such a queer reading can add new meanings and contents to texts and see them from different angles, it seeks positions and horizons of expectations that have not been readily offered but rather object supposed interpretations.7 The queer reading, then, can both analyse texts that openly question heteronormative standards, and it can analyse texts that do not on their surface deal with queer topics, but which conceal or cloak queerness. Also texts that are strongly loaded with heteronormativity can be the target of a queer reading which is, for example, able to question the traditional gender roles and make their artificiality visible.8 The task of a queer reading, then, is to ask

 [...] hur olika kulturella diskurser och representationer samt allmänna värdekonstellationer och föreställningar om å ena sidan det queera, eller rättare sagt queerheter, och å andra sidan heterosexualitet är konstruerat, hur det representeras och hur dessa olika representationer av sexualitet påverkar uppfattningar om sexualitet och framför allt om det queera.9

In countries like France, Britain or Sweden, the selected examples for this study, female homosexuality has been a topic within literature (written by men as well as women) at least since the end of the 19th century – not without scandals, of course.10 When Pirkko Saisio’s novel Kainin tytär (“Cain’s daughter”) was published in 1984, it made literary history as the first lesbian novel written in Finnish. So it seems striking that in Finland, which is known as the third country in the world to enfranchise women as early as in 1906, queer topics seem to have been almost unthinkable. The difficulties for any

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6 Kivilaakso, Lönngren, Paqvalén 2012, 9–10. “The queer reading differs from traditional readings against the grain by placing the queer side by side with the non-queer, by setting sexuality and its incessant relationship with gender into the centre (like the relationship between norm and deviation with regard to sexuality), and finally by assuming that the queer possibly exists in any work. [...] It is a reading that catches the silences of the text, that which the text at the same time reveals and hides, and not least what appears as deviant and odd and which breaches normative understandings about gender and sexuality.”

The translations of theoretical texts are mine, if not mentioned otherwise. Longer quotations that are detached from the running text are quoted in their original and translated in the footnotes. Shorter quotations that are part of the running text are translated within the text to facilitate the reading.

7 Karkulehto 2012, 26.
8 Karkulehto 2007, 88.
9 Karkulehto 2012, 27. “[...] how different cultural discourses and representations as well as general value-constellations and conceptions of the queer, or more correctly queernesses, on the one hand, and heterosexuality on the other hand, are constructed, how it is represented and how its different representations of sexuality affect understandings of sexuality and especially the queer.”

10 For example, Radclyffe Hall’s The Well of Loneliness was banned in Great Britain under the Obscene Publications Act after a campaign by The Sunday Express that began shortly after its publication. See Castle 2003, 633.
kind of unwelcome topics can be explained, amongst other reasons, by the smallness of the Finnish book market. More explicitly than those of larger countries, it exemplarily illustrates not only how publishing is bound to the market and economy, but also how the decision of censoring, rejecting or accepting a book is an indicator of ruling norms and values within a society where anonymity is hard to preserve. Additionally, the special position of literature in Finland needs to be taken into account when analysing unwelcome topics, since it has played a central role in the building of the national identity from the middle of the 19th century onwards.

Therefore, this study will investigate the connection of the literary field and the society in which it has originated, i.e. its ideas and ideologies. While on the one hand literary quality and the probability to sell are decisive factors behind published works, silences in literature on the other hand most likely concern political meaning. Thus, although the queer in some texts might not be visible for every reader, this does not mean that these texts do not contain gender—or sexual-political perspectives; in contrast, as Sanna Karkulehto states:

[I]nnebördena som berör kön och sexualitet och som förblir dolda eller osynliga i texterna är ofta väldigt politiskt laddade. Det politiska som förblir osynligt följer i regel samhällets och kulturens normer, det vill säga det är normativt eller till och med normerande, och samhället och kulturen [som] stödjer det osynliga hos de framställningar och innebörder som följer normerna, är normativa och normerande.11

This means that the political ideas behind silences emphasise prevailing norms, as does the society behind them. The political, thus, has to be made visible by a reading between the lines. The society behind the political has also, of course, its effect on publishing. To identify the reasons behind the decision to either publish queer topics or reject them, the focus of this study lies on the representation of female non-heteronormative characters and their possibilities within the literary works. The use of the term queer follows Rachel Carroll’s explication in her work *Rereading Heterosexuality* (2012) and has its focus on

the representation of female identities at odds with heterosexual norms; more specifically, it explores representations which serve to question the conventional equation between heterosexuality, reproductive sexuality and female identity. [...] The conventional conflation of heterosexuality with reproductive sexuality, and the close implication of reproductive sexuality in the construction of sexed, gendered and sexual identity for women, ensures that the figure of the non-

Karkulehto 2012, 29. “[C]ontents that touch gender and sexuality, and which remain hidden or invisible in the texts, are often enormously politically loaded. The politics that remains invisible usually follows the norms of society and culture, i.e. it is normative or even normalising, and society and culture [that] support the visibility of the descriptions and contents that follow norms are normative and normalising.” Karkulehto has already in her PhD-thesis developed a so-called queer-political method of reading texts in which she combines a performative reading (i.e. the analysis of discourses) with a queer reading based on theoretical-methodical concepts. Reading, for her, is a reciprocal and interactive process that also includes her own feelings, fears and desires. See Karkulehto 2007, 85–86.
normative female heterosexual occupies an especially complex and fraught position in relation to heteronormativity.\textsuperscript{12}

More generally speaking, the term queer can be defined as problematising normative assumptions of sex, gender and sexuality. It is thus also critical towards any identities that derive from these normalising assumptions. An essential contribution which a queer approach can provide within literary studies is its ability to challenge and question canons. It is also able to show that literary canons have always contained a certain otherness within themselves, albeit sometimes in hidden forms, which applies also to the literary production in Finland.

The general approach to the literary texts used in this study has its background in New Historicism which emerged in the 1980s and sees literature in its wider historical context. New historicists were inspired by Michel Foucault’s ideas of power and history and his “assertion that the very concept of sexual identity is historically and discursively produced.”\textsuperscript{13} However, it is important to remind ourselves that it is “treacherously difficult to reconstruct the past as it really was, rather than as we have been conditioned by our own place and time to believe that it was.”\textsuperscript{14} This applies also to queer topics and characters in literature: a queer approach does not expect literary characters to represent identities that exist already outside the text in reality, but it sees them as constructions that serve a certain purpose. As Elsi Hyttinen summarises it, the relationship between literature and reality within literary queer studies means the continuous formation of meanings, while these meanings are being articulated by linking different discourses together that have been available at the time when the text was written.\textsuperscript{15}

Within literary history it is essential to see the historical-cultural background not as a privileged authority that can be located outside a text, but it needs to be seen as one part of it.\textsuperscript{16} Text and history are deeply intertwined, then, while history is not something linear and progressive, but rather a term that is non-linear by definition. That means that history is not a steady linear process towards, in this case, greater openness with regard to anything queer, but rather a process that goes backwards and forwards. Queer topics within Finnish literature prove to be a good example of this non-linearity, as I will show, due to their appearance in books in rather unpredictable ways and sometimes even in reverse ways from the political/ ideological situation.

This study is divided into five chapters. In the introduction I present the important theories and terms and open up the background of literature with queer topics in Finland. The focus here lies on the questions about how we can explain the distribution of power in publishing. What were the possibilities of

\textsuperscript{12} Carroll 2012, 1; 11.
\textsuperscript{13} Carroll 2012, 5.
\textsuperscript{14} Walker 1993, 260.
\textsuperscript{15} Hyttinen 2012, 134–135.
\textsuperscript{16} Baßler 1995, 12.
resisting set norms through literature, and which material is fruitful to answer these questions? The second chapter presents the history of the Finnish literary field in contrast to the Finland-Swedish one, as well as their role within the nation-building process. Another, closely connected focus deals with publishing policies and the discussions of decency and norms within society and literature and on the role of homosexuality in Finnish society. With this as a background, Chapters 3 to 5 then focus on the selected literary works.

Silences & censorship

As explicated, one of the leading questions of this study is which speech-acts or topics were silenced, and which were possible in the decades after Finland’s independence. I also ask in what way they were performed. Within literary feminist theory, a classic within the research on silence is the work The Madwoman in the Attic (1979) by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in which they discuss women’s silence in literary texts and state that women already from their childhood onwards learn to be silent. This learned silence has led to the fact that female writers were not able to express themselves within the patriarchal system. Moreover, it has affected both female writers and their literary characters – a fact that needs to be taken into consideration also when analysing possible queer contents of works.

Within queer theory, one of the classics on silence is Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s Epistemology of the closet (1990). Sedgwick analyses homosexuality in literature which appears as a secret and silence. This is the reason why sexual otherness has formed the “closet”, the unarticulated area of knowing and not-knowing. In the closet’s vicinity “even what counts as a speech act is problematized on a perfectly routine basis. […] ‘Closetedness’ itself is a performance initiated as such by the speech act of a silence – not a particular silence, but a silence that accrues particularity by fits and starts, in relation to the discourse that surrounds and differentially constitutes it.”18 The closet with its silence, then, is not a closeted homosexual person, but it means the homosexual silence, i.e. the awareness that someone has a secret which is not articulated.19 As Mia Franck interprets it: “to do silence via closetedness means to tell, but at the same time to conceal the violation of heteronormative norms.”20 This kind of silence, as Franck states, is essential for analysing the ways in which a literary character can stage normalcy. Sedgwick thus highlights silence as a conscious choice for staging expectations of heterosexuality.21 The analysis of the different works will show to what extent this kind of silence can be observed within Finnish literature. Another question

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17 Gilbert/ Gubar 1979, 43; 58–59. “But the girl child must learn the arts of silence either as herself a silent image invented and defined by the magic looking glass of the male authored text, or as a silent dancer of her own woes, a dancer who enacts rather than articulates.” See also Franck 2012, 233.
18 Kosofsky Sedgwick 2008, 3.
19 Kekki 2004, 32.
21 Franck 2012, 233.
will be to which extent the staging of normalcy also undermines heteronormative values, since “the fact that silence is rendered as pointed and performative as speech, in relations around the closet, depends on and highlights more broadly the fact that ignorance is as potent and as multiple a thing as is knowledge.”22 The concepts of silence and queer reading are then also closely connected, as works like Soini’s or Lehmann’s show that play with silence on the surface and, in Sedgwick’s words, stage normalcy. With regard to a queer reading, Alexander Doty also makes the important point that

the coding of classic or otherwise “mainstream” texts and personalities can often yield a wider range of non-straight readings because certain sexual things could not be stated baldly. Of course, if you aren’t careful, this line of thought can begin to sound like an argument valorizing the closet, for understanding queerness as always something “connotated” or suggested (and never really there “denotatively”), for “subtexting,” and for “subcultural” readings. But since I don’t see queer readings as any less there, or any less real, than straight readings of classic or otherwise “mainstream” texts, I don’t think that what I do [...] is colluding with dominant representational or interpretive regimes that seek to make queerness “alternative” or “sub” straight.23

Moreover, one has to consider that there is not one, but that there are different kinds of silence. Also in Finnish language the word silence has at least two meanings: it can be “hiljaisuus”, which simply means that something is quiet, that there is an absence of sound. But there is also the word “vaikeneminen”, which means the forbearance from or omission of speech, an absence of mention.24 The latter case indicates that there is the possibility to speak, i.e. the issue one keeps silent about is present in the world of the speaker and his or her cultural imagery and it would be possible to broach it. For Foucault, then, silence is always connected to power:

Silence itself – the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers – is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies. There is no binary division to be made between what one says and one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourse.25

The sociologist Jan Löfström, who has extensively researched the relationship between homosexuality and society in Finnish agrarian society up

22 Kosofsky Sedgwick 2008, 4.
25 Foucault 1978, 27.
to the 1950s claims, in contrast, that questions of power and its practices were not the sole reason for the silence about homosexuality within Finnish society. It rather might have resulted from considerations about which issues are even worth talking about. “Vaikeneminen” might then derive both from a lack of courage or time and from the fact that the speaker wants to protect something, or it might be a combination of these reasons. As Löfström states, homosexuality or queerness might possibly not have been seen as meaningful enough to be talked about in Finnish culture, since these topics were not central within the system of meaning, i.e. they were not regarded as especially sensational or exciting.26 In my analysis I argue, however, that within the more urban Finnish milieus from the 1900s onwards, of which publishing was a part, the topic of homosexuality was not seen as meaningless, as the literary texts, the archival materials and reviews I have utilized prove. I will rather suggest that the literary field to a certain degree supported a protective silence, i.e. one that prevented authors from being cast under suspicion. But a silence that was brought about by publishers who rejected certain works can also be found: on the one hand due to economic reasons and on the other hand to protect their own reputation. Still, there were literary works (by Pennanen, Söderhjelm, Olsson and others) that undermined the (unspoken) demand to be silent about queer topics. In these cases, it is most illuminating to analyse reviews either in respect to their possible silences towards queerness or in respect to the way they dealt with the topic whenever mentioned. By a queer reading of reviews, supposed silences can also be spotted, brought to light and a hidden critic of heteronormativity, as well as its confirmation, can be detected.

What then do the silences in literature – willing and unwilling ones – tell about the expectations for women’s role in society that was communicated by the choice of books to be published and those that were rejected? The analyses of the works will show to which extent ruling norms and values of Finnish society with regard to women – which had, as everywhere else, strong heteronormative connotations – were tantamount to those that were predominant in publishing houses. I will not so much concentrate on whether the books communicated authentic representations of real life of women. Rather, I will ask what publishing or rejecting a book with queer characters or plots tells about Finnish publishing and society, as well as its ideas about and expectations of women, given the importance literature has had in the nation-building process.

Women’s role and motherhood

In the late 1910s, the issue of a declining population had become a national question in most of the European countries. And with these dwindling population numbers, the role of women as mothers was emphasised and the

nuclear family became more important. In the case of Finland, one can speak of a “nationalisation” of women and their bodies through a strong emphasis on motherhood since the turn of the century. This situation remained rather stable for the following two decades and even continued until the 1950s. Its consequences also had a strong impact on literature and on discussions within the literary field.

Since the patriotic-nationalist discussions and the hopes for the growth of the nation had risen and intensified after the Civil War in 1918, the 1920s were characterised by a more nationalistic tone regarding the discussion of the idea of the nuclear family, and women’s role as the builders of the nation was emphasised. Also the concept of the so-called social motherhood – that means motherhood that needed not necessarily to be biological but be performed for example via the role of a teacher or a nurse – was stressed. In Finland, the concept of social motherhood is usually closely connected to the Swedish feminist Ellen Key (1849–1926) who coined the term “samhällsmoderlighet” (social motherliness) in her work Lifslinjer (“Lifelines”, 1903–1906). Within the first wave of Swedish feminism, to which Key belonged, the role of motherhood had often functioned as a means to show the differences between the genders: these feminists attempted to claim that it would be woman’s nature to bear children. Motherliness and motherhood equalled cultural capital and helped women to become integrated into modern society. Moreover, these feminists saw motherhood not only as women’s most basic right and duty, but also as a means to renew society and its way of thinking. Motherhood was thus seen as a way for women to exert influence rather than something that oppressed them. Since the concept of social motherhood is an elementary part of Elsa Soini’s novel Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit, the term will be further discussed in Chapter 3.3.

Also important to note in this context is, however, the difference between the Finnish ideas of motherhood compared to the ones elsewhere in Europe: Finnish motherhood was connected with work, collectivity and social influence, whereas in many other European countries motherhood meant a closer connection to the bourgeois family that was defined as private. Ritva Nätkin shows the differences of the ideas between the women’s movements of the bourgeoisie and the educated class, and those of the working-class. She states that in the bourgeois and educated circles (e.g. organisations like Suomen Naisyhdistys or Naisasialliitto Unioni), motherhood was idealised and regarded as an important task within the ideology of Finnishness and enlightenment from the turn of the century at least until the mid-1930s. These

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28 See the quotation of Key’s definition of social motherhood in Key 1903–1906, 231: “Även i det offentliga måste kvinnan sällunda bevara sin kärleks underverkstro, dess mod till det skenbara oförnuftet, detta mod, som redan i folkens sagor fått de skönaste sinnebilder. Hvad det enskilda lifvet lärt henne, måste hon nu åter lära det offentliga!” The term, however, had actually already been introduced by the Swedish feminist writer Fredrika Bremer (1801–1865).
organisations had regarded motherhood as an obvious right for women already since the turn of the century; this point of view was, however, not necessarily traditional, but it rather was similar to Western women’s organisations who regarded motherhood as an active act (social motherhood), not passive mothering.\textsuperscript{30} I concentrate here on the role of urban and middle-class women and the bourgeois women’s organisations, since they are the main focus of this study, both as writers or other members of the literary field, as readers, and as characters in the books that I analyse. An analysis of women of the working-class or the peasantry and their women’s movements would be a different one.

With the emphasis on motherhood, the 1920s meant also a tightening of women’s social role. This emphasis was, of course, not only common in Finland, but characteristic of most European countries. The war had loosened traditional gender roles with women doing men’s work on the one hand and being mothers on the other. Still, the established division of labour was restored straight after the wars, albeit the right for women to work full-time remained.\textsuperscript{31} In the beginning of the 1930s, there were again many discussions about the falling population numbers. An initial point for the discussion was a speech by Gunnar Modeen in 1934 that discussed the future development of the Finnish population and its economic consequences. Modeen, for example, noted that the Finnish nation would suffer from an economic slowdown if the population did not grow. Also the very successful Swedish publication \textit{Kris i befolkningsfrågan} (“Crisis in the Population Question”, 1934) by Gunnar and Alva Myrdal about the same topic was widely read and inspired the discussions in Finland.\textsuperscript{32} Motherhood, in short, was emphasised in multiple respects in the context of gender roles and expectations: economically, morally and traditionally. These discussions about motherhood and morals within society, initiated by the problem of a declining population, were also part of the so-called literary fight in the 1930s which I will discuss in Chapter 2.

\textbf{Queer topics in Finnish publishing}

The topic of this study was originally inspired by an article by Pirkko Saisio, one of the most renowned contemporary Finnish female authors. Saisio stated that she had to change her first, partly autobiographical, novel called \textit{Elämänmeno} (“The Course of Life”, Kirjayhtymä 1975) by eliminating the parts that dealt with the female protagonist’s homosexuality and her coming to terms with it, before it was published. She silenced herself. The publisher had justified his argument by saying that Saisio had enough talent to become

an author and should not start with a provocation.\textsuperscript{33} This process resembles the one Helvi Hämäläinen had experienced already five decades before when her début novel \textit{Kaunis sielu} was rejected in 1928, as Chapter 4.2 will display. Publishing had not much changed in this respect, it seems.

In the course of the research for this study it has become all the more evident that also published books – many of which have nowadays been forgotten and never become a part of a national literary canon – are worthwhile to be examined in the search for queer topics and can show the workings of publishing. By reading them closely with the knowledge of the time period in question and its notion of society and women, it becomes clear that the supposed silence with regard to queer topics was not so quiet after all. My analyses of the selected works shows that also in the 1920s and 1930s more works that dealt with queerness were published in Finland than the tight moral values of the time would suggest.

Nowadays, the Finnish-language book market is well stocked with queer female characters: besides translations of, for example, books by Jeanette Winterson and Sarah Waters, Finnish authors like Pirkko Saisio, Sofi Oksanen, Kiba Lumberg and Gerry Birgit Ilvesheimo have written about female same-sex relationships or other non-heteronormative issues within the last decade. Also literature for young adults addresses queer topics today. But it was not until the late 1990s that queer topics finally became fashionable in literature. Yet, the topic of female homosexuality had been introduced already in 1972 in Maritta Flykt’s novel \textit{Omppo} (Otava), a book written for a younger audience: its main female character experiences a night with her superior, an openly lesbian, rather tragic figure, but regrets it and flees into a relationship with a young man.

However, there were also at least four works right after the turn of the 19th century that contained openly queer characters: in 1903, Aino Malmberg’s (1865–1933) short story \textit{Ystävyyttä} (“Friendship”) about two spinsters living together in Sweden was published as part of her short story collection \textit{Totta ja leikkia} (“Truth and Games”, Otava).\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Ystävyyttä} and its topic was mentioned in a review in the magazine \textit{Valvoja} in 1904, but disliked by the reviewer who regarded the topic as rather improbable: “Concerning the playful part, one must say that these topics seem to be rather far-fetched (Ystävyyttä).”\textsuperscript{35} In 1906, the novel \textit{Voimahmisia} (“Strong People”) by Ain’Elisabet Pennanen addressed female same-sex desire as a side-topic. Since one of Pennanen’s later works is part of the analyses in Chapter 3, I will shortly introduce this

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33} Saisio 2000, 352. The book in the new version received then the J. H. Erkko-prize for the year’s best début novel.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Aino Malmberg had to leave Finland for England in 1910 because she had participated in Anti-Russian activities. She was active in the Suffragettes movement. Malmberg was also proposed by the Finnish League of Women to become the Finnish Envoy in the USA after Finland’s independence, but the proposition was rejected. Although writers like August Strindberg had depicted similar constellations as Malmberg had, i.e. a butch-femme constellation, as it was later called, the short story “Ystävyyttä” is exceptional, since it was written by a woman and got published. See Mustola 2001, 291.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Z.C. 1904, 403. “Mitä taas leikillisiin tulee, niin niiden aieheet toisiaan tuntuvat kovin etsiyiltä (Ystävyyttä).”
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
A third example is Marja Salmela’s (1875–1924) short story *Ystävyys* (“Friendship”) from 1910, published in a collection titled *Syvistä hetteistä* (“From Deep Moors”). Interestingly, the title of the short story is practically the same as Malmberg’s – it can thus be read as an homage to her. In this short story, a middle-aged woman moves to the countryside and lives there as a recluse. Only after a while, she starts talking to one of the spinsters of the village and they become friends. A reason for them to get to know each other is a discussion about the German author and feminist Elisabeth Dauthendey and her essay *Vom neuen Weibe und seiner Liebe. Ein Buch für reife Geister* (1900/ *Uusi rakkaus. Kirja kypsyneille hengille*, 1902). They discuss the meaning of marriage and whether marriage and friendship can be compared. Yet, the book, according to one of the women, does not say anything positive about friendship, but only about “these unnatural relationships, about which the author writes. These appear probably rather seldom.”

Interestingly, Salmela emphasised in the end of the story that “[their] friendship was not of the excluding quality, and neither was it a life-destroying game. It simply brought more sunshine and energy for life and its demands.”

These last sentences of the short story on the one hand address the queer topic introduced already earlier, and at the same time deny it – a method that I will discuss in the context of other works later, since it was not uncommon and certainly one of the literary methods to make the reader aware of queerness. A fourth work is a Finnish classic, Eino Leino’s novel *Rahan orja* (“Money’s Slave”, Otava 1912), in which the queer topic is concentrated on a few lines when the male protagonist sees his wife embracing her female cousin: “And he saw in the mirror how Signe undressed his wife like Johannes himself had done on the afternoon before. And how Signe kissed her on the neck and how Irene pressed her hand against her bare, soft bosom. And the look on their faces was so luxurious and blissful that Johannes could not forget it.”

This scene is the reason and excuse for the protagonist to begin a relationship with his childhood friend and current nursemaid. The women never have their say after this scene in the novel; everything happens only within the head of the male protagonist and stays out of reach for the reader. Elsi Hyttinen accordingly states that the mainstream reader can catch up with the queer realm of this novel only with the help of small references, which she, however, tries to tame as much as possible, and whose unfamiliarity she tries to nullify (since she expects heterosexuality). That this scene of a canonised author never has been the object of research points to the fact that not naming the

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36 Salmela 1910, 150. “[...].”


38 Leino 1933 (1912), 91. “Ja nähnyt peilistä, miten Signe riisui hänen vaimoona, kuten Johannes itse oli tehnyt eilen ilmapäivällä. Ja miten Signe suuteli tätä kaulaan ja miten Irene painoi kiinteästi hänen kättään vasten paljasta, hempeä poveaan. Ja kummankin kasvoilla oli ollut ilme niin nautiskelevaa ja autuaallinen, ettei Johannes voinut sitä vieläkään unohtaa.”
queer is not necessarily due to the reason that it would not be visible. Rather, if there are no concepts of queer, how could one even express it? This question is a central one of this study.

The literary texts presented above, then, demonstrate the early existence of queer topics within Finnish-language literature; although published in printed versions, they had nonetheless been mostly forgotten for a long time. They also demonstrate the difficulties many of these texts faced: they received few and mostly negative reviews, their authors were often not taken seriously and they were not mentioned in general overviews on literary history. Many of the texts addressing queer topics have probably also never reached the broader public and pose thereby one of the major challenges this study faces: how to find texts that might still be buried in an archive and how to find material related to them that tells about the reasons for their rejection? Since there are rather many published works with queer content in Finnish, I refer in this study only to those and not to unpublished material.

The existence of queer topics makes it clear that literature can be a means to bring up topics that are difficult to address otherwise in social or political discussions. It is not at all uncommon that unwelcome topics, be it queer or political ones, were dealt with precisely via literature, since literature has always functioned as some kind of “history writing”, as the folklorist Ulla-Maija Peltonen in her study of the Finnish Civil War in 1918 shows. The controversial political ideologies often forbade talking about certain topics beyond the canons and silenced many voices for decades. But not only in the forming of national identities has literature been important; reading and books have also often functioned as tools for finding and forming people’s individual identity, especially perhaps for those who belong to a sexual minority. In a study on Swedish lesbian literature in the 1930s, for example, Liv Saga Bergdahl points out that it was especially women who used literature to analyse and theorise love and to make themselves heard.

Lesbian and queer literature in Finland: influences and importance

Life in the urban metropolises of countries like France, the USA or Germany provided women with the possibility to gather in bars, cafés or clubs already in the first decades of the 20th century. In Berlin or Paris, the lesbian figure became “a key figure in the period’s articulation as ‘newly modern’, consciously breaking from constraining historical definitions regarding gender, identity, and sexuality” – a fact which also contributed to the development of a vivid lesbian underground culture in bigger cities. This

39 Hyttinen 2014, 40. I thank Sanna Karkulehto for this reference.
40 Peltonen 1996, 16. Peltonen states that from 1960 (and the publication of the second part of Väinö Linna’s trilogy Under the North Star with its “red” (leftist) interpretation of the Finnish Civil War) onwards, the discussions about the Civil War changed massively with a change in attitudes and became more open to new perspectives.
41 Bergdahl 2010, 12.
42 Doan/ Garrity 2006, 8.
impression undeniably had an influence on, for example, the author Mika Waltari, whose novels that will be discussed in this study associate Parisian night-life with ‘abnormal’ sexualities. Such a formation of underground movements – a means to publish unwelcome literature in many Western countries – was, however, more difficult in Finland, since it was not yet very urbanised at that time; moreover, Finnish women were not allowed to go to restaurants without male company until the late 1960s. They had to gather in private places, which made meeting new women, but also the formation of (underground) groups, more difficult.43

Moreover, several studies have unveiled a major importance of fictional books especially for queer women. For example, Mirkka Rekola (1931—2014), one of the main representatives of Finnish modernist poetry, told in an interview that she experienced a lack of role models in real life as well as in literature as a young girl. Nowadays television and the internet provide us with all kind of information, but in the 1920s to 1940s these possibilities did not exist, yet. This is why for Rekola, as for many of her contemporaries, literature read in foreign languages was the most important medium that provided at least fictional alternative role models.44 In analysing the influences so-called lesbian literature has had on its readership and to suggest at the same time what the lack of the genre might mean, the extensive anthology on The Literature of Lesbianism by Terry Castle makes the case that “literature seems to answer the need for a tribal history and to confirm one’s importance in the world. [...] It has been important – even psychically necessary – for many women who love women to legitimate their sexual unorthodoxy by seeking out works of literature written by individuals whom they imagine to be like themselves.”45 In Finland, there have so far been at least three broader studies that have analysed female homosexuality and identities in Finland. While Marja Kaskisaari has studied autobiographical writings of women between the age of 20 and 37 at the point of the study in 1995 in her work Lesbokirja. Vieras, minä ja moderni (“The Lesbian Book. The Strange, Me and the Modern”), Tuula Juvonen has examined the building of female homosexual identities within popular culture in the city of Tampere in the 1950s in Varjoelämää ja julkisia salaisuuksia (“Shadow-life and public secrets”, 2002). A co-edited work called Uusin silmin. Lesbinen katse kulttuurin (“Seen in a new light. A lesbian view on culture”, 1996) has a look at literature, theatre and film from a so-called lesbian perspective. Antu Sorainen, again, has analysed the juridical aspect of homosexuality from the 1950s onwards in her work Rikollisia sattumalta? Naisten keskinäistä haureutta koskevat oikeudenkäymnit 1950-luvun Itä-Suomessa (“Accidental Criminals? Trials on Gross Indecency between Women in the 1950s’ Eastern Finland”, 2005). She has published broadly on the topic. Within literature studies, the first work

43 For more information on this topic, see also an article of the internet-exhibition “Sateenkaari–Suomi” (Rainbow Finland): http://www.vantaa.fi/ki/kulttuuri/museot/kaupunginmuseo/nayttelyt/verkkonayttely_sateenkaari-suomi/nakymattomat_kohtaamiset (07.01.2014)
44 Interview with Mirkka Rekola, 24.8.2006, Helsinki.
45 Castle 2003, 1.
from a queer perspective was Pervot pidot. Homo-, lesbo- ja queernäkökulmia kirjallisuudentutkimukseen ("Queer Symposium. Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Perspectives on Literature", 2004), edited by Lasse Kekki and Kaisa Ilmonen. Another related work in the field of literature is Mikko Carlson’s dissertation on the works by the Finland-Swedish author Christer Kihlman (*1930). Carlson asks in which way the image of Kihlman’s work changes when it is analysed in the light of the conflict of hetero- and homosexuality that shines through in his works, and he analyses the relation between sexuality and space.46 Yet, Carlson’s focus lies on works published between 1971 and 1987, the time, when the law that banned homosexuality had just been abolished. The period before and in particular the time before World War II, has not yet been studied thoroughly, especially not with regard to female non-heterosexuality in literature. Male homosexuality and its “closeted” reception has, however, been exemplarily studied by Harri Kalha in his book on the Finnish painter Magnus Enckell (1870–1925). This gap in research on female non-heterosexuality in literature might also be influenced by the fact that within the agrarian structures that dominated Finnish society until the 1950s, hardly any traces of homosexuality as a topic or reference can be found in stories or pictures or within behavioural manners, as Jan Löfström argues.47 Yet, as the works listed above, as well as those I analyse show, this argument is not quite true. References to non-heterosexuality could be found also in Finnish literary contexts.

But while fiction has been important in providing alternative role models, it is society and the law that make the difference. Especially important to note in the context of publishing literature is that the Finnish law until as late as 1999 included the so-called “kehotuspykälä” (encouragement section), that forbade to “encourage” people under the age of 18 to commit homosexual acts. As Antu Sorainen states, “its logic was quite peculiar. Public incitement to a legal act, i.e. the fornication between people of the same sex, was made punishable by law.”48 It seems to be quite understandable then that authors would not openly write about the topic, either, since (although homosexuality was not illegal any more after 1971), any “incitement” of it – and a book about homosexuality might be easily counted as such – was not allowed and made punishable. Furthermore, any reference to homosexuality in a book might have been ascribed to the sexuality of the author, as I will show.

Since fictional works have formed an important medium for minority identities, the question arises to which extent, then, Finnish readers were aware of foreign book markets, which languages they read, and which magazines they possibly followed. By asking these questions, one has to take

46 Carlson 2014, 15.
into account that they only apply to those with a background in the middle- and upper-classes who could afford a certain level of education. Women from the working-classes or those living in the country-side were generally less able to read or to get foreign books because of educational and logistic reasons like the limited equipment of local libraries.

1.2 Methods, Theory and Terms

Texts as discourses

My analysis of publishing policies is first and foremost a critical discourse analysis that is based on the thoughts of Michel Foucault (1926–1984). I will examine in which way social power and dominance interacted within the literary field and which effects different kinds of power practises had on literary production in terms of queer topics. Power relations are always discursive, and it is discourse that constitutes society to a considerable degree and thus also culture. With Foucault’s conception of the term “discourse” we can indicate the understanding of reality at a particular time: the inner rules of a discourse define who can speak about a certain topic, at which time this can happen, and especially what can be said. However, no representation of sexuality is homogeneously continuous, truthful or stable, but it is rather coincidental and changes over time. Foucault calls this historical discursiveness, which means different networks of relationships that have emerged at certain times and that merge into discursive practices. These, again, produce knowledge and possible systems of information in a form of appearance that is perceived as legitimate. 49 Foucault defines the systematics around discourses in his lecture *L’ordre du discours* held in 1970, as follows:

I am supposing that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality. 50

Foucault’s analysis of power relations has its basis in the interplay between opposed strategies. In other words: in order to understand power relations, one has to analyse the attempts that want to dissolve them. 51 Consequently, an essential part of this study will be the analysis of attempts within publishing (both by publishers and authors) that can be interpreted as a defiance of heteronormative ideas about women. The question then is in which way it was

49 Kekki 2004, 30. “[T]iettyinä aikoina mahdollistuivat tietyllä tavalla ajattelutavat esimerkiksi seksuaalisuudesta, jolloin mikään historiallinen seksuaalisuuden representaatio ei ollut yhtenäisenä jatkuva, totuudenmukainen tai vakaa vaan aina sattumanvarainen ja ajallisesti muuttuva.”
50 Foucault 1972, 216.
51 Foucault 2005, 273.
possible to undermine discourses, and with which fictional and literary techniques.

Foucault also addresses literature directly. He defines a primary text as a discourse that is not only said, but also uttered, remains uttered and still is to be uttered. Literary texts (as well as religious or juridical ones) resume discourses, transform or discuss them. Moreover, the status of these texts is an always renewable discourse; they have an open possibility to speak due to their characteristic of being versatiliy interpretable. Still, these texts are paradoxical in the sense that they can only for the first time say what was kept silent – that is, they utter what has already been existent but was not spoken out; they repeat what has never been said. An author, moreover, can only utter what his or her epoch sees as permissible for the author-function. He or she can, however, modify it. With regard to the utterance of queer topics then, this means that a literary text ultimately brings into the public realm what existed, but what had been kept silent before. This, however, is not trivial at all, since in printed form an utterance carries much authority. Moreover, in The History of Sexuality. The Will to Knowledge (1976 in the original), Foucault states that those who are able to express their sexual awareness are at the same time, within the speech act, able to free themselves from being subordinated. Foucault calls this the “speaker’s benefit” and means those who can speak about a taboo. Irrespective of whether a text speaks about a taboo or not, every text is a fabric made out of discursive threads. It is a special representation of the discourses of its society; it forms them and also changes them. These threads come into the text and go out again and are interwoven within and outside the text. Texts, then, consist of discourses, and discourses of texts. The term discourse also emphasises the fact that intertextuality is not only a characteristic of a text but also of an entire culture.

Moreover, and this is essential for the mere possibility of queer topics and their success to reach a readership:

[...] the discourse aspect of a text is not just a passive one, a reader being (more or less successfully) entertained by an author; on the contrary, the success of the text depends on the reader’s active collaboration in creating the textual universe. [...] Our knowledge about what can happen in narrative is conditioned by our cultural and social presuppositions, as well as by the particular ‘contract’ that we enter into upon opening a novel.

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53 Foucault 1978, 6. “But there may be another reason that makes it so gratifying for us to define the relationship between sex and power in terms of repression: something that one might call the speaker’s benefit. If sex is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression. A person who holds forth in such language places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power; he upsets established law; he somehow anticipated the coming freedom.”
54 Bäßler 1995, 14–16. See also Roland Barthes’ The Death of the Author (1967, La mort de l’auteur): the literary text is nothing else than a part of this cultural texture, an intertext, too.
55 Mey 2001, 793.
Social power within publishing

In order to include details of everyday practices within the literary field (i.e. publishing decisions and policies, as well as translations) in the analysis of power relations, I also base my study on the works of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002), especially on his theory of social power as he has depicted it in *La distinction* (1979). By taking a look at power relations within the cultural field, Bourdieu’s work offers a productive insight into the analysis of cultural practices and operations. His approach is a practical one, and necessary and useful for the analysis of practices within publishing – although he does not take the category of gender into account. Yet, he combines the cultural and the economic criteria, which are both decisive in publishing. One major point with regard to publishing is pertinence: which books and topics are seen as pertinent to be published, which are not? According to Bourdieu, the answer to this question is very much bound to the interest of those who decide:

The basis of the pertinence principle which is implemented in perceiving the social world and which defines all the characteristics of persons or things which can be perceived, and perceived as positively or negatively interesting, by all those who apply these schemes (another definition of common sense), is based on nothing other than the interest the individuals or groups in question have in recognizing a feature and in identifying the individual in question as a member of the set defined by that feature; interest in the aspect observed is never completely independent of the advantage of observing it.\(^{56}\)

It is homosexuality which Bourdieu takes as an example here: in the process of stigmatising it, the interesting part (in this case an individual’s sexuality) is separated from all the rest of his or her personality. There are two strategies to react to this stigmatisation and the analyses of the literary works will lay open the strategies Finnish authors and publishers made use of, i.e. whether they used the strategies Bourdieu suggests here – namely to retaliate against it and highlight its best of characteristics – or if they resorted to different ones.

The logic of the stigma reminds us that social identity is the stake in a struggle in which the stigmatised individual or group, and, more generally, any individual or group insofar as he or it is a potential object of categorisation, can only retaliate against the partial perception which limits it to one of its characteristics by highlighting, in its self-definition, the best of its characteristics, and, more generally, by struggling to impose the taxonomy most favourable to its characteristics, or at least to give to the dominant taxonomy the content most flattering to what it has and what it is.\(^{57}\)


Decisive for an individual position within the field of power are the different kinds of capital which Bourdieu distinguishes – birth, success or talent, for example. These are “simultaneously instruments of power and stakes in the struggle for power”. Accordingly, “[o]ne of Bourdieu’s main purposes in La distinction is to show that social differentiation not only is about economy, but also about the distribution of other kinds of capitals”\textsuperscript{59}, i.e. also social, cultural and symbolic capital. Especially the latter is important in the context of this study, since it “is the form the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognized as legitimate”\textsuperscript{60}, i.e. it comes with a certain social position and is very much related to this position. Those who are able to gain the maximum amount of the symbolic capital needed in the field in question accordingly have the power. In the relationship between publisher and author/translator, the symbolic capital mostly lies in the hands of the publisher who can decide what will be published and what cannot. In the context of an analysis of publishing it is important to note that “an institution, action or usage which is dominant, but not recognized as such, that is to say, which is tacitly accepted, is legitimate.”\textsuperscript{61} This legitimacy is equivalent to power, as Toril Moi states. A tacitly accepted silence about a certain topic then – be it by being published but silenced in reviews, or by generally not being published – is in certain cases as legitimate as speaking about it. In the latter case, it makes resistance against it all the more difficult. Besides, real legitimacy is only “truly achieved when it is no longer possible to tell whether dominance has been achieved as a result of distinction or whether in fact the dominant agent simply appears to be distinguished because he (more rarely she) is dominant.”\textsuperscript{62} Beverley Skeggs makes an important observation in this context and also introduces the topic of gender:

\begin{quote}
Each kind of capital can only exist in the interrelationships of social positions; they bring with them access to or limitation on which capitals are available to certain positions. They become gendered through being lived, through circulation, just as they become classed, raced and sexed: they become simultaneously processed. […] Gender, class and race are not capitals as such, rather they provide the relations in which capitals come to be organized and valued.\textsuperscript{63}
\end{quote}

By writing, as a female author, in an affirming way about queer topics, the possibility of access to capital and symbolic power was supposedly decreased. The relative rarity of direct examples of queer topics in literature written by women – in Finland as elsewhere in Europe until after World War II – demonstrates the inequality of power relations within publishing. The possibilities of getting works published by questioning the legitimacy some

had gained by their amount of symbolic capital had been limited. Thus, the question arises what kind of symbolic capital was needed, and how power was distributed in the Finnish literary field. One interesting case in this context will be the author and historian Alma Söderhjelm, whose début novel *Kärlekens väninna* was regarded as scandalous because of its queer content, but nevertheless received many (mostly critical) reviews due to Söderhjelm’s social position as an acknowledged historian and member of the Finland-Swedish cultural elite. Moreover, concerning the distribution of power, Söderhjelm’s case will demonstrate that it is symbolic struggles about the question of taste that are fought.

Struggles over the appropriation of economic and cultural goods are, simultaneously, symbolic struggles to appropriate distinctive signs in the form of classified, classifying goods or practices, or to conserve or subvert the principles of classification of these distinctive properties. As a consequence, the space of lifestyles, i.e. the universe of the properties whereby the occupants of different positions differentiate themselves, with or without the intention of distinguishing themselves, is itself only the balance-sheet, at a given moment, of the symbolic struggles over the imposition of the legitimate life-style [...].

Thus, for a literary work to be accepted and published it has to be in one way or another within the frameworks of what is wanted and what is seen as being needed by those who decide, namely those with the highest symbolic power. This leads again back to the topic of legitimacy. The works that are regarded to be legitimate fulfil the norms required by a certain taste that has “won” the symbolic struggle (and, one has to add, the appropriation of cultural products always requires dispositions that are not equally/universally distributed). Moreover, those works “are subject to exclusive appropriation, material or symbolic, and, functioning as cultural capital (objectified or internalized), they yield a profit in distinction [...] and a profit in legitimacy, the profit par excellence, which consists in the fact of feeling justified in being (what one is), being what is right to be.” This is crucial in the context of queer topics, since the justification of “being what is right to be” also touches the field of norms within society, the rules that need to be followed. Moreover, when it comes to publishing, the question of quality versus quantity, today as well as then, has also to be considered. While prestige for a publisher is gained mostly by publishing high quality authors, they often do not bring as much profit as would be needed for the maintenance of a publishing house. So publishers also have to take in authors whose books simply earn money in order to make the publishing of high quality but less profitable literature possible. In Bourdieu’s terms, cultural capital is exchanged here with economic capital. A publisher,
then, “is the representative of the art among the businessmen, and the representative of the businessmen in the art.”

In drawing upon Bourdieu’s works, intersectionality studies also have had a crucial role within the analysis of power relations. They explore intersecting lines of difference and indicate power structures that might be hidden otherwise, since “with each new intersection, new connections emerge and previously hidden exclusions come to light.” This applies also to the literary field. The concept of intersectionality pursues to analyse and at the same time criticise systems of power while it “refers to the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power.” In the context of this study, it is mainly gender and sex, combined with ecclesiastical moral values within literary institutional arrangements that are in the focus.

1.2.1 Discourse and Power Relations

Foucault presumes that any society controls the production of a discourse, while it at the same time selects, organises and canalises it in order to restrain the powers and dangers of the discourse and to banish its unpredictability. Social power can then be defined in terms of control.

Groups have (more or less) power if they are able to (more or less) control the acts and minds of (members of) other groups. This ability presupposes a power base of privileged access to scarce social resources, such as force, money, status, fame, knowledge, information, “culture”, or indeed various forms of public discourse and communication.

The exercised power that needs to be analysed within publishing and literature is mainly based on authority, especially when it is exercised with regard to morals and the law. Likewise, knowledge is essential in publishing (i.e. knowledge about literature, but also the market and the readers) and, quite simply, money that is both needed to publish a book and that is expected to be earned by publishing it. Additionally, it is the access to different forms of discourse that is itself a power resource. Within publishing, it needs to be seen as the access to the public, i.e. the question whether a work or an author is published or not. One needs to be aware, however – and this is one point I will demonstrate with some of the literary examples –, that no form of power is ever absolute or even static and therefore can always be undermined in one...
way or another. In Finnish publishing, the seemingly strongest power that exerts control in this context might have been the law that forbade homosexuality and the mere encouragement to it. However, the archival materials related to queer literary topics do not directly mention the law which hints at either a silent agreement in cases it was not mentioned, or it means that the queer topic was simply not recognised, since a public discourse about homosexuality was more or less non-existent.

When talking about the possibilities of undermining predominant discourses and values, it is essential that the reader is able to presume the possibility of non-heterosexual plots or references to it. If this prerequisite is not given, any subtle attempt to propose new perspectives is doomed to fail. As Ann-Sofie Lööngren also states, “heteronormativity [...] has been one of the expectations the reader has carried with him- or herself when encountering [...] texts. This means that those factors which fall outside such a pre- expectation of a text are made invisible, misunderstood or being dismissed as meaningless.”

But literature also has the possibility to objectify social situations which are not those of the author herself. To be able to do so, the specific situation must, however, already exist as a product of the social structure and the reader needs to have some kind of experience of it; only then literature can establish a description as a social reality within the collective, social consciousness. Similarly, the public impact of the work contributes to the degree of social reality the work receives. In this context, it means that the reader needs to know that queerness exists and might have herself experienced it somehow in order to make it part of the reading process. The question then is to what extent the presumption of queer topics might have been possible in a society that was officially silent about them, and which the means were to break this silence and to make the topics heard. Furthermore, as Harri Kalha notes, the identification of any discourse also entails its (re)construction and thus the researcher always has to be aware of her power, responsibility and need of reflection, especially when analysing queerness from a historical point of view.

Aiming at bringing together theory and practice, Foucault chose to approach the analysis of power relations by investigating the point of origin of resistance against different forms of power, e.g. against the power of men over women, as he states in a collection of his writings, *Dits et écrits*. Accordingly, in order to understand what society means with heterosexuality, one must examine the subject of queerness and its forms of resistance against heteronormativity. This is why an essential part of this study is dedicated to the examination of those attempts within publishing that can be seen as a form of resistance against heteronormative ideas about women (e.g. compulsory

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71 Lööngren 2007, 28. “[...] heteronormativiteten [...] historisk sett har varit en av de förväntningar läsaren har burit med sig i mötet med [...] texter. Detta innebär att de faktorer som faller utanför en sådan förståelse av texten osynliggörs, missuppfattas eller avfärds som meninglösa.”


73 Kalha 2005, 52.

motherhood and heterosexuality) and to ask which forms of resistance to heteronormativity can be found within the literary field. Foucault shows that resistance typically happens at the point where the status of the individual is at stake. Resistance is aimed against the way power works and is always about the question of who we are. It is not a certain institution, group or elite that it is aimed at, but rather a certain form of power. This form of power is directly related to everyday life and divides people into categories, assigns them to a defined individuality and imposes a certain reality upon them – in short, it transforms persons into subjects.\(^{75}\) It produces queer and “normal” subjects, and it is this categorisation that some of the works I analyse try to resist. Alma Söderhjelm’s novel *Kärlekens väninna*, for example, sets hetero- and non-heteronormative ideas side by side. Subject here is understood as the one that is subjected to and dependent on another one: it also means a subject that is bound to its own identity. Both cases imply a form of power that subjects.\(^{76}\) Who, then, exerts power and what are the mechanisms behind the power relations within the literary field in Finland between the two World Wars? And how have power relations changed over time (taking into account the non-linearity of history)?

**Institutions and power**

When analysing institutions within society – one of the most important areas of the exertion of power –, it is crucial to perform this analysis against the background of power relations (and not vice versa) according to Foucault. The actual roots of those power relations, however, have to be sought outside the institutions, even though they manifest themselves within them.\(^{77}\) This means that the power relations within the institution of literature have to be analysed in a broader perspective; the roots of actions that influence decisions come from the outside, i.e. society and the law, albeit in an indirect way via the decisions of the men in power. One has to add, however, that power relations are an essential part of society, not an additional structure. In other words, within any given society it is always possible, even unavoidable, that some influence the actions of others. A society without power relations simply does not exist – which is why it is all the more important to analyse their ways of working and to always have them in mind.\(^{78}\)

The primary question for Foucault is what happens when someone exerts power over someone else. The form of power he aims to investigate is the one that is concerned with relations between individuals or groups, the power that operates via acting on others: power only exists as an act. Moreover, power relations are defined by a way of acting that does not affect others directly, but rather their way of acting. Accordingly, Judith Butler reminds us that “there is

\(^{75}\) Foucault 2005 (1982), 274.
\(^{77}\) Foucault 2005 (1982), 288.
\(^{78}\) Foucault 2005 (1982), 288–289.
no doer behind the deed”. Rather, the doer only is produced in and by the deed. Thus, even though the subject is a mere social construct, it still is able to act.\(^7^9\)

An indispensable requirement is, however, the acknowledgement of the other (upon whom power is exerted) as a subject that is able to act; this subject, in addition, needs to be free to be able to be in a relation of power – without freedom, power would not be possible and the relationship would be one of pressure or violence. Foucault, then, arrives at the definition of power as an ensemble of actions that are directed at possible actions, and it operates within a field of possibilities for the behaviour of acting subjects. Power is actions that are directed at actions.\(^8^0\) Hence, to be able as a law-maker, a publisher or an author to direct power against the act of the writing of/ about queer topics, these topics first and foremost need to exist. Therefore, the mere fact that there was a law against female homosexuality and against the encouragement to it already proves its existence.

For the analyses of power relations within institutions like the book market, Foucault lists five points that need to be taken into consideration. First, it is the system of differentiations that allows to affect the actions of others. This system includes, for example, differences in status, economical or cultural differences. Second, one has to analyse the aims that stand behind interference with actions – is it privileges that are tried to be protected, is it authority that is being exercised? The third point is the question of instrumental modalities. In which way is power performed – with language, weapons, archives or rules? As a fourth point, one has to analyse the forms of institutionalisation. Here, traditional dispositions and legal structures or certain habits might merge; hierarchical structures and functional autonomy are also possible. The last point is the level of rationalisation, i.e. the question of the means and their effectiveness with regard to the exertion of power. What, however, always has to be kept in mind is the fact that power is nothing static, but rather develops itself, changes and uses means that are sometimes more effective and sometimes less so. It is also important to remember that power relations are rooted in the network of society, not only in one special institution; although the state is the most important place of power exertion, all other kinds of power are in some way or another related to it.\(^8^1\) Thus, it is important to widen the perspective to include all important forms of power exertion connected to publishing policies. For example, art and literary critics also exercise power; many reviews show this explicitly, others more subtly and often hidden between the lines. Some remain silent about obvious queer topics, others use “closeted” expressions, i.e. tropes like hints, negations or euphemisms. In this respect, the analysis of the reception of the works follows one of Foucault’s aims in *The History of Sexuality I*, namely “to examine the case of a society which has been loudly castigating itself for its hypocrisy for more than a century, which speaks vernobly of its own silence, takes great pain to relate in

\(^7^9\) Butler 1999, 181.
\(^8^1\) Foucault 2005, 289–291.
detail the things it does not say, denounces the powers it exercises, and promises to liberate itself from the very laws that have made it function.” Harri Kalha furthermore states that many critics who use euphemisms and other tropes when criticizing queer topics, and pretend to refer solely to aesthetic evaluations, often tend to identify themselves with the prevailing ideology of normalising gender and sexuality.82

1.2.2 Questions of Gender in Literature
Judith Butler was among the first theorists to coin the central theoretical term of this study, namely queer. The term aims at de-naturalising identities that are taken for granted. Queer theory has emerged already in the late 1980s in the USA and is strongly influenced by Foucault’s works, post-structuralism, and feminism. It was Foucault who strove to find out “both how and why human sexuality came to be treated as an item of knowledge and the cultural and political implications of the attempt to make it knowable. In general, Foucault’s work shows that power exerts itself by creating regimes of inclusion and exclusion.”83 Besides Butler, Teresa de Lauretis, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Michael Warner and Adrienne Rich were among queer theory’s pioneers in the early 1990s, and the term has developed ever since into different directions. Queer theory, as it is defined in the Dictionary of Critical Theory, is a “post-structuralist approach to the analysis, documenting, history, and understanding of human sexuality.”84 It has originated from and to a certain degree also continues gay and lesbian studies, but with an important difference: it refuses “to crystallise in any specific form, [but] queer maintains a relation of resistance to whatever constitutes the normal.”85 It criticises the normalisation of gender, sex and sexuality within a heteronormative society: sexuality, in queer theory, is a discursive effect.86 Queer theory focuses on divergencies that occur between the normalised categories of sex, gender and desire, but it is at the same time more flexible than categories like lesbian and gay.

Moreover, queer theory pays its main attention to ruling gender systems, i.e. to their repressiveness and artificiality and criticises identity-focused thoughts. Queer theory concentrates on the critique of gender norms that in Butler’s words “must be situated within the context of lives as they are lived and must be guided by the question of what maximizes the possibility for a liveable life, what minimizes the possibility of unbearable life or, indeed, social or literal death.”87 As explained earlier, a queer approach can challenge and

83 Buchanan 2010, 394.
84 Buchanan 2010, 394.
86 Jagose 1996, 98.
87 Butler 2004, 8.
question canons and show that the queer has always been present in the canon, although maybe in hidden forms.

Academic research of the last decades has widely illustrated that social categories like gender or sexuality are socially constructed. There are no equivalents to these constructed categories in reality, at the least homogeneous ones (as essentialist theories believe). Consequently, categories like homosexual are also constructed and represent an antipole to the dominating category of heterosexuality, which, in turn, would not exist without the category of homosexuality against which it defines itself. This construction also happens in literature that confirms or mirrors society and its expectations of literature’s task, as I will show. Moreover, identities are not only socially constructed, but also historically specific. The term gender is a historical one that changes its meaning with the course of time. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the historical context when analysing historical texts. Butler has developed the thought of gender being performative and states that “[t]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; […] identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results.”

Moreover, she writes that

performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed by a subject; this repetition of norms is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. This iterability implies that “performance” is not a singular “act” or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism [...].

A reiteration of norms is also required in literary texts so that they can be understood and get published. In literature, as well as in real life, any gender performativity needs to be examined within the context of norms that the subject is forced to quote in a certain way in order to be constituted as a subject within those norms. This theory is supported when analysing publishing policies, especially those of a small book market like the Finnish one; the construction of accepted identities within a society where female identity was predominantly based on the concept of motherhood, is often confirmed by the literary characters of canonised works. When gender is a performance, this

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88 Butler 1990, 25.
89 Butler 1993, 94. It is important to note the difference between “performance” and “performativity”: “Performativity” can be defined as “the underlying conditions that make performance possible, or by virtue of which a given performance does or does not succeed. To say that ‘gender/ sexual identity/ desire is performative’ does not mean the same as ‘it is performed’. [...M]ost of us, most of the time, are not aware of performing anything in this highly self-conscious way. What we are doing, however, is materializing gender/ sexual identity/ desire by repeating, consciously or not, the acts that conventionally signify ‘femininity’ or ‘butchness’ or ‘flirting’. Performativity theory focuses attention on the codes of signification that underlie particular performances, and so challenges the common-sense perception that our verbal and other behaviour is merely a ‘natural’ expression of our essential selves. For Judith Butler, identity is not the origin but the effect of practices of signification [...].” Deborah Cameron & Don Kulick: Language & Sexuality, Cambridge: Cambrigde University 2003, 150.
performance “is effected with the strategic aim of maintaining gender within its binary frame – an aim that cannot be attributed to a subject, but must rather be understood to found and consolidate the subject.”\textsuperscript{90} What gender identity is necessary for, then, is cultural survival.\textsuperscript{91} This argument will be analysed in the case of authors whose works were not published and who could not or did not want to talk about their rejection due to a queer topic, either. But publishers did also not publicly utter the reasons for rejecting a manuscript or for censoring certain passages. Was it cultural survival that motivated them to remain silent or to silence (oneself)? I refer here, for example, to the rather complicated case of Helvi Hämäläinen who in several interviews circled around the topic of her rejected novel \textit{Kaunis sielu} but hardly mentioned it openly. Also in Soini’s novels \textit{Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit} (1926) and \textit{Uni} (1930) that both undermine ruling expectations, the question arises whether her subtle style of writing contributed to her survival as an author and to the fact that the publisher accepted these works.

If identity is an effect of discursive practices, as Butler states, then the question she is asking as a consequence is also essential here, namely “to what extent is gender identity, construed as a relationship among sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire, the effect of a regulatory practice that can be identified as compulsory heterosexuality?”\textsuperscript{92} Moreover, “institutionalised heterosexuality […] both requires and produces the univocity of each of the gendered terms that constitute the limit of gendered possibilities within an oppositional, binary gender system.”\textsuperscript{93} Institutionalisation here means that those subjects who do not function within the limits of gendered possibilities – i.e. subjects that are produced ex negativo and by prohibitions – have no access to a sexuality that is outside of those allowed limits: sexuality and power are, according to Foucault, coextensive.\textsuperscript{94} When talking about (female) identity that is mirrored by the characters of the texts I analyse, the case of institutionalisation seems to be rather clear on the surface: canonised Finnish literature had been closely attached to society after independence; the general requirement of literature was to correspond to a female identity that focused on motherhood and decency. Consequently, the publishing practices might easily be read in the light of institutionalised/ compulsory heterosexuality, as it has been done in some articles on the topic.\textsuperscript{95} Yet, several examples show that publishing nevertheless is more complicated.

**Queer versus lesbian**

Since the material of this study almost exclusively deals with the position of female literary characters (while, however, partly written by male authors), the

\textsuperscript{90} Butler 1999, 179.
\textsuperscript{91} Butler 1999, 177.
\textsuperscript{92} Butler 1999, 24.
\textsuperscript{93} Butler 1999, 30.
\textsuperscript{94} Butler 1999, 38.
term “lesbian” in its distinction from the term “queer” also needs to be explained. By providing this explanation, I will also highlight the reason for my insistence on the term queer. The term “lesbian literature” has been discussed by theorists widely and for decades. In Finland, the term “lesbo” (lesbian) arrived relatively late to a broader public, and according to Antu Sorainen, in the 1950s the term was still unknown to criminal law. However, it was known at least at the beginning of the 20th century within the more literate circles, deriving from German or French, where the word “lesbisch”/“lesbiennne” had appeared already in the 19th century. In Sivistyssanakirja, the dictionary of foreign words, for example, the term “lesbolainen rakkaus” (lesbian love) was in 1924 explained as “libertinism between women”. In 1945, the term was defined as “sensual love between women”. In 1914, the French term “tribade”, was translated in the French-Finnish dictionary as “a woman practising lesbian love, satisfying her unnatural desires”. This means that already in 1914, the word “lesbolainen” was known in Finnish. In Ain‘Elisabet Pennanen’s play from 1919, the term appears even in printed literature. The term “lesbian” itself and the meaning of it is rather complicated and has changed through the times. And it is not easier to determine “lesbian literature”. It is and will be a fluid term like “women’s literature” or “working-class literature”. Lillian Faderman, for example, described the term “lesbian” in 1981 as “a relationship in which two women’s strongest emotions and affections are directed towards each other. Sexual contact may be a part of the relationship to a greater or lesser degree, or it may be entirely absent. By preference the two women spend most of their time together and share most aspects of their lives with each other.” In her dissertation from 2010, Liv Saga Bergdahl still insists on using the term lesbian literature and defines it as “novels written by women, about lesbian characters and/or relationships, and for lesbian readers in the sense that literature depicts lesbians from an inside-perspective.” Yet, although these definitions are applicable to some novels I examine, they are still too limited and cannot contribute to the topic in question in the sense the term “queer” allows. It is not identities and/or their construction or confirmation in literature I am interested in, but questions of power and how they work within the literary field. And how can we even know who the implied reader is? Also, leaving out male writers would miss an important perspective with regard to publishing and the analysis of ruling values.

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96 Sorainen 2005, 23.
99 Faderman 1981, 17–18. Faderman explores relationships also in centuries that were not as “sexualised” as the 20th century. Bonnie Zimmerman analysed the term “lesbian literature” broadly in 1992. Zimmerman’s explanations can be taken into account when writing about literature after the 1960s. Since not only is the case of queerness in literature even more complex to describe, but there was also no (public) lesbian identity (if such an identity exists) or literary culture in Finland before that.
100 Bergdahl 2010, 36. “[...] romaner skrivna av kvinnor, om lesbiska karaktärer och/eller relationer, och för lesbiska läsare i bemärkelsen att litteraturen skildrar lesbiska ur ett inifrånperspektiv.”
Instead of focusing on authors and their lives, I will rather concentrate on content and literary characters “as *locus communis*, as site of collective imaginative inquiry, as topic of cultural conversation.”\textsuperscript{101} This perception allows for instance to also include works written by male authors. The sexuality of the author her- /herself has no significance. Rather, I am interested in the different representations of female non-heterosexuality within the texts in question. What were the possibilities for authors or publishers to undermine, or queer, dominating conceptions of womanhood? Where did authors meet restrictions – their own or external? The sexuality of the female authors nevertheless cannot be completely ignored due to the simple fact that some reviewers and publishers remarked it or rather speculated about it while “analysing” the motives for introducing queer plots.

The term “queer” also seems to be more applicable for historical topics than “lesbian”, since “lesbian” would concentrate rather on identities than on power structures and limit the scope of the study. When analysing queer figures and topics in literature that was written and translated in times when the term and the idea of queer was not yet existing in the way as it is today, we have to pay attention not to impose our concepts of sexuality as we have built them in the 21st century. Rather, as Elsi Hyttinen in an article on early Finnish working-class literature notes: “[p]aying attention to figurations of the queer in older literary works opens a perspective on the history of literature as an essentially open-ended negotiation of what a human being is and not.”\textsuperscript{102} Moreover, as George E. Haggerty in a review of works on a so-called “gay canon” and queering Shakespeare states, it also means trying to find out how the discourse of same-sex desire “functions within the larger concerns of a cultural moment.”\textsuperscript{103}

The reason for my restriction to topics merely concerned with female characters lies, first, in the fact that there is almost no literary research done on literature dealing with female non-heterosexuality in Finland before the 1980s. A second reason is the social position of women in Finland. Here, as elsewhere, it has differed considerably from the position of heterosexual and non-heterosexual men concerning power relations and would require a different way of researching the topic and also necessitate a different theoretical approach. Yet, when taking literary history in general into account, it is essential in the context of this study to include works written by men, since it was mostly male authors who introduced the topic of love between women into literature: Ovid, Michel de Montagne, William Shakespeare, Charles Baudelaire, to name just a few. Women, on the other hand, were mostly excluded from literary history until the 20th century.\textsuperscript{104} Of course there were

\textsuperscript{101} Castle 2003, 6.
\textsuperscript{102} Hyttinen 2014, 29–30.
\textsuperscript{103} Haggerty 2000, 289.
\textsuperscript{104} Castle has also made the “provocative discovery […] how commonplace – if not indispensable – the lesbian theme has been in modern Western writing. […] Virtually every author of note since the Renaissance has written something, somewhere, touching on the subject of love between women.” Castle 2003, 7.
already the works of Sappho, for example, but they will not be included here since the first extensive translation into Finnish was done only in 1966. Although literature has always known relationships between women, or “romantic friendships”\(^{105}\), as Lillian Faderman calls them, a so-called lesbian identity only appeared about a hundred years ago; accordingly, the term “lesbian literature” did not exist before that, either.

Women in the past [...] lacked the ‘sense of historical continuity’ that [...] is a requirement for an explicit lesbian literature. Few felt themselves to be different from other women of their time, or to have an identity defined by a particular sexuality. Although we can recognize lesbian behaviour or feelings throughout the centuries and across all cultures and nationalities, lesbian identity was the creation of the late nineteenth century.\(^{106}\)

In Finland, according to Anu Sorainen (cited above, stating that the criminal law did not know the term lesbian still in the 1950s) the creation of such an identity happened even later, in the 1960s. Here, Laura Doan makes an essential point about the greater emergence of lesbian identity in public that applies also to Finland and its connections to other countries concerning queer topics in literature: “[...] it is a mistake to presume too great an interconnectedness of national cultures in relation to a lesbian subcultural style [...]. Such attempts to ‘internationalize’ lesbianism often result in misunderstandings and in the development of myths [...].”\(^{107}\) Consequently, I would argue that despite a rather vivid cultural exchange between Finland and especially Sweden, but also Germany and France, the cultural exchange on the Finnish-speaking side did not take place so much within the area of ideologies concerning sexuality and gender. Finland-Swedish works, however, addressed queer topics more openly. With regard to queer topics in literature or so-called lesbian identity, there were major differences between Finnish and Finland-Swedish culture. I will go deeper into this topic as well as the relationship between Finland and Sweden in the analysis of the works by Alma Söderhjelm and Margareta Suber and examine the exchange between those two literary fields with regard to reactions to queer topics.

However, the assumption that lesbian culture, its development and the terms that are connected with it are to a great deal an import from sources beyond the Finnish-language book market cannot be denied. In her academic master thesis on the topic of translating lesbian literature, Virva Hepolampi states that “the conception of lesbianism in Finland, within both popular and learned discourses, appears to be to a significant degree a cultural import, the

\(^{105}\) Faderman 1981.
\(^{106}\) Zimmerman 1992, 4.
\(^{107}\) Doan 2001, xix–xx. Moreover, Doan suggests in her book an approach that “constitutes a new direction in lesbian historiography by its insistence on a particularized national context and temporality in interrogating anew a range of myths long accepted without question, concerning, to cite only a few, the extent of homophobia in the 1920s, or the strategic deployment of sexology against sexual minorities, or the rigidity of certain cultural codes to denote lesbianism in public culture.” Doan 2001, xxiii.
product of reading, translating and rewriting of foreign sources.” This thesis applies certainly for the time after the 1950s, but the importance of the influence of translations needs to be questioned for the first decades of the 20th century, since there were indeed not many. I therefore argue that during this time, the reading of foreign literature was the most important means for authors. Hepolampi goes on saying that

[...] female homosexuality did not arouse cultural anxieties in the Finnish agrarian society; its representations before the 1970s were infrequent in Finnish everyday discourse and literature. This is all the more a reason to pay closer attention to translations and other rewritings of foreign origin. Since the amount of translations in Finland is comparatively high, it seems reasonable to assume that the idioms, rhetoric, characterization and narrative conventions have played not a small role, if not a decisive one in shaping the cultural intelligibility of lesbianism in Finland.

While the argument that the representations of female homosexuality were infrequent in Finland seems to be valid, the weakness of Hepolampi’s research is that it mainly has a look at books translated into Finnish. She does not, however, take into account the Finland-Swedish book market as a source of inspiration. Authors like Alma Söderhjelm or Hagar Olsson addressed the issue of queerness and homosexuality already in the 1920s and can thus be seen as endemic sources. Also Finnish literature before the 1920s was to a certain degree conscious about the topic, as shown earlier. But when there were so few translations with queer topics available in Finnish at least until the 1960s, what could have been the lesbian writing that had an impact on a supposed Finnish lesbian culture? It was rather books that were published abroad and available in Finland, and books in Swedish that might have had an influence during the time period analysed here. This means that literature with queer topics was, if at all, almost only available to well-educated readers who knew languages and were able to travel. When searching for the reasons why there were so little translations of texts dealing with Sapphism or female homosexuality, Hepolampi makes an essential remark on translational policies in Finland:

At the time when French writers were involved in Sapphic speculations in the latter half of the 19th century, literary translating into Finnish was dominated by a nationalist agenda and the primacy of getting uncontroversial classics translated in order to nourish the emergent vernacular literature and to enrich the language.

108 Hepolampi 2003, 64. See also for example Mustola 1996. Hepolampi outlines in her master thesis also the history of lesbian literature in Europe and shows how many works have remained untranslated.
110 Hepolampi 2008, 137.
111 Hepolampi 2003, 66.
The translational policies into Finnish have long been following these rules, partly until today, since there are still essential works lacking. Not only is there a lack of works by Finland-Swedish authors, but also for example Patricia Highsmith’s novel *The Price of Salt* (1952, also published under the title *Carol*, first under the pseudonym Claire Morgan) which is said to be the first lesbian novel with a positive and happy ending, has never been translated. The translation of Charles Baudelaire’s *Les fleurs du mal* (1847) that also included poems about “les lesbiennes”, has only been completely published in Finnish in 2011. However, as Hepolampi also states, queer topics “are often to be found in texts that also otherwise had little translational appeal in Finland, for example in texts considered marginal within the author’s oeuvre, in narratives permeated by culturally specific elements, or in genres undervalued in the domestic literary climate.”

That a so-called lesbian identity emerged exactly at the turn of the century in the Western world has, according to Lilian Faderman, several reasons. First, women at the time were more and more able to live on their own and choose their way of life in urban anonymity, since they became an increasing part of the workforce. Secondly, the rise of women’s movements in all countries contributed to an increased self-esteem of women, while heterosexual norms, like the nuclear family, were criticised. In general, however, women’s movements were not much appreciated by the larger part of the population. Still, theorists like Sigmund Freud researched especially female homosexuality and added a modern, not purely negative point of view to it (Faderman also adds to Freud that he cited mostly cases from the (post)Victorian age, that is, from times when the romantic friendships usually meant non-genital love relationships). But after World War I, the perspective on love between women changed due to new knowledge in medical discourses. What had been seen as unproblematic before, or maybe not taken seriously since women were not regarded as having sexual desire, suddenly became something dangerous and forbidden. The influence of sexologists like Richard von Krafft-Ebing and, to some degree, Havelock Ellis, who were only known in small academic circles in Finland at that time, was also reflected in lesbian fiction. As a result of

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112 Charles Baudelaire: *Pahan kukat*, translated/interpreted by Antti Nylén, Sammakko: Turku 2011. The reason why the work had not been translated before, is not named in the afterword. Nylén writes that “it is strange that *The Flowers of Evil* had not been translated before. The translation by Yrjö Kajärvi published in 1962 is an arbitrary selection of the edition from 1861 and contains about half of the original version. It seems weird that no one tried after Kajärvi.” Baudelaire 2011, 480.

In 1965, the poet Väinö Kirstinä wrote in an article on translating poetry that since 1891, there had been 15 translations of parts of *The Flowers of Evil*, but nonetheless until then only 79 poems, less than half of the whole poetry anthology, had been translated. He sees the problem in the difficulty of the original work. The Finnish translations had either been faithful to the original, but useless as poems, or prose-like translations and as poems thus far away from what the original had been. See Kirstinä 1965, 63–64.

113 Hepolampi 2003, 68.


115 Havelock Ellis (1859–1939), for example, had influenced the Finnish sociologist Edvard Westermarck (1862–1939) who also published on topics related to sexuality, e.g. the incest taboo and on marriage. Sorainen 2005, 11.

Also Olavi Paavolainen had read Ellis and planned a book on sexuality and marriage, but never finished it. (I thank Hannu K. Riikonen for this reference.)
this exploration of the history of the different terms, I use “queer” as a
differentiation from terms like homosexual and lesbian, since they would limit
the scope of the topic. The question of this study is not about identities – I do
not analyse the literary characters as possible representative identities of real-
life models or examine the question whether the texts prove homosexuality –
but I see the queer topics or literary characters as a literary means that serves
a certain function, namely to reveal or confirm power structures.\footnote{116} While the
term queer points beyond established categories of sex and gender, it is
therefore not meant as a new term for homosexualities, but rather as a term to
signify all forms of non-heteronormativity and everything that goes beyond
anything perceived as “normal” and that deviates from norms that prevailed
when the text was written. When identity formation per se is criticised and any
fixation of an identity is questioned, then “queer theory’s claim is to be
opposed to the unwanted legislation of identity”.\footnote{117} Or, as Annamarie Jagose
puts it, “queer, then, is an identity category that has no interest in
consolidating or even stabilising itself. [...] The discursive proliferation of
queer has been enabled in part by the knowledge that identities are fictitious
– that is, produced by and productive of material effects but nevertheless
arbitrary, contingent and ideologically motivated.”\footnote{118} What I will show is that
there were literary techniques or ways of writing to undermine or to question,
i.e. to queer these ideologies. Yet, queering the ideology of compulsory
heterosexuality also had its limits.

The term “queer” then offers possibilities which terms like gay or lesbian
do not. It is a helpful and at the same time difficult term, since “queer” refuses
any kind of clear definition. It rather tries
to go beyond the binary oppositions and essentialism that it sometimes sees as
characterizing gay or lesbian studies. The concern is that [...] lesbian or gay studies
[...] suggest a belief in stable characteristics that can describe all gays or all
lesbians across geography and time [...] . By contrast, the term queer suggests
instability and continuous process.\footnote{119}

Both terms, moreover, have changed over the time span in question and
are very unstable per se. “Queer” can also include more than gay and lesbian
can, since it is concerned with all kinds of norms, i.e. also the norms with
regard to compulsory heterosexuality that include for example the

\footnote{The German-Austrian sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902) studied, amongst other
topics, homosexuality in his famous work \textit{Psychopathia sexualis} (1886) and came to the result that it is
a perversion and not a mental illness; he also stated that homosexuality (“die konträre Sexualität”) is an
equivalent to heterosexuality. See Brede 1984, 20.

However, Krafft-Ebing states in the chapter called “Amor lesbicus” that lesbian desire rarely is
innate, but rather develops under certain circumstances, e.g. in prisons for women: “Die grosse [sic]
Mehrzahl der Lesbierinnen aber folgt nicht einem angeborenen Drange, sondern entwickelt sich unter
analogen Bedingungen wie der gezüchtete Urning. Besonders gedeiht diese “verbotene Freundschaft” in
\footnote{116} See also Hyttinen 2012, 134–135/ Kekki 2004, 33–34.
\footnote{117} Butler 2004, 7.
\footnote{118} Jagose 1996, 130/131.
\footnote{119} Parker 2008, 163.}
expectations directed at women to become mothers and to contribute to the national project. In the context of this study that deals with a period when terms like queer or lesbian were not in use yet, queer-studies are useful since they deconstruct gay and lesbian studies by striving to understand the way sexualities are constructed and to analyse historical representations of sexuality. Following Lasse Kekki, we can “[…] with the help of queer-studies ask whose sexual discourses have been formed and how desire that is directed at the same sex has been presented in different sexual discourses.”

Moreover, a queer interpretation can be seen as a conscious or subconscious strategy to reject different discourses: heteronormative discourses can be exposed while those that affirm queer ones can be spurred.

1.2.3 Heteronormativity and Possibilities of Queer Subversion

In a context of silences and possibilities around the topic of sexuality, the question of “norms” automatically comes to the fore, since it is social norms that define what kind of (sexual) behaviour is acceptable and what is not, and it is norms that enable social life. Moreover, as Butler has put it, also “gender is a norm”, and a norm “operates within social practices as the implicit standard of normalization”. As far as they are not at the same time the law, norms are not static, but “can be transformed by the subjects that are to be formed by them.” They work best when they are not recognised and “appear synonymous with the patterns of behaviour and comportment that a society takes for granted.” Yet, once the norms can be realised as a norm, they are in danger to become subverted. It is at this point, when norms become visible, when also literary works have the potential to undermine prevailing norms by using them and converting them at the same time into something else, for example with the means of irony.

One result of normalisation is heteronormativity, i.e. the norms that categorise men and women according to certain roles, with heterosexuality being the standard. As categories of both thought and identity, sex and gender become intelligible within the terms of heteronormativity – which is why lesbian or gay identity is consistently rendered unintelligible by heteronormativity. An identity that is unintelligible is not marginalised, but

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120 Kekki 2004, 31. “[…] queer-tutkimuksen parissa kysytään, miten seksuaalisuuden diskurssit ovat eri aikoina rakentuneet ja miten samaan sukupuoleen kohdistunut halu on esitetty erilaisissa seksuaalisissa diskursseissa.”
121 Kekki 2004, 34.
122 Kirby 2006, 124.
123 Butler 2004, 41.
125 Kirby 2006, 124.
126 Chambers/ Carver 2008b, 150. The term heteronormativity is not without controversy. Leena-Maija Rossi, for example, has analysed the term heteronormativity and its history and criticises that it blurs the differences between different forms of heterosexuality. Moreover, the idea of the term is well able to lead the reader’s attention towards sexualities and gender, but it also is limited to those and does not, for example, take race or class into account. She thus suggests to rather speak about normative and non-normative heterosexuality. Rossi 2006, 24; 26.
is rather, as Samuel A. Chambers and Terrell Carver in their study on Butler and political theory point out, one of “those ‘others’ who are made invisible by the norm. [...] The power of normalisation cannot only marginalise or oppress; it can render one unintelligible.”\textsuperscript{127} How does one become visible or able to speak, then? That is, how can queer topics find their way into literature when they are not requested, being unintelligible and thus invisible? Following Butler, Chambers and Carver state that a subject position also always implies possibilities. Since right from the moment of being subjected to gender norms, there is also the possibility of resistance: subjection and agency are inextricably intertwined. Thus, it has to be heteronormativity itself that is the target of subversion. It is by challenging heteronormative structures of kinship that the previously unintelligible can be rendered intelligible. To subvert the heterosexual matrix – i.e. the assemblage of norms that serves the particular end of producing subjects whose gender/sex/desire all cohere in certain ways – means to repeat the regulatory practices that maintain the matrix, but by altering their terms.\textsuperscript{128}

Moreover, it is heteronormativity that makes sexuality legible. To subvert heteronormativity would, then, mean to render sexuality less legible. One needs to undermine the practices of reading sexuality produced by heteronormativity.\textsuperscript{129} This means in the context of this study that when the aim is to undermine heteronormativity, we have to look for literature that deals with the patterns of heteronormativity, but at the same time introduces queer alternatives within and subverts it: a queer reading, as introduced earlier, is needed. A subtle introduction of queer alternatives happens for example in Elsa Soini’s novel \textit{Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit}, in which the examination of concepts of motherhood is a central topic. Parts of the novel’s plot, as I will show, can be read as the repetition and at the same time a possible subversion of heteronormative structures. Also Hagar Olsson’s \textit{På Kanaanexpressen} belongs to the same category, but deals with the topic even more openly. The difficulty with such texts, however, is to know what might have been regarded as queer or undermining heteronormative structures at the time the text was written, when “queer” as a concept had not yet existed: where exactly and by what means did the text undermine set values? The topic of homosexuality and the rejection of motherhood had often not been considered to even exist in Finland; as late as the 1990s, potentially queer topics offered in books from abroad were, for example, rejected with the argument that they were not relevant to current Finnish society.\textsuperscript{130} Queer subjects in literature after independence might then be called unintelligible in Butler’s sense and a novel

\textsuperscript{127} Chambers/Carver 2008b, 126/7.
\textsuperscript{128} Chambers/Carver 2008b, 147.
\textsuperscript{129} Chambers/Carver 2008b, 154.
\textsuperscript{130} This was for example also the case with Simone de Beauvoir’s \textit{La deuxième sexe} (1949) that was translated into Finnish in 1980 and reprinted in 1999 (under the title Toinen sukupuoli), both times without the chapter on lesbian love. The translator Annikki Suni mentioned as one decisive reason that it was a) cheaper, and b) the chapter includes many references on texts unknown in Finland (I refer here to a telephone conversation with Suni in summer 2007). In 2009 and 2011, the publisher Tammi finally published an unabridged version with the same title in two parts.
like Soini’s indeed might have been an example of the subtle subversion of heteronormativity, as I will show.

Besides, it is important to note that subversion must come from within the culture it wants to subvert to be (politically) efficacious. Subversion must therefore, according to Butler, always target a norm or a system of norms. As Butler states, “a norm is a form of social power that produces the intelligible field of subjects, and an apparatus by which the gender binary is institutional.”\(^{131}\) Crucial in the Finnish context is Elena Loizidou’s argument: “[W]hen norms do not become the law, [...] then we can resist the cultural norms that bring us into being. But when law and norms become one or at least are presented as one, then the possibility for survival as humans becomes delimited.”\(^{132}\) When both male and female homosexuality were banned by law from 1889 until 1971, this argumentation becomes vital. Consequently, the question arises, to which extent the law and norms went hand in hand when publishers decided about publishing or rejecting books with a possible queer content. Of course, male homosexuality had everywhere been banned but still books and art dealing with this topic came out (albeit they often resulted in debates). How about the encouragement section, then? How much has it influenced Finnish discourse? As Kati Mustola writes, it had at least influenced the media, since: “[...] it made the state-controlled Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) very cautious. It scarcely dared to transmit any programs on the radio or TV which dealt with homosexuality because it could mean facing legal charges.”\(^{133}\)

The question remains whether repeating and questioning norms made them visible in literature and influenced the later production of queer topics. What can be observed in the texts that exemplify a subversion of heteronormativity on the Finnish book market is that some of them indeed repeat existing norms while some also without doubt ironise them. To assess their potential subversion, a queer reading is able to bring out variations within the frames of set norms that undermine what they tell on the surface.

### 1.3 Approaching the Archives

This study is not only based on published texts, but to a large degree also on different kinds of archival material. When approaching an archive, one has to consider the character of an archive, since, as Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) has put it, “[t]here is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion; the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation.”\(^{134}\) An archive is always constructed and based on the fact that it only contains what was, at a certain time and by certain people,

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\(^{131}\) Butler 2004, 48.

\(^{132}\) Loizidou 2007, 125.

\(^{133}\) Mustola 2007, 238.

\(^{134}\) Derrida 1996, 4, footnote 1.
regarded as valuable to be archived. Moreover, it can only contain those materials that were offered to the archive: both the authors themselves (by what they wrote and kept), and their relatives (by which material they donate) can have made selections beforehand. An archive can thus not necessarily be seen as having an objective view on history, it rather is also bound to interpretation, selection, in- and exclusion, and systematisation. As the historian Antoinette Burton points out,

history is not merely a project of fact-retrieval [...], but also a set of complex processes of selection, interpretation, and even creative invention – processes set in motion by, among other things, one’s personal encounter with the archive, the history of the archive itself, and the pressure of the contemporary moment on one’s reading on what is to be found here.¹³⁵

This character of archival material has always to be kept in mind when doing research; depending on what material or interpretation one is after, one chooses the kind of material to look at, since the time to do archival research is limited and the amount of material that might be considered is usually too large. As a result, “archives are always already stories: they produce speech and especially speech effects, of which history is but one.”¹³⁶ Yet, this is a thesis I can agree with only partly, since there are of course materials that represent facts. However, it is then also discourses that are built and/ or confirmed within and by archives. And it can be stories (or “histories”) that are told by the selection of the material, not necessarily history that would be universally valid. Or, as Page DuBois has put it in her research on Sappho: “Historiography is a process, a recognition of the fictionality, the scriptural status of the story we tell assembled from the fragments of the past, objects, bits of stuff embedded in other narratives or standing alone, receiving their status as fragments only from our point of view within a narrative. We use these fragments as we seek coherence.”¹³⁷

Due to the rather little amount of literature with queer content that was published in Finnish, and, even if published, had not found a broader readership and accordingly been forgotten in the long run, it is the archives of publishers and the Finnish and Finland-Swedish literature societies that provide insightful material about how these texts had been received when they were written. Archival material, both unpublished letters by publishers and published newspaper articles, have also often been more helpful than research literature, since there are not many studies with a queer perspective on texts. Nevertheless, more and more articles have been published in recent years.¹³⁸

Newspapers and magazines published during the time-span of this study have proven to be most fruitful. Archived newspapers and magazines can shed a light on once published but nowadays forgotten works with queer notions

¹³⁸ See for example Kivilaakso 2012, or Hyttinen & Kivilaakso 2010.
and at the same time depict the way possibly queer topics were perceived at the time they found their way into the public. They also tell about prevailing norms and expectations towards literature. In addition, cultural magazines and newspapers like *Tulenkantajat* and *Sininen kirja* that focused on foreign literature are a rich source to answer the question what Finnish publishers, authors and the readership might have known about foreign literature that was not translated, but nevertheless known via the writings of leading literary critics and scholars. In the case of literary critique, it is of course also decisive which person the review writes (e.g. male/ female, political and social background), for which magazine/ newspaper the review is written (a conservative or a progressive one, one supported by an organisation etc.), and who the intended readership is. A broader readership usually also means a more cautious review, i.e. no one should be offended or being driven away due to a too liberal opinion. Also the media needs its readers and the money they pay. I agree here, then, partly with Sanna Karkulehto who in her dissertation states that (knowingly or unconsciously) “the closet forms the means for literary reviews to write about non-normative sexualities”, so that certain readers know what they write about and detect the hidden meanings, while others simply do not recognise them.\(^{139}\) Yet, within the reviews of certain works I examine – mostly in quality papers, and mostly in Swedish language –, the closet was not used as a means at all, but the “scandalous” topic was openly addressed and discussed.

The correspondences between publishers in Finland and abroad as well as between authors and publishers have also been efficient sources. Besides, minutes of publishers are helpful in finding out about decisions or financial situations that might have led to the rejection of certain manuscripts or foreign books, or about other limitations or possibilities. But many decisions still remain unclear and can only be interpreted by knowing the background of the publishers and reviewers: how they decided in other cases, what kind of background they had, what kind of letters, articles and reviews they wrote in which they expressed their opinions on morals and values, what they possibly remained silent about and what the publisher’s financial situation was – often, of course, books are not published or translated due to the financial risk when there were doubts whether a book would sell.

The problem with archival material, however, is rather evident: although Finland’s literary production has been rather small compared to many other countries, and the number of publishers accordingly is also quite small, it still is impossible to go through all the possibly relevant material. So where to start and where to end the search for unpublished material that was possibly rejected due to its queer topic? And where can we find the evidence for the reasons for rejection or censorship? This is one of the reasons why the final selection of literary texts for this study only consists of published texts and of

\(^{139}\) Karkulehto 2007, 160. “[...] uskon retoriikan keinot muodostuvan kirjallisuuskritiikkien keinoksi kirjoittaa ei-normatiivisista seksuaalisuuksista.”
the archival material related to them. This selection was also necessary due to the many texts with queer topics that can be found.

Another challenge for research is the structure of archives, since they are systematised in a way that leaves certain topics out or does not mention them separately, as for example “queer”.

The introduction of systems, orders, boundaries, and reason into what is disparate and without contours can be viewed as a practice of “consciousness and meaning production”. But the principle of coherence has a price, as the object’s “[u]niqueness, specificity, and individuality are destroyed within the process.” [...] [T]he archive is dependent on a principle of identification and recognition – a principle that risks reducing the material in the tyranny of categorization that severs connections and other possible meanings.140

Systematisation thus at the same time destroys and leaves out certain parts of the whole, while it nevertheless is the only way to organise an archive. What is indispensable, and also being done more and more, is to include more categories into the systematisation and to widen the perspective of those working in archives, also by experts from outside. With regard to the material that this study is dealing with, there has been no label within traditional archives that would say “queer” or even “homosexual” (except in criminal records). In contrast to labels like “war” or “women’s role” that are established labels of systematisation, one rather has to know where to look for in the area of queer topics and rely on the knowledge and information of those working at the archives. In short, it is background knowledge that is important in order to find out which authors might have been interested or involved in the topic; who was mentioned in newspapers or in minutes or letters by publishers, and in which way. One has to read between the lines and follow these threads rather than archival categorisations. It is “counter-knowledge” that needs to be sought – knowledge, that is, that had not been regarded as useful during the process of archiving and thus has disappeared within the official labels and categories of archives. Besides, and essential here, “[q]ueerness is often transmitted covertly. This has everything to do with the fact that leaving too much of a trace has often meant that the queer subject has left herself open for attack.”141 This statement needs to be kept in mind also within Finnish literature and publishing: a small field, that is, where the people who decided were very few and an author’s reputation was crucial for at least having the possibility to be published.

Furthermore, within archive studies the terms remembrance and memory become essential. What is remembered, and in which way? That is, what kind of material has found its way into canons, to the public sphere, into the archive,
and what has been lost? Remembrance never is purely personal, but always at the same time social and political in a broader sense. Ulla-Maija Peltonen states that “in practice those things that are remembered and the question of how they are interpreted are bound to the dialogue between political and cultural values in the presence.”\textsuperscript{142} The social, cultural and political background thus play together in a) what is remembered and what comes to the archive or to public, and b) what they value – or what the individual researcher values – at the time the memories are being analysed.

But also the opposite of memory, namely ‘oblivion’, needs to be taken into account. The historian Luisa Passerini points out the important difference between silence and oblivion that is crucial in this context: things that are forgotten cannot even be searched for; they are lost. In contrast, those things that were silenced often still have left traces. It is those that need to be searched for – outside institutional conventions: “[W]hen trying to understand connections between silence and speech, oblivion and memory, we must look for relationships between traces, or between traces and their absences; and we must attempt interpretations which make possible the creation of new associations.”\textsuperscript{143} It is then, as also Passerini concludes, a queer reading that follows those traces that can lead to new knowledge outside canonised literary history.

When a first answer to the question what the archives tell about literature that did not fulfil expected moral or normative requirements, or what the authors themselves wrote or said, would be: not much – then the silences of the archives still speak for themselves. There are silences that appear in reviews that ignored a rather obvious queer plot, as the example of Pennanen’s or Soini’s texts show, and they also appear in publishers’ or literature archives where material about certain works was not kept. Reports by publishers mention, for example, in one sentence that a certain book was unsuitable for the Finnish readership. Striking in such cases is that the non-silence of a work was answered with silence.

Yet, not only are archives sometimes stories, but stories can also be archives. This means that fiction itself also can and must be seen as an archive in this context. With its characteristic as a first individually written, but later published text, literature has the ability to transform private experiences into collectively witnessed ones. And, as stated earlier, a literary text is always a special representation of the discourse of its society. My approach to the fictional material then also resembles the act of going to the archive, with all the challenges described above: what can be found in the literary works and what do they tell us about the time they were written in? As Ann Cvetkovich writes, it is feelings and experiences that need to be taken into account when analysing queer topics in literature. Those can be found especially in fiction and other, especially private, archival material, since these materials not only

\textsuperscript{142} Peltonen 1996, 24. “Käytännössä se, mitä muistaa ja miten muistamansa tulkitsee, on sidoksissa vuoropuheluun poliittisten ja kulttuuristen arvojen välillä nykyhetkessä.”

\textsuperscript{143} Passerini 2003, 240.
convey facts, but most and foremost emotions. \(^{144}\) Also fiction can be “queered” by reading it through archival material related to it that shows, for example, discussions about the material with regard to its queer content. As Katri Kivilaakso puts it, it is the knowledge of texts, archival or printed, that is crucial from a queer perspective: “[w]hat they presume, know or implicate about gender and sexuality, and how they do it.” \(^{145}\) Both fiction and “truth” are part of the past, documenting certain histories. Moreover, “[f]orms of individual and collective narratives are not merely representations disconnected from ‘real’ political life; nor are these expressions ‘transparent’ records of histories of struggle. Rather, these forms – life stories, oral histories, histories of community, literature – are crucial media that connect subjects to social relations.” \(^{146}\) As a result, queer topics within literary texts build an archive of their own, i.e. an archive for divergent sexualities, preserving and conveying marginal experiences via the written text. \(^{147}\) A fictitious approach might then have been easier for authors than writing about these topics overtly in private letters. Thus, it

is likely that our subjects have edited the record or were prone, in any event, to practise certain forms of subterfuge – conscious or unconscious – in what they committed to paper (and in what they chose to keep). We must contend with ellipsis, code and impenetrable innuendo in a context where, unlike the original recipients, as readers we lack the shared context that would guarantee comprehension of so many details in the documents we examine. \(^{148}\)

Archival materials, those documents that are easily considered to tell the truth about historical events, in the end are not necessarily more reliable than fiction. Rather, “letters cannot ‘explain’ novels or give us access to the writer ‘behind’ the fictional narrative, nor can excerpts from letters reliably provide ‘facts’ about a situation or a sensibility on which to ground a literary argument. Letters and novels are both acts of self-representation in writing and, as such, may both be taken, to begin with, as fictions.” \(^{149}\) However, when also reading literature as an archive, one can find queer topics that have usually not been named or marked as such, neither within common archival practices, nor in works on literary history. And what we find in an archive are fragments of a whole, a part of a history. This is the main challenge one has to cope with when approaching the archive.

What remains to us of the past, what we know of the present, of the consciousness of others, for example, is fragmentary. One way of responding to this recognition

\(^{144}\) Cvetkovich 2003, 7–8.
\(^{145}\) Kivilaakso 2012, 149. “[...] vad de antar, vet eller antyder om kön och sexualitet och hur de gör detta.”
\(^{146}\) Lowe 1996, 156.
\(^{147}\) Kivilaakso 2012, 147.
is to pursue a dream of wholeness, transparency, perfect access to what we desire to know. Another is to accept the partiality of our experience, to seek, even as we yearn for more, more facts, more words and artefacts, [...] to read what we have.¹⁵⁰

The researcher who approaches the archive always has to keep in mind that she brings her own background and her own questions to the material with her. The readings of documents are mostly interpretations, and thus open to be challenged as any interpretation of any text. A thought to be kept in mind concerning any approach to archives, not only a queer one, is noted by Sally Newman who writes that “part of the danger in constructing the past in our own image is that we forget to interrogate the status of that image.”¹⁵¹ An interrogation of the status of the image of queer notions in literature in the time between the wars, then, will also be one of the aims of this study.

2 The Literary Field and Women’s Position within the National Project

2.1 Questions of Female Decency and Literature in the Process of Finnish Nation-Building

Literature and publishing in Finnish have their roots in the national movement of the 19th century. Finnish nation, Finnish culture, national identity and literature played a crucial role in the building of the Finnish nation. In the early 20th century, both the First World War and the Finnish Civil War that followed in 1918 had left their marks before the long-awaited independence of Finland happened in 1917. The consequences of these events were also far-reaching for publishing. While striving to build and establish a (homogeneous) national identity, Finland and its literary field in the decades after independence were dominated by nationalist-patriotic ideas, as for example archival material related to the literary works shows. These ideas, I argue, had not only an impact on the confirmation of heteronormative ideas about women’s role, especially concerning motherhood, but also on the way authors wrote. Both analogies to (even an overstatement of) the ruling discourses can be observed within literary works, and a literary production that undermined these ideas.

Historical overview

For a better understanding of the socio-cultural and political atmosphere within the Finnish nation after its independence, I will first give a comprised overview of some of the country’s historic events that have resulted in nationalist tendencies in the 1920s and 1930s. First, it is essential to note that Finnish history until 1917 was one of foreign rule. From the Middle Ages until 1809, the country was part of Sweden, and although the majority of the population spoke Finnish, Swedish was the official language. Written Finnish language virtually did not exist until the 19th century (disregarding mostly religious texts or academic texts, like on Finnish grammar). Finnish became an official language only in 1902, while Swedish has remained the country’s other official language.

During the Napoleonic Wars, Russia and France allied themselves against England and thus also against Sweden that was an ally of England. In 1808, as a consequence, Russia started the so-called Finnish War against Sweden. As a result of the war, the Russian Empire gained most parts of Finland, which became the Grand Duchy of Finland and gained autonomy under Russian rule. From the 1840s onwards, Finnish intellectuals started to fight for the rise of the Finnish culture, a sovereign Finnish nation and the status of Finnish as the national language. A central part in the struggle, especially for Finnish as the
country’s language, played the Finnish Party (Suomalainen Puolue). Founded by the Fennoman movement, it was a political group that aspired to fortify the autonomous state unit. With his aim to strengthen the Finnish language, the state philosopher Johan Vilhelm Snellman (1806–1881) played a crucial role in this movement. He emphasised that the problem for Finland was its lack of a national literature, around which a national high culture and a public could be built. For him, it was decisive that the nation should be constructed around one language, namely Finnish. So it had been the Finland-Swedish elite who strove to bring forward the Finnish language as the language of literature in Finland already in the 19th century. Thus, it was a strong nationalistic movement, fennophile idealism and to some degree Fennoman fanaticism that made way for literary activities on a broader scale, and helped to develop the literary institution into a professional system. These factors also had an important and ongoing influence on the ideas that were predominant in Finland during the first decades of the independence.

At the turn to the 20th century, the wish for independency became stronger. The Russian rule intensified and a process of Russification started. During the so-called “sortokaudet” (times of oppression; 1899–1905 and 1908–1917), censorship was tightened and the Russian government ruled Finland without consent of local legislative bodies. Russian language was made the language of administration with the aim to end Finland’s status as an autonomous state. Yet, due to a continuous Finnish resistance through petitions, strikes and the assassination of the Russian governor-general Nikolaj Bobrikov in 1904, this attempt failed. This resistance that in the end coincided with the October Revolution and the breakdown of the Russian Empire in 1917, finally led to Finland’s declaration of independence in the same year.

However, the Finnish Civil War in the first months of 1918, divided the nation again and caused traumas that needed to be dealt with for decades. The outbreak of the Finnish Civil War was closely attached to both the aftermath of World War I, which had destroyed basic intellectual values throughout Europe, and to the Russian Revolution and the collapse of the Russian Empire. Socially, economically and politically still an unstable nation, Finland was divided into supporters of socialism on the one hand, and conservatives on the other. As a consequence, the forces of the Social Democrats or “Reds”, supported by the Russian Soviet Republic, fought against the “Whites”, the conservative-led Senate that was supported by the German Empire. The latter became the decisive force and shortened the war to the advantage of the Whites with the help of an intervention. The conflict between left and right continued until after the Second World War, while the political division into socialists and conservatives also had a strong impact on the cultural and literary field due to literature’s important role in the struggles for a Finnish

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152 This comprised Finnish history follows Meinander 2006; about the Fennoman movement see e.g. Liikanen 1998, 67.
153 Niemi 1995, 82; 89.
154 Meinander 2006, 119, 143–149.
155 Meinander 2006, 151–156.
culture and identity. Most publishers were for a long time mainly led by conservative-minded figures.\textsuperscript{156} The consequences of the conflict on politics during the first decade of the independence were short-lived governments and strong ideological contrasts. None of the first presidents was in office longer than one mandate period. Important within the first independent decade were, moreover, the question of language and the position of Swedish. In 1919, both languages were confirmed as the country’s official languages. Since the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century (the reform in 1906), the Swedish-speaking elite was not dominant any more within politics. However, still in the 1920s, over half of the commercial elite were Swedish-speaking. Within culture, sciences and arts the Swedish-speaking population was thus over-represented (compared to about 10 \% of Swedish-speakers of the whole population in Finland). The Finland-Swedish literary field was rather self-sufficient and had close connections to the Swedish book market. It never needed the Finnish-language publishers. Yet, the most radical Fennomans did not approve of the Swedish language so that the language fight went to a climax in the 1930s, led by the influential, right-wing student organisation Akateeminen Karjala-Seura (Academic Karelian Society) that strove after a totally Finnish-speaking University of Helsinki. They did not succeed and in 1937 the parliament approved a law that guaranteed the continuation of education in Swedish by which the language fight ebbed away for the time being.\textsuperscript{157}

\textbf{Johan Vilhelm Snellman’s idea of a national literature and women’s duty}

After Finland finally had gained independence, the ideas about a national literature launched by the national movement of the Fennomans in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and especially the ideas of Johan Vilhelm Snellman, were reasserted and also influenced publishing. Still in the 1980s, many intellectuals in Finland “swore” on the name of Snellman. Due to his enormous impacts on the literary field until quite late in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, one can speak of a renaissance of Snellman’s literary concept of a national literature especially between the wars.\textsuperscript{158} Therefore, an excursion into the ideas of this state philosopher is indispensable. Snellman, a Young-Hegelian (albeit forming, interpreting and adapting Hegelian terms to Finnish circumstances\textsuperscript{159}), visited Germany between 1839 and 1842 and shaped his ideas about the role of a national Finnish literature especially during this time and afterwards. Besides Hegel, also the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder had influenced Snellman in many of his ideas. Concerning the question of the nation, for example, both Herder and Snellman did not see the national and the international as opposed terms; Snellman realised the necessity of other

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Sevänen 1994, 25.
\item Meinander 2006, 158–161.
\item Niemi 1985, 89.
\item Karkama 1989, 53.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
nations, since no nation can exist without others.\textsuperscript{160} German literature, especially humanism that arose with Kant and others in the middle of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, formed, according to Snellman, an important influence on Finnish culture.\textsuperscript{161} Therefore, also translations as a mode of cultural exchange are important in Snellman’s ideas.

For Snellman and the Fennomans, patriotism with its final goal to lead Finland into independence, was the most important term to be coined. In one of his main works, \textit{Versuch einer speculativen Entwicklung der Idee der Persönlichkeit} (1841), patriotism for Snellman became, besides a political term, an aesthetic category, defined as the pathos of the era. This kind of patriotism also became the core of Snellman’s idea of a national literature that has played a central role in the awareness of what it means to be Finnish. Following the Young-Hegelian movement, literature for Snellman was politicised and seen as a part of the patriotic political practice.\textsuperscript{162} Yet, this nationalism was not necessarily an aggressive one; rather, internationality and interaction between nations were emphasised. According to Snellman, no nation is independent from others and can live on its own.\textsuperscript{163} On the other side, pure “cosmopolitism” and the denial of one’s own nationality was impossible, too, since everyone is bound to his or her nation by way of thinking and functioning.\textsuperscript{164} Snellman emphasised the thought of a common culture based on a common language, customs and tradition.\textsuperscript{165} And it is through patriotism, according to Snellman, that also literature can become a part of the life and acts of the nation.\textsuperscript{166} National literature, then, has to be literature that is written in the country’s own language.\textsuperscript{167} He emphasizes that the only way to express the intellectual life of a nation is to express it in the people’s own language.\textsuperscript{168} This point is important with regard to the language-question: Snellman, like many other Swedish-speaking Finns, supported writing in Finnish during that time to include the common people into the national project. Furthermore, writing in Finnish was able to converge the spontaneous way of life of the people as the topic of depiction and the cultural thinking of the elite to a dynamic dialectic unity. In short, an ideal national literature brings the elite’s way of thinking and the life of the people together.\textsuperscript{169} The role of the national literature, accordingly, is to merge patriotism and the “culture

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{160} Rantala 2006, 399. Yet, both Herder and Snellman saw the nation as the societal form that shapes the basic unit of history.
\item\textsuperscript{161} Snellman 1859: KT 16, 2004, 39/ SA IX 1997, 582. See also Rantala 2006, 394.
\item\textsuperscript{162} Karkama 1989, 52.
\item\textsuperscript{163} See e.g. KT 5 2001, 41/ SA III 1993, 306. See also Rantala 2006, 399.
\item\textsuperscript{164} Rantala 2006, 501 (endnote), see also Snellman: KT 3 2001, 219 / SA II 1992, 336.
\item\textsuperscript{165} Pulkkinen 1989, 17–18, 37–38.
\item\textsuperscript{166} Karkama 1989, 74.
\item\textsuperscript{167} Snellman, in: \textit{Litteraturblad} 10/1857, 295. “Icke den är en god patriot, som väl särskiljer sitt folk från andra jordens folkslag, utan den, som förskaftar det en jemnboröd plats bland folken. [...] Att älska födelsebygd, barndoms omgifningar, modersmål är patriotismens utgångspunkt; men bildningen skall höja denna naturliga tillgivnenhet till kärlek för ett lands kultur, för ett folks välstånd, sjelfständighet och bildning, för dess språks regelbundenhet och skönhet i den vetenskapliga och nationallitteraturen.”
\item\textsuperscript{168} Snellman in \textit{Saima} no. 24/ 13.6.1844, 2.
\item\textsuperscript{169} Karkama 1989, 258.
\end{itemize}
common to all mankind.”

Besides, every action, including cultural ones, is part of the process which has the birth of the common nation-state as its aim. One of the main functions literature receives is to make education a cultural task.

The task of publishers within this project of building a national literature was then a huge one. In accordance with Snellman’s concept, all national, societal and state institutions had to become educational institutions. As a result, the position of literature in Finnish society, and with regards to politics, became very strong. Within the process that aimed at the nation’s education, these institutions also became part of the ideological state machinery. Therefore it is important to analyse in which way influences from politics and society also had an effect on literary institutions and ultimately its production. Regarding the possibility and necessity of changes within the literary field, the challenge for new literature (in Snellman’s case obviously not literature with queer topics) was the necessity that this new literature also had to be part of the process of changing attitudes, habits and opinions within society. It is the (acknowledged) author, according to Snellman, who has the responsibility to show what can be written, and this is a question not of liberal freedom, but of public and responsible sincerity. In the case of queer topics, then, the author’s responsibility was ambiguous in the 1920s and 1930s: with both the “encouragement section” and a small literary field that consisted to a great part of conservative publishers, editors or reviewers (or a few leftist ones, in case they were able to publish, for whom homosexuality was also problematic) – the question is how a text or an author could deal with unwanted topics. As an author, one had to pass the doormen who watched over the final entrance of certain topics and authors into the literary field. Thus, it needed to be these doormen who also helped pass unwelcome topics, or who did not recognise them.

Snellman’s ideas influenced the publishing of queer topics not only because of his idea of a national literature, but also because of his writings about women and their position in society. Therefore, I will provide a short introduction of the ideas of the women’s organisation “Marttajärjestö” (Martha organization), the most influential (albeit not a homogeneous) one of the women’s organisations during the time span this study. The idea behind the foundation of the Marthas was to function as an advisor organisation for housekeeping. It also aimed at improving material and mental welfare. In its

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170 The term “allgemeinmenschliche Kultur” goes back to Hegel and means the realisation of a rational and ethical Weltgeist within human action.
171 Karkama 1989, 75.
172 Karkama 1989, 94.
173 Snellman, SA I, 833.
175 Karkama 1989, 118.
176 The name of the organisation refers to the biblical Martha of the New Testament, who was a thorough housekeeper. The organisation was first called “Sivistystä Kodeille” (Education for the Homes) but had to change its name into a more neutral one, since it sounded too dangerous, even revolutionary for the Finnish senate in 1900. For the history of the Marthas (founded in 1899) see their homepage: http://www.Marthaperinne.fi/aikajana/1890/ (21.1.2014)
initial ideas, the Martha organization was closely connected to the movement of the national awakening and to Snellman’s ideas about women. The organisation was strongly involved in the popular enlightenment, so that its reference to Snellman and his ideas about women and motherhood that were popular at that time is only logical. Snellman regarded the family as the institution that maintained the state, since it is the family that brings up children and makes them into (patriotically minded) citizens.\textsuperscript{177} Concerning Snellman’s ideas about family and society, it is interesting to see that, while he defines the state as changeable and made possible by the action of free men, the terms family and society in his writings are rather static ones.\textsuperscript{178} Pertti Karkama accordingly notes that the ideas about family and marriage had always been the most conservative within Snellman’s writings and primarily applied to the rather conservative family life of the peasantry.\textsuperscript{179} In Snellman’s later writings, the task of women is a perpetuating one; she represents conservatism and acknowledges moral power. Snellman also stated that women always need and want protection: that is what he defines as femininity, and will be lost when women aspires to fill men’s position in society. As an example, Snellman used the Swedish feminist writer Fredrika Bremer (1801–1865) and her emancipatory novel \textit{Hertha eller en Själs historia} (1856) in which the protagonist acts and chooses freely with regard to her task within society. Snellman accused Bremer for depicting how things should be, instead of what the status quo for women in society was. He thus acts on the assumption that women’s being is constant and cannot be changed, as Karkama notes. Moreover, Snellman regarded both the world and women as constant and unchangeable.\textsuperscript{180} When these ideas still were partly accepted in the 1920s, it is then logical that Elsa Soini referred to Bremer’s novel in her own work \textit{Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit} (1926) by naming one of her protagonists who strives for an independent life after the novel’s title.

Yet, there were also essential differences between Snellman’s ideas and the Martha organization. The Martha organization expanded women’s domain from the homes to society and did not want women to be restricted to the home, while Snellman had opposed women’s involvement in society. The Marthas saw society as one big home in which also women had their duties.\textsuperscript{181}

In 1899, Lucina Hagman (1853–1946), a pioneer within the Finnish women’s organisations and one of the founders of the Martha organization, defined motherhood as woman’s real nature and her social and ethical substance. Hagman hoped that women would comprehend their duty as mothers, educators and citizens, since, according to her, the future of the whole nation depended on it. Also the question of woman’s citizenship was tightly connected

\textsuperscript{177} Ollila 1993, 30–31. Ollila refers for example to an article in the magazine \textit{Emäntälehti} no. 6/1910 called “Keväälää!”

\textsuperscript{178} Karkama 1989, 84.

\textsuperscript{179} Karkama 1989, 218 (see also SA IX, pp. 164).

\textsuperscript{180} Karkama 1989, 239–240 (Karkama refers here to \textit{Litteraturblad} 11/1855).

\textsuperscript{181} Ollila 1993, 31.
to her duties as a woman and mother.\textsuperscript{182} During the first two decades after independence, the attitudes within the Martha organization slowly changed and finally, in 1939, they did not any more divide women into two groups as before – i.e. the educated and the uneducated –, but they were seen as one group: defined through the home that was assumed to be close to every woman’s heart. Anne Ollila, in her research of the Martha organization, goes even as far as saying that woman and home were equated with each other by the end of the 1930s.\textsuperscript{183}

Decency and the criminalisation of homosexuality

An important term in relation to women and their role in society that was coined by Snellman and which is also essential in the relation to queer topics is the term decency (“siveellisyys” in Finnish). Due to the efforts of the women’s organisations, the term changed around the turn of the century and wove the political and the ethical in a new way. While Snellman had understood society and the state mostly in a moral way, morality within the discussions of the women’s organisations did not culminate or become concrete in the state. Rather, the meaning of morality that moulded together different parts of life, socialised and politicised the intimacy of family-life and the private milieu.\textsuperscript{184}

For a long time, the term decency had not only been used with regard to sexuality, but also with regard to politics and women’s participation in them. Yet, it only became political in these texts by being closely linked to other topics, especially to sexuality, religion and motherhood, and it received its power with the help of those. In a political respect, as Anna Elomäki states, who has studied the writings by women’s organisations at the turn of the century and their use of “siveellisyys”, the term’s origin is best understood through Snellman’s definition of the Swedish word “sedlighet” (decency), which means the position that the individual takes towards the norms of the community. By the turn of the century, decency was already closely connected to ethics and morals in general. Within some women’s organisations, also motherhood was linked to the term. The Martha organization as a representative of the Finnish women’s movement believed that women follow “moral” ideals more easily than men, often due to the mere fact of their possibility to become mothers. The “moral individual” was regarded as a sexually pure one, while desire and free love were seen as “immoral”. The term, thus, points also to the question of prostitution or marriage.\textsuperscript{185} While decency in texts about the right to vote is seen as the aim of political activity, as Elomäki

\textsuperscript{182} Ollila 1993, 9–12. Lucina Hagman’s speech in Ollila’s book was cited by Alli Nissinen: “Muistelma Martha-yhdistyksen alkuvaiheilta”, in: Martha-yhdistys 1899–1924, Helsinki 1924, 16–17. Hagman was also the founder of the Helsinki co-educational school.

\textsuperscript{183} Ollila 1993, 9–12. The conception of “home” and its importance for the nation was emphasised in magazines like Emäntälehti or Husmodern, both organs of the Martha organization.

\textsuperscript{184} Helén 1997, 150.

\textsuperscript{185} Elomäki 2011, 131–134.
states, for many women a development towards more rights was only true if it was connected to the spreading of Christian values. Women from the working class and from the countryside were often labelled as “immoral”, since within these social classes premarital sex and children born out of wedlock were more common. The feminists of the worker’s movement fought against this labelling, since they saw the upper-class’ arranged marriages for the reason of money as a much bigger misdeed. Elomäki makes an important point when she says that although the term “siveellisyys” does not directly refer to politics in this context, it still had political consequences, since it pointed to the (in)ability of being able to live within given norms. It seems, as Elomäki writes, that the morally upright mother-citizen was the only female figure that could be politically active. At the latest by the turn of the century, the understanding of the term decency had then changed to a focus on sexuality and was thus rather far from what Snellman had originally meant by it. This idea of the term remained until the 1930s.

Decency also played an essential role in the criminalisation of both male and female homosexuality. When the law was passed in 1889, the understanding of crimes against decency still had a rather broad meaning: from gambling to cruelty towards animals or public drinking – it could mean many different things. Yet, its main focus was on the value judgement of sexuality by society and on the public order of genders to which also the sale of sex, or pimping belonged. New in the law was the deed against the sexual order, i.e. gross indecency with someone from the same sex. According to Antu Sorainen, we can observe a tendency in the criminal law at the end of the 19th century to take sexological theories from mostly Germany into account. That means that sexuality was seen as something that could be classified and hierarchised – a fact that then resulted in the distinction between accepted and non-accepted sexualities. Jan Löfström additionally names the morals of the time as a reason for the criminalisation of female same-sex relationships: all relationships outside marriage were regarded as a threat to the moral welfare and stability of the nation. Both motherhood and the nuclear family were needed for the continuation of the nation, as well as for the moral welfare and the social order that was based on the idea of the nuclear family.

186 Thus, at the same time it questions the ability of those who are labelled as “immoral” to be citizens. This means, moreover, that a citizenship that is connected to morals as the women’s organisations demanded, also means a citizenship for women that is different from the one for men. This idea of citizenship is then gendered: the women’s organisations defined the citizen as heterosexual, family-orientated and “chaste”. Those who did not fulfil these premises were not understood as citizens.

187 Elomäki 2011, 138–147. Important in the use of the term by, e.g., Lucina Hagman is that she combined femininity and decency not only on the moral, but also on the political level, including thus also the change of laws and manners. The women’s movement of the time around Hagman insisted on “moral freedom”, that means the ability to develop into a self-assured and independent individual, a process that leads to becoming conscious of one’s responsibility with regard to the nation. Moreover, the idea of religion was very strong in Hagman’s texts and is closely connected to the term decency.

188 Sorainen 2011b, 199–200. Before 1889, the Swedish law, which did not include morality in the same meaning, had reigned from 1754 onwards in Finland.


Sorainen, by analysing how heteronormativity is built-in in the Finnish legal system and how heteronormativity produces sexualities and genders without legal protection, tries to resolve why the Finnish law included gross indecency between women. The person who had most influenced the new legislation in 1889 and who might be the source of the idea was the professor in criminal law and history of law, Jaakko Forsman (1839–1899). Yet, he did not particularly mention women\textsuperscript{191}, and neither do the minutes of the lawmakers. One reason for including women might nonetheless be seen in Forsman’s deep interest in questions of morality\textsuperscript{192} and his knowledge of the forensic research of the time, like the works of Richard von Krafft-Ebing who, together with other sexologists, created terms like inversion and homosexuality. In the committee that discussed the Penal Code there were no medical experts, so that Forsman probably was the only one with such background knowledge. Therefore, also a general over-reverence for the Swedish ideal might be a reason, since the Swedish law from 1864 made no difference between the sexes and banned both male and female homosexuality.\textsuperscript{193} Jan Löfström, however, doubts this, since Sweden had passed this law already 25 years earlier and the Finnish laws until then had not included women.\textsuperscript{194} Instead, to comprehend “the complex ideological underpinnings of the criminalization”, Löfström emphasises the importance to focus on “the historically specific mode of perceiving gender relations within the specific configuration of social structure that was late-nineteenth century Finland.”\textsuperscript{195}

During that time, Finland was a mostly rural society, with 90 percent of the population living off the forest and land. On the countryside, the gender polarisation was less strong than in bourgeois urban cultures, also with regard to notions of sexuality and sexual desire; women in pre-industrial rural culture, in short, were conceived as sexual beings, while in bourgeois/ middle-class cultures like the German or British the man often was seen as the sole proprietor of sexual desire and woman’s desire seen as muted sexual

\textsuperscript{191} In his lectures, he only mentions the following on the topic: “I propositionen till strafflag var otukt mellan personer af samma kön inskränkt till personer af manligt kön. Stadgandet blef dock sedermera i strafflagsutskottet utvidgadt sålunda, att det kom att gälla personer af lika kön överhuvud, hvilken ändring blef af ständerna godkänd.” Forsman 1938, 94.

\textsuperscript{192} Sorainen refers here to Forsman’s idea of law that was on the one hand characterised by absolute gender morals that allowed sex only within marriage, and on the other hand he was influenced by Hegel’s philosophy of law where a crime hurts the idea and awareness of the civic society. Thus, in Forsman’s understanding same-sex gross indecency was immoral, irrational and against the law. See Sorainen 2000, 15.

\textsuperscript{193} Sorainen 2000, 12–13. On Forsman’s interest and the availability of works on (homo)sexuality see also Löfström 1998c, 57–58. Forsman had, for example, ordered Krafft-Ebing’s Psychopathia Sexualis to Finland, as Löfström discovered in his archive. Moreover, he had read Strindberg’s Gifts (1884–86) that had caused a scandal in Sweden to see what was “too much even for the Swedish tastes nowadays” – in one short story; homosexuality is discussed in the light of contemporary medical theory. He had also spoken about homosexuality in Western criminal law from a merely historical-comparative perspective in his lectures (1881–83/ 1886–88), but mostly only quoting a German textbook by Albert Berner and not mentioning female homosexuality.

\textsuperscript{194} Löfström 1991, 19.

\textsuperscript{195} Löfström 1998c, 55.
expression. However, as Sorainen writes, in many of the laws dealing with indecent assault that were passed in 1889 only men were the subject and women as the object. The case of same-sex gross indecency is an exception here, since also woman is made the subject. At the time the law was made, possible punishments that followed sexual “integrity” depended more and more on the question of how blameless the accused woman’s life had been before: a woman had to earn the protection of her integrity. “That the criminalisation [of female homosexuality] took place undramatically implies that the legislators had no particular qualms with the idea of woman’s autonomous sexual desire; without this idea the very possibility of women having sexual relations between themselves would not have been conceivable.”

Another reason for including women as subjects might be found in the constellation of those who made the law: they were part of the small group of gentry, nobility, clergy and bourgeoisie who, within the rising project of nation-building, emphasised woman’s maternal role as “mothers of the nation”. Women who were not following this model were seen as a threat to the nuclear family since they were regarded as being responsible for the family project as were men, and thus they became subjects. Also many women from these classes were of the same opinion, including those active in women’s organisations. While in an international context the reasons for women’s sexualisation can be found in the rise of the women’s movements that arose due to contradictions between the ambitions of women and their possibilities of gaining them, in Finland, in contrast, the women’s movement was also part of the nationalist movement and the nation-building project, rather than a fight of women against men.

Also the changes within the social classes and of power relations within society might have influenced the law-making; in Europe, the discussions about sexual norms mostly evolved from economic-social contradictions and tensions. In my opinion, also Finnish society and its attitude towards female homosexuality is mirrored in the points the British sociologist Jeffrey Weeks makes:

[S]everal intertwined elements determined attitudes to lesbianism, and the consequent possibilities for lesbian identity: the roles that society assigned

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196 Löfström 1998c, 61–62. Löfström refers here to, for example, folkloric material where woman’s sexual subjectivity and desire comes forth, but also law cases where the woman was also seen as an agent to express her want of a sexual relation.

197 Sorainen 2000, 12–13. For her, it might have been also a symbolic criminalisation, with which the lawmakers tried to make their moral codes and values visible. Gross indecency at the end of the 19th century was regarded as mainly directed against society, not individuals. The final reasons for including women remain open.

198 Löfström 1998c, 68.

199 Löfström 1991, 20–24 and Löfström 1998c, 64, 68. One needs, however, to be careful to apply the developments in Western or Central Europe directly to Finland. Finland, until the 1950s, was mostly a rural society. This means, according to Löfström, that “the notions of sexuality and sexual desire are also one [...] territory where the categories of man and woman in pre-industrial rural culture were substantially less polarized than in bourgeois culture and subsequently in urban middle-class culture.” Löfström 1998c, 61.
women; the ideology which articulated, organised and regulated this; the
dominant notions of female sexuality in the ideology; and the actual possibilities
for the development by women of an autonomous sexuality.200

Yet, the inclusion of women into the law was a last-minute decision, as
Löfström states, since the earlier proposals had suggested the criminalization
of men only. This inclusion needs to be seen as an indicator of acknowledging
female homosexuality: women were given a sexuality that was at the same time
restrained and allowed only within certain limits when sexuality was
connected mostly to working-class women and prostitutes, while those of the
middle- and upper-class were seen as asexual. Löfström makes the important
observation that female homosexuality was not much discussed within
medical circles in Finland until rather late and gained only limited attention.
Also the idea common in Europe at that time that feminists were equalised
with homosexual behaviour or mannishness was rarely used in Finnish
discourse – a fact that is especially interesting when analysing literature, since
one of the main features of so-called lesbian literature was the mannish lesbian
as the protagonist in Radclyffe Hall’s The Well of Loneliness from 1928 or
Margareta Suber’s Charlie (1932). If the Finnish reader did not know this
discourse, then the question arises how female homosexuality was depicted in
Finnish literature. The works in question show that it was mainly the type of
the New Woman that was used when the aim was to depict references to same-
sex desire. In published texts in Finnish, however, these types were usually
introduced in a negative context, like in Waltari’s works (decadent women) or
Lehmann’s (the woman that takes the protagonist’s love away), while the
queer characters with a positive or ambiguous notion were mostly depicted as
feminine figures.

Although it was possible also in Finland to get information on the
development of theories around homosexuality, there was, according to
Löfström’s inquiry, from a medical point of view only one article on the topic
written by the physician Johan Backman in the medical journal Finska
Läkaresällskapets Handlingar in 1882, followed by the next one as late as
1919201. The latter, written by Akseli Nikula, appeared in the medical magazine
Duodecim under the title “Yleiskatsauksia. Homoseksualiteetti ja sen
oikeudellinen arvosteleminen” (“General overviews. Homosexuality and its
juridical evaluation”). In the article, Nikula explains in detail the research on
the topic available in Europe, like Krafft-Ebing’s, Hirschfeld’s or Freud’s
theories. Moreover, he lists the characteristics of female homosexuals (e.g.
interest in horse-riding, shooting or woodwork, no interest in women’s
traditional occupations). The last part of the article is about juridical questions
and to which extent homosexuality as such or homosexual acts should be

201 Kati Mustola, however, notes that the German psychiatrist Carl von Westphal “had been
appointed an honorary member of the Finnish Medical Society in 1881, which suggests that he was well-
criminalised – in Nikula’s opinion only the latter.\footnote{Nikula 1919, 248–270.} Yet, there was also at least another short article by the Swiss psychiatrist Auguste Forel available. In 1911, one of Forel’s writings was published in Finnish by the magazine Työväen sanomalehti (“The magazine of the working-class”) under the title “Sukupuolikysymys: luonnontieteellinen, sielutieteellinen, terveysopillinen ja yhteiskuntatieteellinen tutkielma” (“The gender question: a natural scientific, hygienic and social study”).

That there were nonetheless only few articles on the topic leads Löfström to the conclusion that “a medicalizing approach to female homosexuality attracted only limited attention in Finland.”\footnote{Löfström 1998c, 70.} Despite, for example, Forsman’s knowledge about Western theories on homosexuality, he concludes that the reasons for the criminalisation of female homosexuality in Finland must be seen in the pre-modern conception of gender and sexuality, i.e. the role applied to women within the still rural society with its “relatively mild polarization of the man and the woman in the prevailing notions of gender.”\footnote{Löfström 1998c, 56; 71.} In this context it is worth mentioning that Arja-Liisa Räisänen, who has analysed the development of the gender system in Finnish marriage and sexual advice manuals between 1865 and 1920, shows that these advice manuals consisted first to a great deal of religiously influenced ones, while in the beginning of the 20th century natural scientific and medical advice, e.g. about hygiene, prevailed. Yet, homosexuality is not a topic of these manuals. The writers of these manuals built their ideas about marriage and sexuality on the ideologies and concepts prevailing within bourgeois circles; yet, also pamphlets criticizing these ideas (e.g. defending the idea of free love) were published. All in all, Räisänen has analysed 275 handbooks that were published between 1865 and 1920. See Räisänen 1995, 25.

Kati Mustola, however, regards the medical discourses that were introduced to Finland mainly from Germany, and also via fiction (like Strindberg’s works) as a decisive factor, since the law-makers had changed their minds rather rapidly.\footnote{Mustola 2007, 220–221.} I agree at least partly with this argument. That homosexuality was at least not “foreign” in Finland is proven by Hirschfeld himself who writes that while the statistics would tell that about 2,2 % of every population are homosexual, his impression of the number in Helsinki is much higher (he knows at least 200 homosexual men). He also mentions homosexual women: according to Hirschfeld it would be enough to have a look at the leaders of the suffragette movement with their broad shoulders, bearded faces and young girlfriends. In Lapland, again, homosexuality is, according to Hirschfeld, widespread and part of religious customs.\footnote{Hirschfeld 1914, 539.} However, these indicators, especially the first, did not necessarily mean the same in Finland as they did in Germany. At least within the literary works there is hardly any figure that...
would prove the mannish look as an indicator for female homosexuality in Finland.

When talking about sexology, also the originally Finnish sociologist, philosopher, and anthropologist Edvard Westermarck (1862–1939) is worth mentioning in this context of a discussion about the knowledge and awareness of homosexuality in Finland. Between 1907 and 1930, Westermarck was a professor for sociology in London where he published his main work *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* in two volumes (1906 and 1908) in English which includes a whole chapter on “Homosexual Love” from an anthropological-sociological point of view. The first volume was translated into Finnish only in 1933 (before that into German and Swedish), the second that includes the essay on homosexuality, has not been translated. Westermarck also addresses female homosexuality, using the example of certain Brazilian tribes, Herero women, or ancient Greece. He writes that “[t]he fact that homosexuality has been much more frequently noticed in men than in women does not imply that the latter are less addicted to it. For various reasons the sexual abnormalities of women have attracted much less attention, and moral opinion has generally taken little notice of them.” In his analysis of the moral valuation of homosexuality, Westermarck does not name Finland. Yet, following examples like Britain, France or Germany (the latter mentioned as a place where “a propaganda in favour of its [the ban of homosexuality] alteration is carried on with the support of many men of scientific eminence”), he states that

> homosexual practices are very frequently subject to some degree of censure, though the degree varies extremely. This censure is no doubt, in the first place, due to that feeling of aversion or disgust which the idea of homosexual intercourse tends to call forth in normally constituted adult individuals whose sexual instincts have developed under normal conditions.

Yet, although the medicalisation of and the discussions about sexuality had not developed in Finland in the same way as in Western Europe, there was an attempt to decriminalise homosexuality in 1922 by Allan Serlachius (1870–1935), a professor of law, which was also based on sexological theories. The premise for the decriminalisation Serlachius suggested was that both parts were adults and agreed to the act out of their own free will. Serlachius did not mean to accept homosexuality, but was of the opinion that the decision of leaving it out of the criminal law would be good for the society; the law, in his opinion, was not the right means to deal with “abnormal instincts of nature”. He also argued with deterrence; if someone was not hindered by instinct from

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207 The Finnish translator of Vol. I, Emerik Olsoni, writes in the foreword from 1933 that the process of translating had already started in 1915, but was hindered by too little financial resources and then the upcoming Civil War. The foundation that supported the translation had granted money only for Vol.I. See Edvard Westermarck. *Moraalin synty ja kehitys 1. Siueelliset yleiskäsitteet*, transl. by Emerik Olsoni, Porvoo: WSOY 1933.

208 Westermarck 1971 (1908), 465.

209 Westermarck 1971 (1908), 483.
such a crime, the threat of punishment would not help, either. Serlachius’ suggestion, however, was not accepted and the law remained. For Sorainen, Serlachius’ suggestion is based on heteronormative assumptions – in his understanding the “healthy” society needed an “unhealthy” homosexual. That is, Serlachius “proves” Foucault’s idea of the origin of homo- and heterosexuality. While Jaakko Forsman had been of the opinion that nature had produced a body that was unnatural, Serlachius wanted to silence the suspicious and unnatural bodies within the law and wanted them to be treated elsewhere. This development of the idea of homosexuality in Finland in the 1920s needs then to be taken into account when analysing literature and publishing, too. Moreover, it is interesting to observe that the focus of the criminal law tightened in the 1920s: in 1926, the law against extramarital sex was abolished, since it had not been successful in guiding the behaviour of the people. Thus, the control over morality concentrated on phenomena that were regarded as “abnormal” or “deviating”, i.e. homosexuality, incest, sex with children or animals, pimping and prostitution. Yet, as some of the literary examples show, there were works that more or less openly dealt with the topic of female homosexuality, despite the law. With these examples, I will demonstrate which depictions were possible and which were not in the 1920s and 1930s, and how queer topics were received when the law actually banned them. I argue that the law, although it existed for a rather long time, was taken into account quite differently within the literary field, depending on the greater political and social situation. One can see Mika Waltari’s descriptions of the “dirty lesbian”, for example, in the context of the 1920s that had opened Finland up to influences from abroad, especially to American light culture. Within Finland-Swedish literature, moreover, it seems, the acceptance of queer topics had reached a higher level than in Finnish-language literature. Also the way of description made a difference, of course: the less direct, the easier a book could get published. In publishers’ minutes or letters there is hardly any reference to the law, while references to the topic of a book can be found, as well as assumptions on the part of the writer’s sexuality.

It is also worth mentioning that despite the ban of homosexuality, the figures of individuals being sentenced were very low; there was never an intense prosecution at any time before World War II. In the 19th century, crimes against morality were usually seen as crimes against society, not against individuals. It was gender morals that were tried to be protected by the

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210 Sorainen 2000, 16. Serlachius used the same arguments that were used in Britain in 1921, when those who were against the criminalisation of female homosexuality were afraid that the publicity of the case would make women lesbian (since they had not known before about the possibility of female homosexuality). It becomes clear here that Serlachius knew both the British case and German sexologist’s works. Serlachius is also mentioned in Nikula’s article quoted earlier who reports about Serlachius’ interpretation of the Finnish law, according to which the satisfaction of the sexual instinct should be punished, while deeds that are directed to the mere stimulation of it should not be.

211 Sorainen 2000, 16.

212 Sorainen 2011b, 204-205.

213 Löfström 1998c, 71–73. Löfström argues, moreover, that the same reasons for introducing female homosexual acts into the penal code apply also for the Swedish legislation of 1864 where industrialisation had not yet been as far as in other European countries.
law. Moreover, the Finnish law as Forsman and others had created it, followed
the classic thought where only a deed was punished.\textsuperscript{214} All in all, only 51 women
were punished throughout the whole duration of the law, with a peak in 1951,
when 12 women were sentenced. It is interesting that some of these women
continued to live with women after the sentence and even were respected
persons in their village due to other functions they fulfilled – that is, the law,
as Sorainen states, that defined people unprotected and sentenced them, was
exercised from above rather than according to the general opinion of the
people.\textsuperscript{215} The time after World War II with a rising urbanisation and the
change of the structures of society led, after a peak of sentences and two
decades of adaptation to alternative ways of life, finally to the
decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1971. That the number of trials referring
to homosexuality had increased since the 1930s can be explained by the fact
that sexuality in general had increasingly become the object of state regulation
and control. For example, there were attempts to criminalise cohabiting in
Finland in the 1930s, which also meant that people of the same sex were not
supposed to share flats.\textsuperscript{216} The topic of cohabiting is touched at least by two
novels in this study: in Elsa Soini’s \textit{Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit} the two
female protagonists live and travel together, having a relationship that can be
called queer. Also the translation of Rosamond Lehmann’s \textit{Dusty Answer}
(1928), where the main character Judith falls in love with her co-student
Jennifer with whom she lives in the same student house, touches the topic.
There was no trial in Finland against an author who wrote about female
homosexuality.

\textbf{Publishing and the literary field}

Publishing in Finland from a queer perspective has until now not been
researched on a broader scale. There are two essential works that deal with the
topic of publishing in Finland from a socio-literary perspective: Erkki
Sevänen’s \textit{Vapauden rajat. Kirjallisuuden tuotannon ja välittyksen
yhteiskunnallinen sääntely Suomessa vuosina 1918–1939} (“The limits of
freedom. The social regulation of the production and exchange of literature
1918–1939”, 1994) and Risto Turunen’s \textit{Uhon ja armon aika. Suomalainen
kirjallisuusjärjestelmä, sen yhteiskuntasuhteet ja rakenteistuminen vuosina
1944–1952} (“The time of bluster and mercy. The Finnish literary system, its
relations to society and its structuralisation in the years 1944-1952”, 2003).
Sevänen’s book deals especially with working-class literature and books that
were contrary to the ruling political ideology, i.e. regarded as socialist or
communist. Turunen, again, offers a system-theoretical approach to the
Finnish literary system in the post-war years. Although particularly Turunen

\begin{footnotes}
\item[214] Sorainen 2000, 14.
\item[215] Sorainen 2000, 18–19. According to a figure by Kati Mustola, the first two women were sentenced
106.
\item[216] Mustola 1990, 47–51.
\end{footnotes}
deals with questions of norms and values within society and their influence on publishing – his aim is to analyse societal and literary processes that have led to a renewal of societal and cultural values after the war\textsuperscript{217}, neither of them pays attention to gender questions. One major conclusion that can nonetheless be drawn from these works is that it was almost natural that the nationalist and patriotic function of the literary field intensified after Finland had become independent. Moreover, publishing in Finnish has from the start been dualistic, i.e. there have always been a few big publishers and a bunch of small(er) ones.

When analysing publishing from a socio-literary angle, the term “field”, marked by Bourdieu, is inevitable. The use of the term makes it possible to define a group of individuals to map their social relationships, positions, etc. It is constituted by the relationships of the positions the different players in the field take. A field is always dynamic and never static. It always has a certain degree of autonomy with regard to other fields around it.\textsuperscript{218} For Bourdieu, a field is an \textit{espace de jeu}, an area of objective relations between individuals or institutions which compete about the same thing\textsuperscript{219}, about a network or a configuration of objective relations between positions taken by different actors.\textsuperscript{220} The actors of the field, in turn, take different social positions. Heterogeneity is one of the conditions of every field; not an implicit equality of all subjects is assumed, but rather the social practice, i.e. the different social positions that actually exist. These different positions are also an indicator of the capital resources of the actors and their position in relation to others within the social space. Social fields are realms of power whose dynamics are produced by the relationships between their actors.\textsuperscript{221} Every field, moreover, has its specific logic that “determines those which are valid in this market, which are pertinent and active in the game in question, and which, in the relationship with this field, function as specific capital – and, consequently, as a factor explaining practices.”\textsuperscript{222} All depends, that is, on the ability of the actors to mobilise specific capital. The intellectual field, to which also the literary one belongs, has a special position. According to Bourdieu, it

is relatively autonomous in relation to the whole social field and generates its own type of legitimacy. This is not to say that the social field is not present within the intellectual field, but rather that it is present only as a \textit{representation} of itself, a representation, moreover, which is not imported from outside, but produced from within the intellectual field itself.\textsuperscript{223}

This means then that the literary field produces its own rules, in connection, however, to the social field of which it is a part. One outcome of

\textsuperscript{217} Turunen 1994, 27.
\textsuperscript{218} Gedin 2004, 15.
\textsuperscript{219} Bourdieu 1984, 197.
\textsuperscript{220} Bourdieu/ Wacquant 1996, 127.
\textsuperscript{221} Engler 1990, 241.
\textsuperscript{223} Moi 1991, 1021.
this fact in Finland was the literary war in which the rules of society were debated in the 1930s. I suggest, though, that the Finnish literary field, due to its strong position within the building of the nation, was for a long time not very autonomous in relation to the social field. It not only represented the social field, but to some extent also reflected it. Nonetheless, there were groupings within the literary field, especially towards the end of the 1920s that made the way for more differentiation. To both the literary war and differentiation I will return later in this chapter.

Concerning the autonomy of the literary field within the broader social field one can generally say that the literary one mainly follows its own logic, since the capital that dominates within politics and economics does not necessarily have the same relevance in the literary field. For example, books that are published because of economic reasons – mass products – are not very significant for the building of national canons. Therefore, the symbolic capital in this field is difficult to measure, since it cannot be estimated by money or merits; it is rather acknowledgement that one might define as the symbolic capital within the literary field. However, there is a constant battle between those who represent the economical part and those who represent the artistic part within the literary field. Decisive is the monopoly of legitimacy: who has the power to say who is an author and who is not, which work is worth publishing, and which is not. In short, who owns more of the symbolic capital? And who decides which work gets translated, and how?

Additionally, the literary field consists of two inner systems: a system of positions which is defined by the degree of symbolic power, and a system of statements that is defined by either works or theoretical statements. A decisive point in the context of this study is thus the following: “Changes in the system of works and theories trace back to modifications of the system of positions which are possible when the subversive power of one fraction of the field meets the expectations of the audience.”

What needs to be analysed, then, are the changes in society and in publishing that have led to a more open approach to queer topics overtime (e.g. with the emergence of light fiction in the 1920s in Finland), as well as to backlashes. After all, the development is clearly a non-linear one, and with every work arises the question which influences from society had reached the literary field. The decision to publish something “risky” or “unusual” depends on the position, i.e. it requires a great amount of symbolic capital, let alone, of course, economic capital of the one who publishes as well as the one who writes.

Those within the Finnish literary field that owned great amounts of symbolic capital mostly communicated so-called White values in the decades after independence by pleading 19th century-ideas with regard to politics, norms and language policies, as Erkki Sevänen states. Although the

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connection between the two big publishers WSOY (Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö) and Otava and the state were rather unofficial, the owners of the publishing houses were mostly loyal with respect to political ideologies of the bourgeoisie and thus took part in establishing their values also within literature.\textsuperscript{226} The White elites strove to extend nationalist, patriotic and bourgeois values to rule the larger parts of society as a counterweight to the labour movement and the Reds who had lost the war.\textsuperscript{227} Accordingly, authors that were ideologically closer to socialist ideas had fewer possibilities of getting published or translated by influential Finnish-language publishers, especially in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{228} For the Finnish working-class culture, the loss of the Reds in the Civil War meant a breakdown: meeting places and libraries were closed down; the publishing of newspapers and books related to the movement was interrupted.\textsuperscript{229}

The position of Finland-Swedish literature, again, was also not very strong concerning translations into Finnish. Yet, the Finland-Swedish literary field was rather self-sufficient and did not need the Finnish-language publishers. Due, then, to the loyalty of the influential publishers to dominant political ideas until after World War II, it is important to analyse the ruling discourses, i.e. the values and norms within society that had an effect on publishing policies or were even interdependent with them. What can be concluded from the points explained above is that there were two factors that had an influence on society and on publishing: language (Finnish or Swedish), and class (White, i.e. bourgeois, or Red, i.e. socialist/communist).

Accordingly, there were three different micro-systems within publishing: the Finnish-speaking one, the Finland-Swedish and the one (and partly also Finland-Swedish) of the so-called Reds and the labour movement, i.e. small publishers that supported authors that would otherwise have had problems to get because of ideological reasons. Thus, also more diverse forms of literature could develop, despite the common elements all these fields shared.

\textsuperscript{226} Sevänen 1994, 159.
\textsuperscript{227} Sevänen 1994, 20.
\textsuperscript{228} Laitinen 1984, 10.
\textsuperscript{229} Palmgren 1983, 18.
\textsuperscript{230} Wrede 2000, 62–63. “[…] the Civil War, that lasted just a few months, [nevertheless split] society for the quarter of a century into a White and a Red half and created a double system of civic institutions within economy, culture and art. Broadly speaking, the semi-official state culture – that manifested itself among others in the church, the national defence, security guards, schools, even universities and the public art- and cultural institutions –, seen from an ideological perspective, remained until the end of the Second World War a White one.”
Koko järjestelmä oli sisäistänyt länsimaisen kirjallisuustradition ja sen konventiot. Suomen kytkeminen tämän tradition yhteyteen oli ollut osa kansallista mobilisaatiota ja snellmanilaista kulttuuripoliitikkaa; näiden seikkojen ansiosta länsimaisen kirjallisuuden seurannasta oli vuosisadan mennessä muodostunut pysyvä piirre kirjallisuusjärjestelmän toiminnassa.

The growth of the publishing of light fiction needs to be seen as part of this development. Another common feature was the willingness to closely link politics and art. Those actors in the literary field of the 1920s and 1930s that pursued political change – right-wing as well as left-wing – were likely to bind themselves to non-literary norms also when it came to approaching and evaluating literature. Literature’s task was first and foremost regarded a political one. The publishing houses worked not only under economic, but also under outward pressure. Until after World War II, publishers served as doormen who watched over the admittance of authors into the literary system and thus into the public, both from a literary and from a political point of view. Pleading 19th century values and emphasising nationalist ideas at the same time had also a deep impact on ideas of gender and sex in literature, although these values were not carved in stone, either, as the some of the published works demonstrate.

Moreover, when analysing big publishing companies, one has to differentiate between bourgeois publishers and bourgeois ideology: a publishing house that wants to succeed economically cannot function merely as a public channel for any ideology. A certain pluralism in values and ideologies is required in order to meet different population groups. It is worth noticing in this context that the Finnish bourgeois publishers for example published more literature from and dealing with the workers’ movement in the 1930s than ever before – this in a time when extreme right-wing parties got stronger. One interpretation here might be the effort of the elites to unite the “national value system” with elements from the worker’s movement.

In the first decades after independence, the literary field was split also in another respect: the young generation of writers, like Mika Waltari who had only begun to write, concentrated on other topics than the already established ones. According to the literary researcher Kai Laitinen, the 1920s and 1930s can be divided into even four groups of writers: firstly, the established ones – Finnish and Finland-Swedish alike, who had begun to write already before the Civil War; secondly, the Finland-Swedish modernists like Södergran, Olsson

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231 Sevänen 1994, 88. “The whole system had internalised the Western literary tradition and its conventions. The fact that Finland linked itself with this tradition was part of the national mobilization and of “snellmanish” cultural politics; due to these, the aim to follow-up Western literature had within a century developed into a constant feature within the literary system.”

232 This fact is certainly also related to the law. Between 1934 and 1936, the so-called “Encouragement Law” (Kiihotuslaki) forbade anything that would hurt religious or moral principles, or the parliament. See Sevänen 1994, 131.


234 Clegg 1989, 159–166. According to theorists like Antonio Gramsci, this was a quite common and essential deed within nationalist ideologies, since it increased their social influence.
or Diktonius; thirdly, the group *Tulenrantajat*\(^235\): this group, however, was so heterogeneous that it hardly can be seen as unitary. Yet, they published a magazine and had a certain common interest in modernist tendencies and international contacts. A fourth group is the leftist orientated Kiila, founded in 1936 as a counterweight to the right-wing tendencies within culture.\(^236\) Tulenkantajat existed only for some years, while Kiila, founded in 1935/36, still exists.\(^237\)

While Finland-Swedish modernism is directly connected to the early part of the 20\(^{th}\) century with names like Edith Södergran, Hagar Olsson or Elmer Diktonius, modernism in Finnish-language is often linked to the 1950s and authors like Eeva-Liisa Manner and Paavo Haavikko. But already in the 1920s, strong modernist tendencies in Finnish literature can be observed, albeit in different forms than in the rest of Europe, although modernism came to Finland via German expressionism. Characteristic of this modernism is, for example, an ongoing search. However, while for example central European modernists objected to bourgeois family values, this was not necessarily a topic in Finland, as Waltari’s works and his relation to gender questions, as well as most of the leading critics and magazines, show. Since Finland was still on its way from an agrarian to a modern society, Finnish authors were very much fascinated by technology and urbanism, while European modernists during the 1920s had already distanced themselves from these topics.\(^238\) Waltari then symptomatically stated in the magazine *Nuori Voima* that he would not necessarily want to be a modernist, but rather a modern man.\(^239\)

Exemplary in his description of the spirit of the time in Europe is the German historian and philosopher Oswald Spengler, who caused and influenced discussions in the Western world with his work *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (*The Decline of the West*, original 1918, English 1923). Although the work was translated into Finnish only in 1961 in an abridged version, Spengler’s work was also read in Finland. While Finland had not directly been involved in the war, it underwent nonetheless great changes in its context and went from an autonomous state to an independent one that was on its search for a form of government. The debates circled around topics like atheism,

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\(^{235}\) The most important members of the group were writers like Olavi Paavolainen, Katri Vala, Uuno Kailas and Elina Vaara. The group’s magazine with the same name was published by Nuoren Voiman Liitto (an influential and still existing cultural and literary organisation founded in 1908).

\(^{236}\) Laitinen 1984, 12–22.

\(^{237}\) Rinne 2006, 15. Founding members of Kiila were, for example, Iris Uurto and Elvi Sinervo, Katri Vala or Pentti Haanpää. Kiila was interested in Marxism and psychoanalysis. Kiila’s connection to the literary history trace back to the turn of the century and its radical classics, like Minna Canth or Eino Leino, while their contemporary forerunners were Tulenkantajat and the Finland-Swedish modernists around the magazine *Ultra* (1922) and later *Quosego* (1928–1929). The motives for founding Kiila were both aesthetic and political. Its aim was on the one hand to form an exclusively literary group that differed from Tulenkantajat that included also other art forms, and on the other hand it aimed at modernising the traditional working-class literature from a leftist point of view. It was also political in the way that it was founded in an international surrounding (after an international authors meeting in Paris in 1935) and was directed against war and fascism. Also the end of Finland’s isolation from world literature was a common demand. See Sallamaa 1994, 54: 59–60.

\(^{238}\) Takala 1990, 58–9.

\(^{239}\) Takala 1990, 58. See Waltari in *Nuori Voima* 1928, 404.
sobriety, women’s rights, free love, socialism and pacifism. Spengler’s theory was radically new and rather devastating, but also a logical continuation of the irrevocable change in values after the First World War: he proposed that the lifespan of every civilisation is limited and that the choices the individual has are predetermined. The possibility of the individual to influence the outcome of society or history for Spengler is rather limited. He also states that the individual is not free any more to hope and wish for the future, since the future is predictable; however, he sees this theory “of benefit to the coming generations, as showing them what is possible – and therefore necessary – and what is excluded from the inward potentialities of their time.” His theory of predestination reaches also the area of morals. In Spengler’s opinion, there are as much morals in the world as there are cultures. This also means that there is no freedom of choice for the individual: everyone has to act according to the morals of one’s culture: “The individual may act morally or immorally [...] with respect to the primary feeling of his Culture, but the theory of his actions is not a result but a datum. Each culture possesses its own standards, the validity of which begins and ends with it. There is no general morale of humanity.” Moreover, any conversion to another kind of moral is not possible. The idea that nothing can be done to influence one’s own destiny was quite widespread after the First World War and the Civil War that directly followed and several of the novels of this study represent some variation of these ideas: some accept it, as for example Waltari’s, but also Soini’s or Söderhjelm’s works in which the characters subordinate themselves to their destinies within Finnish culture; other fight against it, as Hämäläinen’s or Suber’s unpublished novels will show.

But despite moral questions, publishing is also always about finances. In the beginning of the 20th century, a commercialisation of the Finnish book market can be noticed and thus light fiction experienced a notable rise. This change, however, did not mean the separation of the literary field from the expectations of the nationalist movements and their pursuit to enlighten the ordinary people. Although publishers loosened their dependency on White politics, they at the same time kept their loyalty to the predominant discourses. Many civil servants, for example, still belonged to the governing bodies of the publishers. Naturally, the relationship between politics, national movements and the literary system was close. This system continued between the wars, what becomes also evident in the fact that the state used literary researchers, members of the writer’s union and the literature societies as experts in its arts councils. Thus, discursive power within society and the literary field lay in the hands of the White intellectual elite. According to both Sevänen and Turunen, the building material of the newly found nation consisted mainly of five elements: nationalism, patriotism, ecclesiastical virtues, agrarian

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240 Ekberg 2013, 13.
241 Spengler 1923, 53.
242 Spengler 1999, 40.
243 Spengler 1999, 345.
244 Sevänen 1994, 94–96.
mentality and readiness to defend the country. In a process that aimed at the homogenisation of the state, the cultural field and society, these values were interconnected in the beginning of the 1920s. Since the bourgeois parties were hardly autonomous with regard to the state machinery, this building material functioned as a value orientation that had vast impacts also on the cultural field, Sevänen argues. In his opinion, it was this value system that helped to secure power relations after the Civil War and to legitimise the interests of the bourgeois elites.\footnote{Sevänen 1994, 111/ Turunen 2003, 28.}

Kristina Malmio, however, in her dissertation that deals with works of light fiction in the 1910s and 1920s in Finland, cannot find these values represented in the works she examines.

Having analysed the texts of this study, I agree with Malmio and also object to some part to Sevänen’s opinion. The works by Waltari, Soini or the Finland-Swedish authors Olsson and Söderhjelm are anything but agrarian; rather, many are modern, introduce international surroundings, are entertaining and even received positive reviews. The latter, however, is not the case with, for example, Söderhjelm’s novel Kärlekens väninna. This novel did definitely not meet the expectations of the White elites and their nationalist-patriotic ideas; such works, also according to Malmio, were partly (but not merely) reviewed more critically.\footnote{Malmio 2005, 78.}

What can be observed within the reviews and discussions of that time is, however, a rather clear division into “good” and “bad” concerning topics, and particularly morals and values. Conservative writers liked to make a division between a “healthy” Finland and a degenerate Europe. An example here is the theologian Erkki Kaila (1867–1944), who became later the Archbishop of Finland. In his book about Europe’s destiny, he saw it as a merely positive factor that Finland was still young as a civilised nation.

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kuluttamotonta, neitseellistä voimaa. Kun Euroopan vanhat sivistyskansat jo ovat kulke
kulkemassa syksyn merkeissä, saattaa Suomella vielä olla kesä edessä.248

The depression in 1929 intensified this move into a conservative direction and the feeling of self-sufficiency that it brought about, while the belief in development and internationality was shattered. Foreign influences were not necessarily very welcome any more, and urbanisation – one of the aims of the cultural elite in the 1920s – was rejected. Clear dichotomies were on the rise, such as “good” as in countryside, Finnish or agrarian, versus “bad” as in city, international or industrial. This had its effects also on publishing that directed its attention at safe, i.e. traditional, national and agrarian topics. Moreover, the beginning of the 1930s was marked by discussions about a cultural crisis. One of the main reasons for the crisis was seen in the lack of moral authority that was also connected to the above mentioned bad side of the dichotomy.249 Degeneration was feared from still another direction in the 1930s: the middle-class on its rise, which would bring big masses of people to decide about and dominate the destiny of culture, and thus lead it into decline. One effect of the growing middle-class was the growth of magazines and advertisement, since the way of consumption changed as well with masses of people in cities who earned enough money. However, in the debates during the wars the term culture had gained an additional colour and included also other forms than mere high-brow culture.250 In short, the different opinions about culture and moral values clashed in the first two decades after independence and caused a cultural crisis due to the efforts of the elites to preserve their values against a decline in morals. One of the leading questions within this work will thus be to which extent the literary institutions were functioning according to the bourgeois set of values and how much they were supporting them. I will also ask how much space there was to object to set norms, by whom – publishers, authors, translators – they possibly were objected and how light fiction possibly influenced the publishing of queer topics.

While the Finland-Swedish modernists were in general more radical with regards to their literary production as well as their activities, the Finnish-speaking modernists from the group Tulenkantajat, for example, had their roots in the educated middle-class and were also influenced by the ideologically white publisher WSOY who had its roots in Christianity. While some members of Tulenkantajat thus had a rather nationalist perspective on culture, others, like Olavi Paavolainen, were internationally orientated. Tuija Takala, who has examined articles in magazines from the year 1928, accordingly emphasises that the young generation within the Finnish-

248 Kaila 1921, 117–118. “Spiritual anarchy rules outside the ecclesiastical circles. [...] We indeed cannot change the general state of the world. But in our country we can strive for healthy conditions. We can sharpen the fear of God and good manners; we can resist the move into cities and try to keep the people in the countryside. Our nation is still young as a civilised nation; there is still a lot of unused, virginal power. When the old European civilised nations are already going towards autumn, Finland still has spring ahead.”

249 Mikkeli 1996, 128.
language literary field was received quite positively by the older generation due to the fact that they usually did not test their understanding of art to a too large degree. Rather, new voices were even welcomed, since they strengthened the self-esteem of the young nation-state. It was predominantly the White elites who defined the predominant norms and values. Consequently, they determined the kinds of literature that were accepted for publishing. The interest towards foreign literature, for example, was on the wane after the mid-1920s because of topics and styles that were regarded as being too modern(ist). For example, the critic and Professor of Finnish Literature Viljo Tarkiainen – an influential person in the field – wrote in the internationally orientated, yet conservative magazine *Sininen kirja* (“The Blue Book”) that the “solid romance of the countryside is usually stronger in us than the fleeting star products of fashionable writers, inasmuch as it depicts something more real and lasting, although the power of its aura might not always be very strong.”

By the end of the 1920s, there were also attempts to raise the general quality of literature by controlling that nothing was published that might offend the taste of the greater readership, both with regard to Finnish authors and especially foreign ones. “Modern foreign literature was shunned and its translation not regarded as especially desirable. ‘Modern’ was automatically associated with ‘immoral’, as it were”, as the literary researcher Kai Häggman writes. This argument is underlined by another article in *Sininen kirja* from 1929 about literature that was offending moral feelings and allegedly spreading all over Europe’s big nations:

> [...] kuin myrkykaasu [...] Varsinaista likakirjallisuutta meillä Suomessa on verrattain vähän. Pienissä oloissamme eivät sellaisten kustantajat eikä kirjoittajat voi niin piloutua eikä toimintaansa niin verhota, ettei huomattaisi, löydetä asiakaat tai korkeakokonaisuudesta seisoa. Not only can the works published here be considered trivial, but also the activities of the publishers and writers, which are not easily concealed.

*Sininen kirja* represented the perspectives of the conservative-minded forces in the cultural field that was published only for a short time, from 1927 to 1930 and was founded by the writers and critics Kersti Bergroth and Alex Matson. The focus of the magazine was on literature, its presentation aestheticised. According to Takala, one can clearly make out an oppositional standing against the younger generation, although it presented itself as being liberal. See Takala 1990, 55.

251 Takala 1990, 74.


254 O. Toivanen: “Huonon kirjallisuuden vastustaminen”, *Sininen kirja* 3/1929, 35–6. “[...] like poison gas. [...] Here in Finland, we only have comparatively little really filthy literature. In this small country publishers and writers cannot hide themselves or conceal their activities, so that no one would note, find or drag up their works and hold them to account. [...] Yet, every now and then appear works – mostly in form of translations from other languages – whose artistic evaluation is high, but whose content is obscene [...] [...] Resisting bad literature is an important task within culture.”
Such a negative attitude towards foreign literature seems to have been more or less the common understanding during that time within the Finnish-speaking literary field that saw the need to protect its own literature and culture. Accordingly, this idea was reflected within the programmes of publishers by publishing fewer translations and concentrating on Finnish authors. Only few works contrasted the prevailing conservative norms – neither the norms set by society with regard to morals, nor those with regard to common literary styles. The Finland-Swedish field, on the other hand, was more open towards influences from outside. The Finnish literary field, as emphasised also in the quotation above, was small and, perforce, tried to homogenise itself. Pluralisation within publishing was also hindered by the patriarchal way with which especially the two big publishing houses, WSOY and Otava, were headed. Moreover, WSOY’s founder Werner Söderström (1860–1914) and his successors had a strong Christian background.\textsuperscript{255} Also Gummerus, the third biggest publisher, had its background in Christianity and published a lot of religious literature, but gradually began to change its line with the new director Sakari Kuusi in 1916.\textsuperscript{256} However, not only had the leading figures within the big publishing companies strong Christian and nationalist backgrounds, but nationalist movements also tried to put pressures on publishers from the outside in form of normative regulation by demanding literature that would bring forward the nation.\textsuperscript{257} After the Civil War, all literary institutions were supposed to participate in and contribute to the strengthening of the nation, which is why the development of the publishing field towards commercialisation and pluralisation was put into practise within very restricted normative borders.\textsuperscript{258} Other fields of society watched over the literary field, so that also the “rest of the society” was an established part of the literary field. This “rest” was not only something external in relation to the literary field, but due to the above mentioned connections to academia and media, it was an elementary part of the literary field.\textsuperscript{259} However, one has to consider the fact that the more pluralist a society is, the more it weakens of course the homogeneous nation-state.\textsuperscript{260} A pluralist Finnish literary field in the 1920s and 1930s, when a homogeneous national identity was the aim, would have been rather counter-productive with regard to the goals of the leading ideas. The question is whether this homogeneity was a result of the pressure on the publishers from outside, as Sevänen states, or not rather the logical consequence of the persons who were leading the publishing houses, as well as their ideological background. These two perspectives, of course, cannot be totally separated from each other. Every text, as explicated by Foucault, is always a fabric out of discursive threads and a special representation of the discourses of its society, forming and changing them. Literary texts never arise

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\textsuperscript{255} Häggmann 2001, 34.
\textsuperscript{256} Leino-Kaukiainen 1990, 277.
\textsuperscript{257} Sevänen 1994, 25.
\textsuperscript{258} Sevänen 1994, 60.
\textsuperscript{259} Sevänen 1994, 96–97.
\textsuperscript{260} Eskola 1990, 27.
out of a vacuum, but they develop within these discourses and reply to them. And the publishers did not necessarily act under outward pressure and either reject or publish a possible queer topic, but they acted according to their own conviction whether a topic corresponded to (their) prevailing values or not, and whether it might sell. Decisive in the end is always the monopoly of legitimacy: who has the power to say who is an author and what gets published. This monopoly, in the case of the big publishers, lay mostly, but not merely, in the hand of those who represented conservative values.

The way to modernisation and segregations within the cultural field

The Finnish literary institution, unlike for example central European ones, has gained its aesthetic-autonomous function on a broader scale only with the arrival of modernism, which happened in Finnish-language literature in the 1950s. Between the wars, publishing can be described as a combination of traditional and modernist characteristics. But to a growing degree, it was practised in a way that was distanced, yet not separated from the values of the high-brow elites that strove for people’s enlightenment.261 After a short period of the above explicated modernist tendencies and a certain “americanisation” (i.e. a focus on light culture) of society in the middle of the 1920s, the depression and a critical attitude towards foreign influences at the end of the decade made many within the literary field turn their view inside, emphasising national culture and neglecting influences from abroad, as also the quotes above have shown.

The 1920s had bragged about opening windows to Europe, but it soon became clear that the work of bringing European literature to Finland had been superficial. The young republic, in its self-sufficiency, had neglected translations. Modern Anglo-Saxon literature, in particular, was almost unknown. The country lacked any series of quality foreign literature. A strong nationalist influence defined book publication.262

What nevertheless had made the literary field modern was primarily the fact that books were aimed at a socially heterogeneous public. No longer was only the upper class in the focus of literary programmes, but via teaching literature in school, for example, theoretically the whole reading population was included.263 Another move towards modernisation can be seen in the fact that the market of light fiction started to grow in the 1920s. Although, as mentioned, the commercialisation of the book market had happened rather slowly, its expansion still shows that “publishing or the “symbolic production”

261 Sevänen 1994, 381.
262 Tarkka 1988, 47. The lack of important international translations was in 1932 heavily criticised by the author Olavi Paavolainen, member of Tulenkantajat; I will return to his critique later in this chapter.
263 Sevänen 1994, 381. There was for example a division of the work between publishers and book sellers, while critique and research were still closely connected. The book production was not any more aimed only at the upper class and educated people.
had distanced itself from the normative foundation of society, from supporting it. After publishing was commercialised, the symbolic production included more and more books which the elite could not place within its positive value hierarchies.”

This fact applies to several of the books I will analyse; they show that light fiction was the genre that did the least represent ruling moral values. This is why I chose Elsa Soini’s novels *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit* and *Unī* as examples for this study. Both were categorised as light fiction and thus able to subtly undermine set values.

Nonetheless, despite the slight commercialisation in the beginning of the 20th century and the publishing of (especially foreign) light fiction, clear ideological and cultural purposes within publishing policies during the 1920s and 1930s can be determined. According to the Finland-Swedish literary scholar Johan Wrede, one can even speak of a politically motivated segregation during that time with regard to culture. For Wrede, it was on the one hand a political segregation between White and Red, and on the other hand a linguistic one between Finnish and Swedish. The knowledge about what happened in Swedish language was quite little within the Finnish-speaking literary field, as Elmer Diiktonius (1896–1961) criticised in an article about Finnish modernist poetry:

Niin yllätyksellisiä kun nämä “uuden suunnan” runoilijat ovatkin olleet suomenkieliselle yleisölle ja kirjallisuusarvostelulle on heillä kuitenkin ollut edeltäjää ja on yhä edelleen taistelutovereita omassa maassa. Meillä on nimittäin olemassa ryhmä ruotsinkielisiä runoilijoita, jotka osittain jo vuosikymmenen ajan ovat kulkenet niitä polkuja, joita heidän nuoret suomenkieliset ammattiveljensä nyt samoilevat. Maamme onnettomuksin levälistä laveampiin suomenkielisiin piireihin.

Diktonius’ article – he himself wrote both in Swedish and Finnish – is an indicator of how little modernist tendencies in literature were known to the (also educated) Finnish-speaking public, at least before the emergence of magazines like *Tulenkantajat*. Also the knowledge about, or maybe rather the interest in, Finland-Swedish prose fiction was not necessarily better, as the few translations into Finnish show. This division between the two language groups was also visible within the field of publishing. The two main publishers on the

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265 Wrede 2000, 63.

266 Elmer Diktonius: “Ruotsinkieliset modernistimme”, *Sininen kirja* 2/1927, 50–51. “As surprising as these poets of the “new movement” might have been to the Finnish-speaking readership and critics – they had predecessors and still have comrades in arms in their own country. We namely have a group of Swedish-speaking poets who have already for a decade walked on those paths, on which their young Finnish-speaking colleagues now wander. The unfortunate relationship between the languages in our country has hindered the knowledge about them to spread into larger Finnish-speaking circles.”
Finland-Swedish side, Schildts and Söderströms, were first and foremost connected to the Finland-Swedish organisational structure within society.  

It is, however, important to note that the majority of the Finland-Swedish elite also had joined the White side during the Civil War. Finland-Swedish publishers, quite similar to the big Finnish ones, communicated mostly bourgeois values. Yet, there were differences between the Finnish and the Finland-Swedish publishers’ notions of nationalism. Though not having lost power totally, since many of the upper-class Finland-Swedes still had comparatively high positions within the Finnish society, they still struggled to maintain a certain position within the country. An article in *Nya Argus*, the cultural-literary magazine for the Finland-Swedish cultural elite, shows the concerns and fears of the more conservative parts of the elite in 1928. Lars Ringbom, professor of art history at Åbo Akademi-University, wrote that

"[...] den finska befolkningen hägrar framtidsmålet: ett finskt Finland åt finnarna; den svenska befolkningen som långt före detta fått uppgiva varje anspråk på hegemoni, ställer såsom sitt anspråkslösa mål att få behålla sitt språk och sin egenart och att jämsides och med samma rättigheter som finnarna få tjäna det gemensamma fäderneslandet. I huvudsak är det samma ideell som fortfarande kämpa mot varandra, som under inbördeskrigets dagar. [...] Skillnaden är endast den att idealen nu förflyttats till det nationella, medan de då befunnit sig på det sociala planet [...] och vi kunna konstatera att de båda språkligen skilda befolkninggrupperna leva i en helt olika andlig atmosfär."

Ringbom’s comparison of the separation of the two cultures with the difficult atmosphere during the Civil War emphasises that this division was experienced rather strongly. Still, together with WSOY and Otava, the two Finland-Swedish publishers formed the core of the publishing elite, and some of their leading figures were at the same time also part of other cultural and political elitist groups. The exchange between the publishers of the two language spheres, however, was rather one-sided; very little Finland-Swedish literature was published by Finnish publishers. It was mainly small, but ambitious literary magazines like *Tulenkantajat* that, despite their small budgets, translated Finland-Swedish literature and especially poems into Finnish and introduced foreign modern literature to Finnish readers. In Swedish, it was magazines like *Ultra* that pursued the same goal.

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267 Sevänen 1994, 63.
269 Lars Ringbom: "Finsk och svensk stämning", *Nya Argus* No. 21, 16.12.1928, 261–264. "[...] the Finnish-speaking population shares the vision of a Finnish Finland for Finns: the Swedish-speaking population, which long ago had to give up its demands for hegemony, unpretentiously aims at being allowed to keep its language and its individuality and that it may side by side with the Finns, and with the same rights, serve its fatherland. It is actually the same ideals that now fight against each other as those that did so during the Civil War. [...] The only difference is that the ideal now has moved towards the national level, while then it was on the social level [...], and we can state that those two population groups that are divided by language live in a totally different intellectual atmosphere."
270 Sevänen 1994, 89.
Opening the windows to Europe?

The combination of Christian-conservative and national-patriotic values was apparently stronger within the Finnish-speaking literary field than in the Finland-Swedish, which is why also their literary outcome was different. As said, the Finland-Swedish field was rather autonomous with regard to the Finnish and strongly influenced by the other Nordic countries, especially Sweden. Within Finland-Swedish literature, Edith Södergran had introduced modernism already in 1916 with her poetry collection Dikter. From the 1910s onwards, the interest in different literary and political trends from abroad, especially from Western European countries, was enormous. It was (short-lived) magazines like the bi-lingual, modernist Ultra or Quosego – tidskrift för ny generation that served as forums for modernist writers and introduced new international ideas in Swedish language. Quosego was published by the Finland-Swedish publisher Söderströms, which made it difficult for it to hold radical political views. Moreover, it was founded only in 1928, when modernism in Finland-Swedish literature was nothing new anymore. Ultra, in contrast, was independent from the main publishers and published by the small publishing house Daimon. The aim of Ultra was “[...] to publish artistically qualified poetry both as Finnish and Swedish originals as well as translations of the latest European literature.”

It was also in Ultra where Elmer Diktonius published his still famous demand to open the windows towards Europe, with which he articulates a harsh critique towards Finnish authors not being able to produce poems that represented the presence, but rather having got stuck in national self-adoration that is of no help for the development of literature:


Ultra, thus, aimed to break the ideological isolation that was dominant in the young nation by introducing international tendencies as well as Finland-

272 Ekman 2000, 120.
273 Ultra no. 1, 1922; advert. “[...] taiteellisesti pätevä runouden julkaiseminen sekä alkuperäisinä suomen- ja ruotsinkielisinä teoksina että käänäkösinä uudesta eurooppalaisesta kirjallisuudesta.”
274 Elmer Diktonius: “Muualla ja meillä”, Ultra No.2, 30.9.1922, 25. “Open up the windows towards Europe! It is the only remedy. National self-adoration and nationalism are beautiful and in every way respectable things in the National Museum – in poetry they have to be left out in the hallway, outside the entrance door, like all slag. If contemporary poetry cannot be developed in this country, it has to be brought from elsewhere. If Finnish poets have lost touch with their time, let’s bring German French Swedish English who have not. The self-preservation instinct of provincialists has to be avoided when intellectual existence is in question.”
Swedish modernists who tried to stress their position as a ‘new generation’ that “represented aesthetic and philosophical ideas without connecting them to national cultural traditions in Finland, and this at a time, when the official cultural life was gathered around the idea of the national.”275 It was, thus, particularly internationalism as a counterweight to nationalist ideas that was aimed at and propagated; *Ultra* and the authors around it tried to see and introduce literature from a broader view than the Finnish national one that ruled the programmes of the publishers and the works of the writers. In this context, also the magazine’s bilingualism must be seen as a deliberate break with nationalist conventions concerning language policies. Hagar Olsson’s novel *På Kanaanexpressen* is a typical representative of this movement with its emphasis on everything new as well as on the young generation and its power to change things. Olsson even introduced a queer side-plot into this world.

Towards the end of the 1920s, also within the Finnish-speaking literary field finally appeared magazines that were related to Diktonius’ claim and had a look at new tendencies in an international context. The magazine *Aitta* (“Magazine” or “Granary”), 1926–30, published by Otava, was rather entertaining, emphasising urban life, internationality and liberalism.276 *Sininen kirja* (1927–30), founded by the writer Kersti Bergroth (1886–1975), was mostly literature-orientated and attempted to introduce foreign literature and culture to Finnish readers that was not available in translations. The first editorial of *Sininen kirja* commented on the general condition of Finnish culture and especially the book market in the end of the 1920s, justifying the need for the magazine’s foundation:

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Todellisesta maailmanajattelusta saamme vain hajatietoja. Monien keskinkertaissten ulkomaalaisyjen kirjojen joukosta löydämme silloin tällöin teoksen, joka yhtäkkiä muistuttaa meille, että maailma ajattelee. Mutta mikä on tämän teoksen paikka maailmankirjallisuudessa? Onko se yksinäinen ilmiö vai edustaako se laajaa virtausta? Se jää meille irralliseksi tosiseikaksi, jota emme osaa sijoittaa emmekä sentähden oikein arvioida.277
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Translated literature available in Finnish, according to this editorial, was thus chosen randomly rather than because of a certain logic. This was partly due to the fact that the Berne Convention – to which I will return later in this chapter – was signed only in 1928, i.e. books were published without the publishers having to pay for the rights. This led both to double translations

275 Wrede 1974, 25. “[...] företrädde estetiska och livsåskådningsmässiga idéer utan anknytning till de nationella kulturtraditionerna i Finland och detta vid en punkt då det officiella kulturlivet samlats kring de nationella idealen.”
276 Takala 1990, 55.
277 Kersti Bergroth, Alex Matson: “Lukijalle”, *Sininen kirja* 1/1927, 5. "From the real thoughts of the world we only get scattered information. In the bunch of average foreign books we every once in a while find a work that suddenly reminds us that the world thinks. But what is the position of this book within world literature? Is it a single phenomenon or does it represent a broad stream? For us, it remains a loose fact that we cannot place and that we thus cannot really evaluate.”
and to many untranslated books. A regulatory system did not exist, which is why the information about a translation mostly got public only after the book had already been published. This randomness of the publishers’ decisions has, according to Urpo Kovala, several reasons. Translations were selected on the basis of three methods. First, publishers followed foreign magazines or Finnish- and Swedish-language magazines that published reviews on foreign literature. The second and maybe most important method was to observe translations into other languages. Especially translations into Swedish and the Swedish book market as such were decisive for Finnish publishers; often even the translation into Finnish was based on the Swedish version, not the original. The third method, direct contacts to foreign publishers, happened on a broad scale only after Finland had joined the Berne Convention. At the same time and for the same reason also a few book agents appeared on the scene to work with Finnish publishers and functioned as an info channel for them.\textsuperscript{278} The fact that most of the literary magazines that were founded in the 1920s had to give up sooner or later due to financial problems indicates that the time was not really ripe yet for modern influences from abroad; also the greater reading public that would have certainly been needed for financial security of the magazines, had not been found or was not interested in these magazines. All this demonstrates that the literary field was still rather homogeneous and not yet differentiated enough that it would have supported various magazines with different points of view on literature. From the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s, the Finnish literary field as a whole was ruled by financial difficulties and a dominating conservatism in values and politics, while modernist voices remained at the margins. Only in the mid-1930s the field began to differentiate and to include more critical, often leftist, voices to a larger degree.

Yet, there were of course exceptional voices who questioned dominant morals within and via literature, especially in the decades before the independence; since the turn of the century, many women writers took up the topic of sexuality and corporality and made it to one of the most significant topics in women’s literature since then.\textsuperscript{279} For, example, both Minna Canth’s (1844–1897) and L. Onerva’s (1882–1972) works were turning against ruling moral values and had been published in the beginning of the 20th century, despite the fact that they critically dealt with women’s position in society. Novels that were written in the time after independence, like Hämäläinen’s \textit{Kaunis sielu} (1928/ published 2001), or Maria Jotuni’s \textit{Huojuva talo} (“The Rocky House”, 1935/ published in 1963), on the other hand have mostly shown that works addressing (homo)eroticism and sex, but even those casting a critical light on marriage were often impossible to be published.\textsuperscript{280} In this

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[278] Kovala 1989, 27.
\item[279] Karkulehto 2007, 42. See also Melkas 2006.
\item[280] In the case of Jotuni’s book, it is, however, difficult to say what in the end kept Jotuni or her husband Viljo Tarkiainen, from having it published. Jotuni wrote the book originally for a writing competition in Great Britain, but did not manage to finish it before the deadline. She aimed then at another competition, organised by the Finnish publisher Karisto in 1935. The book did not receive a price, and Tarkiainen went to get the manuscript. It was kept in the family-archive for 20 years. After the novel was finally published in 1963, there was rumour about its autobiographical elements and
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
respect, Finland was of course no exception. But due to the small size of the Finnish book market it seems that in the 1920s and 1930s it the possibility to publish works that openly deal with critical topics was smaller than before. Finnish literature at that time, even more than translations, was hoped to reflect ideological and moral expectations. This led, as Kai Häggman states, to a certain willingness by publishers, translators and authors to censor unwanted topics. This argument is also supported by some of the archival material of publishers that I have found.

Also the greater part of Finland-Swedish literature of the time remained untranslated into Finnish. The decline of translations from Finland-Swedish had already begun at the turn of the century, when there were more Swedish-language books translated from Swedish than from Finland-Swedish writers. The reason was seen in a deliberate segregation by Finland-Swedes, and might partly also be true: "From the Finnish-speaking side, our Finland-Swedish writers were accused of separating themselves, and after having become estranged from the national and social development, they were thought to not have anything to give to Finnish readers." The Finland-Swedish literary field, then, was completely self-sufficient, a different world than the Finnish one, and might thus also be more or less compared to a foreign literature. Yet, the cultural, social and political commonalities with the Finnish field by sharing the same history places it nonetheless closer to the Finnish field than any other literature.

2.2 The Ratification of the Berne Convention in 1928: a Turning Point in Publishing

Translations played an important role already in the early phase of written Finnish literature, when in the 1830s the need to develop a Finnish language for literature emerged, since until then, Finnish had been more or less only a spoken language. The quest for translations became an essential part of the national project. Between 1840 and 1910, the number of translations was higher than the number of books originally written in Finnish. The original aim in the 19th century was to translate the best that world literature had to offer in order to set an example for a Finnish national literature and for the many-sided and rich national character that needed to be developed. The

whether it was Jotuni's and Tarkiainen's own marriage that was depicted, and whether it was him who had been the model for the violent husband. See Niemi 2001, 242–257.

281 Häggman 2008, 328.


publishers, mostly active in the Fennoman-movement, supported this idea of connecting translated literature and nationalistic aspirations.\textsuperscript{284}

From 1910 onwards, Finland launched a national program to connect itself to the Western cultural tradition by means of translations and with the help of, for example, the program *Kirjallisuuden Edistämisrahasto*, the Finnish Literature Society’s Fund for the Promotion of Literature. The orientation of its Finland-Swedish counterpart was different and can be explained by the position of Finland-Swedish literature until the independence. Founded only in 1923, its main purpose was both funding the translation of foreign classics and to promote the translations of Finnish-language literature.\textsuperscript{285}

Between the wars, English-language literature dominated translations, since most of the light fiction translated into Finnish had its origin in these countries. The literary elite, however, was not very familiar with English literature, only few even spoke the language. In contrast to English, especially German and to some degree French literature played an important role within high-brow literature and its translation. Also many writers got to know Anglo-American literature only via translations.\textsuperscript{286} When having a look at books written in Finnish in the late 1920s and the early 1930s, their topics indicate that Finnish authors travelled much and were interested in European culture. Especially France and Germany were popular destinations for the elite, while Great-Britain and the USA were not so much favoured. Mika Waltari, for example, had travelled to Paris and set his first novel *Suuri illusioni* (1928) partly there. His travel book *Yksinäisen miehen junaa* (1929) again tells about his trip through Europe, from Helsinki to Istanbul and Paris. Hagar Olsson’s protagonists dream of a Pan-Europeism, while Alma Söderhjelm’s protagonist travels to Italy. Elsa Soini’s protagonists, in contrast, travel to the USA, and her works symptomatically were classified light fiction. However, e.g. the author Aino Kallas (1878–1956) lived in Great-Britain as the wife of an Estonian diplomat and also wrote about her experiences there, while Kersti Bergroth (1886–1975) and Alex Matson (1888–1972) emphasised English-language fiction in *Sininen kirja*. Bergroth herself was more interested in French literature, while Matson had lived in England as a child.

Since translations had played such an important role both for the development of Finnish literature, the building of a national identity and for its opening towards foreign cultures and the influences they brought with them, the decline of translated literature that can be discerned in the 1930s is especially worth noticing. Both Finland’s entry into the “Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works” in 1928 and the financial crisis of 1929 led to a striking decline in translations. These events were far-reaching markers in the history of translations into Finnish.

The Berne Convention that is still in force implies that the author of a work is entitled to all copyrights in the work as well as in its entire derivative work,

\textsuperscript{284} Kovala 1999, 299–301.
\textsuperscript{285} Sevänen 1994, 152–153.
\textsuperscript{286} Sevänen 1994, 103–104.
i.e. publishers have to pay for the rights to translate a book. Many within the
literary field regarded it as a matter of honour that Finland finally joined the
Berne convention in 1928. The publisher Söderströms, for example, had seen
it already as self-evident to pay for translations before Finland had joined the
Convention.287 Yet, the attitude of the Finnish Book Publishers Association
towards the contract was quite reserved. They were afraid of the extra
expenses that came as a side-effect for publishers by joining the convention
and participating in the intellectual works of the big and rich civilised
countries.288 In the end, the contract was signed in its original version from
1886, so that all translations that already existed could be distributed without
any payments and the number of translations did not immediately drop down;
in 1927, 1655 new titles were published in Finland; in 1929 the number even
rose to 1932 titles.289

One effect of joining the Berne Convention was the emergence of light
fiction in Finnish on a broader scale, as well as the genre’s simultaneous
establishment on the Finnish book-market. Until then, the genre had mostly
existed in form of translations from English. When translations had suddenly
become expensive, the conditions for Finnish writers to enter the market
improved. Another positive feature after the ratification of the convention was
that the books got usually published only once; before, it had happened that
the same book was published twice, since the publishers did not always
communicate their implications to translate a book.290 However, Gummerus,
for example, had already decided in May 1907 to publish the list of books they
had chosen to translate in newspapers. Little by little, most of the other
publishers followed this example. In the years before Finland became
independent, also contracts with known foreign authors were made, although
Finnish publishers would not have had to pay them for the copyrights.291

However, since the publishers, especially small ones with little budgets,
had aimed at low-budget translations, their quality was often rather bad. The
other side of the coin was that after joining the Berne Convention only
established publishers were able to buy translation-rights. Translations
suddenly lay in the hands of a handful of publishers, which, in turn, meant that
the publication of foreign books became rather one-sided292 – also
ideologically. Thus, the concentration of publishing books meant that the

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287 A letter to the German publisher Fischer shows the example Söderströms set, concerning
Hermann Hesse’s novel Demian: “Zugleich erlauben wir uns Sie darauf aufmerksam zu machen, dass
Finnland nicht zu der Bern-Konvention gehört hört (sic) und wir somit nicht gezwungen sind, das
Copyright zu kaufen, obwohl wir freiwillig die Gewohnheit haben den Bestimmungen der Bern-
Konvention zu folgen.” Svenska litteratursällskapets arkiv: Söderströms arkiv (SLSA: 996), Utgående
brev: S. Fischer Verlag (SLSA: D7), 15.11.1924.
288 Alvar Renqvist, O. Wickström: “Suomen liittyminen Bernin sopimuksen”, Suomen
Kirjakauppalehti 1927/18, 125.
289 Hägman 2008, 370.
290 An interesting peculiarity were contracts that had been made between Russia and amongst others
France and Germany after 1910, since Finland was part of Russia and thus also part of the law that
translation contracts between these countries meant also free rights in Finland for ten years.
291 Leino-Kaukiainen 1990, 64.
books that were translated to a large degree reflected the value system and interests of the big bourgeois publishers. Working-class literature or other ‘marginal’ topics were less likely to find their way to the Finnish reader. Yet, there were exceptions like Rosamond Lehmann’s *Dusty Answer* that, however, was already translated in 1928.

After the convention had been signed, the fear of its (financial) consequences and insecurity rose considerably. Väinö Hämeen-Anttila (1878–1942), the director of the middle-sized publisher Karisto residing in Hämeenlinna, stated in a paper he presented to his colleagues that “[...] joining the Berne Convention has too much influenced us when choosing our programme. [...] As a consequence, the production of our publishing house has consisted of too much outdated narration that we did not have to pay for, but for which our readership does not want to pay either.” Publishers like Karisto, thus, had not dared to take risks in those times of financial insecurity. But at the same time they were not financially successful, either. With this statement in mind, it is rather obvious that “risky” topics like homosexuality were also from a financial point of view very unlikely to get published, since the readership would have been too limited – apart from the case that the book would have caused a scandal and sold because of this, as did Alma Söderhjelm’s novel in 1922. However, a scandal always labels also the publisher and does in the long run not necessarily have positive consequences, especially when taking into account the encouragement section.

In addition to the Berne Convention, also the Great Depression had its influence on publishing, but maybe not as strong as some had expected; Hämeen-Anttila at least saw the reason for the downturn of the company’s income not so much in the depression, but rather in the lack of flexibility concerning the programme. Still, when having a look at the number of translations, which had until then more or less equalled the new publications in Finnish literature, the long term consequences of the Berne Convention that fell together with the Depression can be easily observed. Until the late 1930s, there was a big decline in the amount of translations into Finnish. Especially

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293 SKS/KIA: Väinö Hämeen-Anttilan arkisto, mf 2004:12, D, Kirjavaraston realisoinnista, 3.2.1934; toimintakirjat. “[...] tuotantomme valinnassa on Suomen liittyminen Bernin sopimukseen johtaneet vaikutetaman liiallisesti. [...] Seurauksena on ollut kustannustuotannossamme paljon sellaista vanhanaikaista kerrontaa, josta meidän ei ole tarvinnut maksaa, mutta josta yleisökkään ei tahdo maksaa.”

294 In Germany, for example, it was precisely this period of time, the 1920s, when a considerable amount of literature with lesbian content was published, beginning with Anna Elisabet Weirauch’s *Der Skorpion* in 1919, which quickly sold out. Interestingly, one of Weirauch’s novels has been translated into Finnish in 1931 under the title *Lomapäivien aurinkoa. Yhden viikon romaani* (WSOY; the database Fennica does not include the original title, the direct translation is “Holiday Sun. A Novel of a Week”). Thus, although Germany in many ways (law etc.) functioned as a model for Finland, it was not a model with regard to rather liberal attitudes towards sexuality during the 1920s. In 1931, the famous film *Mädchen in Uniform*, directed by Leonie Sag, which tells about a girl’s love for her teacher, came out. It was an adaptation of the very successful play *Gestern und heute* (1930) by Christa Winsloe and a big success. A remake of the film, even more popular, was made in 1958 (directed by Géza von Radványi). The film from 1931 came out in Finland in May 1932 under the title *Tyttöjä murrosiässä* (“Girls in Puberty”).
smaller publishers suffered from the Depression. The left-wing publisher Kansanvalta, for example, withdrew its literary director from his tasks and published from 1929 onwards less and less books. Several medium-sized publishers got bankrupt in the beginning of the 1930s, like Kustannusosakeyhtiö Kirja, Kustannus Oy Taru and Kustannusliike Minerva Oy – the latter having published Zola’s novel Nana in 1930 that included all the queer parts that were later, in a new translation in 1952, missing.

The late 1920s and especially the 1930s have thus been described as a “hermetical age” in terms of translations into Finnish. “The republics’ childhood years were in many ways isolated. The country locked itself in, and Finnish and Swedish locked themselves in.” Both the relation between Finnish and Finland-Swedish culture and the relations to other countries via translations were rather weak. The Finnish-language literary field concentrated on itself and its own literature. Sininen Kirja aptly describes this atmosphere:

Kahdeskymmenes vuosisata, se on yhteinen kotimme. Mutta syrjässä asuva kansa pysyy vieraampana tälle kodilleen. [...] Suomi elää 20:nneen vuosisadan keskellä, mutta se ei voi kouluulotaan yhtä helposti kuin keskuksissa elävät kansat. Suomen lähentäminen vuosisataansa tuntui minusta olevan jokaiselle suomalaiselle tärkeää tehtävää, ja siltä pohjalta kasvoi viihitellen Sinisen Kirjan ohjelma, mikäli se koskee “meidän” suhdetutamme ”ulkomaahin”.

While magazines like Tulenkantajat and Sininen Kirja saw it as their task to provide the Finnish reader with insights into what was happening in foreign literature, some parts of the literary field seemed content, even complacent, with the situation. An article symptomatic of the time and its problems was published in Suomen Kirjakauppalehti (“The Magazine of Finnish Bookshops”) saying that

[k]irjallisuutemme taso on korkeampi kuin ehkä missään muussa maassa. Kieleemme siirretään tuskin koskaan hengettomän kehnoa ja vahingollista teosta; ja alkuperäiset sensuuntaiset eivät näytä, harvaa poikkeusta lukuun ottamatta, läpäisevän kustantajien kiirastulta. Erikoisesti ovat kirjallisuuden päähkustantajat tässä suhteessa varsin tarkkoja.

299 Kersti Bergroth, Alex Matson: “Lukijalle”, Sininen kirja 1/1927, 7. “The 20th century is our common home. But a nation that lives on the fringe stays a stranger to that home. [...] Finland lives in the middle of the 20th century, but is not able to feel at home in its century as easily as those nations that live in the centre. Finland’s rapprochement to its century seems to be an important task for every Finn. Based on that, the programme of Sininen Kirja is being developed insofar as it concerns ‘our’ relationship to ‘foreign countries’.”
300 N.N.: “Piirteitä kirjallisuudestamme”, Suomen Kirjakauppalehti 3/1930, 15. “[T]he level of our literature is maybe higher than in any other country. Rarely is a work translated in our language that is
According to Häggman, this idea of Finnish literature communicated by the magazine reflected the thoughts of the majority of booksellers, but also of those who bought books. This would then mean that the majority of readers did not even want to read foreign literature or was not eager to know what was happening abroad. A radical statement that adds to this can be found in an article by the editor and journalist Eino Railo (1884–1948) in 1935, where he criticises Finnish publishers and media because they have become “victims” of the ruling Anglo-American pulp-culture. He accordingly demands to put away foreign junk from public Finnish life and to honour self-sufficiency. Here, the role of the critics as doormen becomes obvious in the attempt to spread their opinions about (foreign) books and topics; some of them, like V. A. Koskenniemi (1885–1962), also worked at the same time as experts for publishers. This role becomes even clearer in the literary wars to which I will return in detail.

From a contrasting perspective also the author, essayist and journalist Olavi Paavolainen (1903–1964), a central figure within the Tulenkantajat-movement as well as in the whole literary field of the 1930s, criticised Finnish literature and publishing quite harshly in his essay collection Suursiivous eli kirjallisessa lastenkamarissa (“Spring clean, or in the literary nursery”, 1932), the latter precisely because of its translation policies. For him, joining the Berne Convention could only mean a death blow to translated literature in Finland, since foreign modern world literature, works from for example Woolf, Proust or Gide were not even known by then in Finland. As a consequence of the Berne convention, Paavolainen feared that “the artistic level of literature might be notably lowered without someone noticing or remarking it.”

Strikingly, new foreign literature was less translated and followed in the independent Finland than it had been during times of Russian rule. Also authors like Mika Waltari concentrated on Finland and “closed the windows towards Europe” again. Having travelled through the continent and examined European life in his books in the late 1920s, the Waltari of the 1930s shared the opinion of the nationalist orientated elite and argued that, after having thought about Finland’s “traditionalism”, there were at least three good reasons to boycott foreign literature: referring to authors like Gide or Huxley, he had come “to the comforting result: the new foreign literature is a) indecent (they deal a lot with, amongst others, sexual problems), b) poisonous (i.e.,

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301 Häggman 2008, 3.
303 Paavolainen 1932, 47. “Kirjallisuuden taiteellinen taso saattoi huomattavasti ruveta alennemaan kenenkään sitä huomaamatta tai siitä huomauttamatta.” Paavolainen’s book was a big success. The attention it received in newspapers was unparalleled; Paavolainen had offered the book to WSOY and Otava, who both rejected it since it severely criticised their own authors. It was published then by Gummerus. See Leino-Kaukiainen 1990, 150.
intelligent, destructive and dispersing), c) provoking social revolution [...].” He had also the readership in mind for whom these kinds of literature would not fulfil the meaning literature should have. At the most, those books would sell as a result of their sensational character and dealing with indecency. Therefore, he sums up, it was best to leave such books untranslated and he advises those who are nevertheless interested in them to get to know them via the Swedish language. Waltari’s views on “indecency” were already visible in the depictions of the queer characters in the two books from the late 1920s which I will examine, *Suuri illusio*ni and *Yksinäisen miehen jun*. Also some of the publishers shared this viewpoint of contemporary literature to some degree, albeit from a more elitist point of view. For example WSOY’s Martti Haavio (1899–1973), who belonged to the right-wing and nationalist group Akateeminen Karjala-Seura was very distant towards any kind of modern literature and hoped that the threshold into publishing would be raised, also with regard to Finnish literature. Hämeen-Anttila from Karisto even held that the bigger part of the published literature actually had no right to find its way into the public. In this sense, translations were of course more or less a safe bet, since their success could be anticipated. There was a dilemma, it seems: foreign literature for many within the literary field meant a moral problem, Finnish literature on the other hand meant a more intellectual one, since too much bad literary quality had found its way into the public. Nonetheless, in terms of morals bad quality literature was mostly following traditional family values.

Besides, also the rise of right-wing political tendencies might have had an impact on the declining number of translations; right-wing orientated members of the literary elite also managed to exert influence on the selection of translations. The ruling ideology of the 1930s, with for example the right-wing Academic Karelian Society that had much power, opposed itself to everything different. With the help of patriotic, national and ecclesiastical values, everything was clearly classified as (morally) either good or bad, be it with respect to political views, a certain language group or a way of life. The political field of the 1920s, however, was partly leftist. The first Finnish president from 1919–1925, K. J. Ståhlberg from the National Progressive Party, a liberal, internationally oriented one, led the country into a democratic

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305 Mika Waltari: “Tyhjää tynnyreitä eli kolinaa ammattikirjailijan aivokopassa”, *Suomalainen Suomi* 2/1933, 73. “[... ] lohdulliseen tulokseen: uusi ulkomainen kirjallisuus on a) epäisveellistä (siinä käsitellään runsaasti mm. seksuaaliprobleemaa), b) myrkyllistä (so. älykästä, repivää ja hajottavaa), c) yhteiskunnallisesti kumoukselleen ylittävää [...].”


308 Simojoki 1950, 101–11.

direction. That means that rather soon after the Civil War which the Reds had lost against the Whites, Finland was ruled by a leftist government. In 1926, the Social Democrats under Väinö Tanner won the elections and stayed in power for about a year, which resulted in an appeasement of the inner political situation; however, the gap between the leftist and the right-wing parties grew. \(^{310}\) Besides, leftist did not mean communist, although there still was a communist movement in Finland. In 1919, the secret national police was founded with the aim to define groups that were not welcome since they formed a threat towards the cultural order and the purity of the young nation. These groups were, amongst others, “suspicious organisations” (for example communist ones) or “abnormal gender-lechers”. \(^{311}\)

Within the context of this study, also the attitude of the communists towards family, marriage and homosexuality in the 1920s is interesting, since it contrasts the prevailing conservative-nationalist one in Finland. The Bolsheviks, namely, pursued the “new human being”, a freed individual, and the destruction of any gender orders. The tasks of the different genders within household, marriage, family and work were questioned; the aim was the community of the genders. Women should slowly receive the same social role as men, while in the end they might, in the idea of the Bolsheviks, even physically resemble men. Marriage was declared totally equal, the church had no longer the right to contract marriages, and divorces were possible; abortion was legal from 1920 onwards. In 1922, the punishment for homosexuality in the Soviet-Union was abolished; another step towards the freedom of the individual and the breaking up of the idea of the nuclear family, as the historian Elina Katainen interprets this law. \(^{312}\) However, the influences of the Soviet-Union on the official politics in Finland were mostly visible within the communist movement and not, for example, in the reviews or books of the influential newspapers and magazines or the big publishers and will thus not be in further focus here. For example, only one work by Alexandra Kollontai was translated into Finnish, its title *Uusi moraali* (“The New Morality”). It was published in 1926 in the magazine *Työväenjärjestöjen tiedonantaja* (“The Informant of the Worker’s Organisations”), the mouthpiece of the socialist workers’ movement in the 1920s. Kollontai was, however, also known in Finland-Swedish circles, for example Hagar Olsson had seemingly read her. \(^{313}\) Important to notice nonetheless is in this context where also censorship of unwelcome topics is in the focus, that the communist movement together with its press were made illegal in 1930. In 1938, the Ministry of the Interior also tried to close down the right-wing press that represented the radical Lapua Movement, but did not succeed. \(^{314}\)

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\(^{310}\) Rinne 2006, 21.

\(^{311}\) Katainen 2013, 11. “[...] abnormeja sukupuolielostelijoita”.

\(^{312}\) Katainen 2013, 190–194.


\(^{314}\) Weibull 1987, 170.
Within Finland-Swedish publishing, the number of translations likewise decreased in the beginning of the 1930s. However, in contrast to publishing in Finnish, only quite a small amount of Swedish-language literature and literature translated into Swedish was (and still is) printed in Finland. The Swedish book market, of course, has offered much more literature available in the Finland-Swede’s mother-tongue. Literature translated from Finnish, with exception of the few years when the publisher Schildts published translations from Finnish into Swedish, still played a rather marginal role on the Finland-Swedish book market.\(^{315}\) This shows again that the two linguistic cultures in Finland were quite closed formations in relation to each other, seemingly self-sufficient. It is also important to note here that the greater part of books that were imported to Finland came via Sweden. Most of them were translations into Swedish from different languages. Which impact this fact had on the status of literature with queer topics will be discussed later with the example of Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) that was translated into Swedish in 1932. The question will be whether a Finnish readership (or a Finland-Swedish) got to read such books already in the 1930s – and why it was possible to translate and publish it in Sweden.

### 2.3 The Literary War of the 1930s: Arts, Morals and the Lutheran Church

The beginning of the 1930s was marked by a literary war (”kirjasota”/”kirjallisuussota” in Finnish) that was a discussion mainly negotiated via magazines and newspapers. The topic of this discussion was the understanding and task of literature, especially from a moral perspective. The question that became predominant in the mid-1930s was whether culture needs to subordinate itself to prevailing values or whether it has to strive for new ones, depending on the background of those who participated in the discussion.\(^{316}\) The fight came to a climax when the different camps between left and right within society fought for ideological hegemony; in terms of values, the literary field, was not at all homogeneous (any more), but rather mirrored the social field that was also developing into different directions. According to Heikki Mikkeli, who has analysed the 1930s literary field, one can distinguish three groups that took part in the literary war: the cultural conservatists, i.e. writers and critics like Mika Waltari or K.S. Laurila; the liberal writers like Lauri Viljanen or Tatu Vaaskivi; the leftists like Raoul Palmgren and the authors around the group “Kiila”. The literary wars themselves – or rather the whole of European intellectual thought in the first half of the 20\(^{th}\) century – can again be divided into two opposed trends of ideas: the idea of a belief in progress on the one hand, and the idea of a crisis

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\(^{316}\) Karkama/ Koivisto 1999, 13.
of progress on the other. The point in time when the fights occurred is logical, according to Sevänen, because of the changes society had been through:

30-luvun alkupuolella kulttuuritaantumus oli paljolti virallisesti legitimoitua, valtion ajamaa kulttuuripolitiikkaa. Kauden aikanahan julkisuuden kontrolli tiukentui. [...] Kulttuuritaantumukseen subjektit pystyivät tässä vaiheessa torjumaan pakkokeinoin porvarillisten ja kirkollisten perushyveiden loukkaukset.

Such coercive means were, for example, the suppression of leftist magazines or libel actions towards books like Jaroslav Hašek’s The Good Soldier Švejk, accused of blasphemy. Books that presented queer topics are not in the list of accusations. Cultural regression in this respect began in the end of the 1920s within Finnish-language publishing; before that, works like Ain'Elisabet Pennanen’s Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin, the translation of Rosamond Lehmann’s Dusty Answer or Elsa Soini’s novels could still come out, while the number of queer topics went down after 1930 for some years. But although the attitude towards morals tightened, it usually stayed within the borders of discussions and did not expand to juridical actions. Concerning direct state control, the majority of lawsuits were conducted for political-ideological reasons. Although homosexuality was banned by law, state control in terms of moral or religious issues was nonetheless looser. Within the literary field, the control worked usually before anything directly aimed against the ruling morals got published. Of the topics that were especially discussed in the literary fight, sexuality was one, while homosexuality was rarely named or publicly discussed.

The interpretations of the literary fight have been rather diverse in the times between the wars, i.e. when the discussions were in full swing, and can be divided into different categories, of which the literary, the theological, and the social are helpful in the context of this study. The literary interpretation has seen the crisis as a dispute between the different literary directions about the question of which kind of literature is morally acceptable. “What the conservative reviewers saw as corruption and threat of immorality, the liberal critics saw as an attempt to build a new individual image of the human being.”

The theological interpretation again sees the social and spiritual degeneration of the Western world as the main reason for discussion, while for the philosophers the clash of different world views as well as the differentiation

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318 Sevänen 1994, 283. “In the beginning of the 1930s, cultural regression was mainly officially legitimated; it was state-run cultural policies. During that phase, the control of the public tightened. [...] The subjects of this cultural regression were in this phase able to repel any offence of the basic values of the bourgeoisie and the Lutheran Church with the help of coercive means.” The above mentioned encouragement sections is an example for the state-run cultural policies and the repulse of offences.”
319 Sevänen 1994, 137.
320 Mikkeli 1996, 139. “Minkä konservatiiviset arvostelijat näkivät tapainturmeluksena ja siveettömyyden uhkana, sen liberalistiset kritikot puolestaan kokivat yrityksenä rakentaa uutta individualistista ihmiskuvaa.”
between the individual and the mass is central. The social interpretation emphasises the rise of the middle-class and its demand for more participation in the cultural life and its decisions as a reason for this literary dispute. The latter interpretation was only marginally a topic in the 1930s; it rather arose in the 1950s, after a timely distance. A common factor of all these different points of view, however, is the emphasis on a crisis of values and the conflict between them.\(^{321}\) In the context of queer topics in literature, the discussion about morals is the most important; but also the theological interpretation certainly had its influence on it, as the analyses of the reviews on the novels I will examine, show.

These interpretations of the literary fight reveal that strong regressive forces prevailed within the literary field and thus rendered any interference on the part of external powers unnecessary. This might also explain the many gaps in the archival material, since quite often the reasons for a refusal of a book are not given. One conclusion might be that rejecting a publication concerning unwanted issues was self-explaining, widely agreed upon and did not need not to be discussed. Or these topics were so delicate that they were agreed upon only word-of-mouth. This argument is supported by the case of Hämäläinen’s *Kaunis sielu*, if we can trust an interview given by her in 1972: she simply received strange looks when she came to get her manuscript. The knowledge about this reaction, however, has for a long time been only available in a few interviews stored at the archive of the Finnish Literature Society and had to be searched for until it was made more public by academic articles.\(^{322}\) There is also no material available about the reason why the Finnish translation of Zola’s *Nana* from 1952 lacks the parts where Nana has an affair with her best female friend. Censoring these parts might also have been a word-of-mouth discussion between publisher and translator.

As stated in the introduction, literature can never be seen outside its context: the society it is written in and its morals and value judgements. Discussions about morals within literature, then, are discussions about the moral foundations of the society they concern\(^{323}\) and about the larger question of one’s view of the world in general. It is then indeed not surprising that a discussion about literature and morals arose in the 1930s: pluralism had also reached out to the literary world, while business and values had to be juggled with more than before. The wider emergence of light fiction, moreover, had also reached a broader readership that was now in the focus of the publishers; the mediation of morals, according to the conservative parts in the field, had thus become more important again.

In this context of morals and literature, the role of the Lutheran Church that had changed in the course of the Civil War and its aftermath, may not be neglected. After the Civil War, the Church was most popular among the bourgeois part of the nation, which became evident in the writings of the big

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\(^{321}\) Mikkeli 1996, 139–140.

\(^{322}\) See for example Kivilaakso 2010 and 2012. I will analyse the interview in detail in Chapter 4.

\(^{323}\) Mäkinen 1989b, 157–158.
newspapers as well as in literature, and among the Swedish-speaking part of the population. Until then, the Church had, in the atmosphere of a rising individualism, been associated with backwardness and seemed to have grown away from many people’s life. The growing popularity of the Lutheran Church, however, was not necessarily motivated by religious reasons. Rather, the majority wanted the Church to be a stronger educator and supporter of the social order than before the war and the independence. A relationship between the Lutheran Church and the worker’s movement still was more problematic; a Christian worker’s movement was almost non-existent. During the Civil War, the Church had officially taken sides with the Whites, although very few of the clergy had actively taken part in the fights. The new system of government that came into force in 1919 changed the principles of the status of religion and the Lutheran Church by being neutral and guaranteeing freedom of religion. The latter principle was rather contested, since many feared that the position of the Church as the moral educational institution would be weakened by this law. Many of its members wanted to see the Church as the “moral backbone” of the nation, in all its fields. Accordingly, although Lutheran belief became one of many religious persuasions on the paper, the new political system nevertheless at the same time conceded the Lutheran Church a special status as the church of the big majority of the people – only very few left the Church after the introduction of the law and it thus kept its position as the “official” Church without being the state Church.

The respect which the Lutheran Church had gained after the Civil War within the bourgeois circles was a reason for the institution to try to influence also beyond ecclesiastical matters and extend its work on influencing the building of the young nation. This meant at the same time a clear scepticism both towards the workers’ movement that was seen as a threat for the patriotic and religious values, and towards international or foreign influences. The fear of communism and foreign influences led to a support of the two strongest political movements of the time which were situated at the very right. The Lapua Movement (1929–32) and the Academic Karelia Society (AKS, 1922–44) included many of the clergy in the 1920s, which again gave especially the Lapua Movement a clear religious and moral stamp. When the Lapua Movement radicalised in 1930 and started to act outside the law, the clergy withdraw, but the stigma that the Church had been supporting the Lapua Movement could not be completely removed. Also the Academic Karelia

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324 Kena 1979, 124–128; 312–313.
325 Kena 1979, 304. See also Murtorinne/ Heikkilä 1980, 86–87. In 1921 and 1922, when the Finnish nation state gradually had established itself, the discussion about whether Church and State should be separated, was rather active. Many representatives of the Church thought, that it would harm the state more than the church, since the church’s task was to educate. Still, the law about freedom of religion was the central focus before the relationship between church and state could be further developed.
326 Murtorinne 1977, 11–14. Especially the Soviet Union’s Church politics in the 1920s that made atheism its religious ideology, were a reason for the Lutheran Church to see a White Finland as the safest option with the aim to preserve the country’s and thus also the Church’s independence; the Lapua Movement with its strong anti-Communism and its moral annoyance about the violation of nationalist-patriotic values as well as blasphemy seemed a right option. Lapua was an aggressive movement directed not only against the left, but also against the democratic state itself.
Society was strongly anti-Communist and a movement of particularly the middle-class. But in contrast to the Lapua Movement, the AKS saw the nation’s coalescence, its harmonisation, as the precondition for preserving the nation’s independence against threats from both within and outside. Since the time after World War I had meant a decline of the economic situation of the middle-class, the representatives of the middle-class saw the AKS as the movement that was fighting for their interests, which is why it found great favour with many.\(^3^2\)7

To sum up, one can say that the conservative and especially nationalist characteristics of the representatives of the Lutheran Church could be observed in several areas: they became active within language-politics, showed, as many Conservatives did, a growing interest in the cooperation of and with different clans, and had a special interest in merging the Finnish nationalist viewpoints with religious and theological ones. In discussions and articles it was rather common that the so-called national Lutheran Christianity, i.e. the fear of God and the patriarchal love of the country, was sharply opposed to an internationalist and atheist Socialism.\(^3^2\)8 The Lutheran Church, however, cannot only be described in black-and-white:

Kuten aiemmin on jo todettu, pyrki kirkon aseman ja asenteiden muotoutumiseen kansalaissodan jälkeen vaikuttamaan kirkkoon kohdistunut erilaisten odotusten paine. Se tahtoi muovata kirkosta yleishyödollisen porvarillisen palvelukirkon ja/tai alistaa sen nationalistista ajattelua myötäileväksi rajoittuneeksi kansalliskirkoksi. Kirkon taholta pyrittiin tosin torjumaan näiden tendenssien liiallista vaikutusta, mutta toisaalta mm. johtavan papiston omiin asenteisiin ja teologiseen ajatteluun sisältyi tiettyjä nationalistisia ja nationalistia juontelia.\(^3\)29

The Lutheran Church, situating itself within politics and being concerned about the nation’s morals in a broader sense, also influenced the development of the literary wars. It was representatives of the Church who initiated them on the one hand, and authors on the other. The 1930s can be thus characterised by tighter moral values. Urban living styles were said to interfere with nationalistic aims. Especially women’s access to public and working life was seen as the reason for a downfall of gender morals. Also many of the critics of bigger and influential newspapers and magazines had adopted these nationalist-patriotic values and reviewed books accordingly; moreover, many

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327 Heinonen 1977, 82–87. A third movement that moreover became a political party in 1933 was the Patriotic People’s Movement (Isänmaallinen kansanliike, IKL), the successor of the Lapua Movement after 1932. It stayed, however, within legal frames and had, besides in its anti-Communism, also in its aim of a monolingual Finland, similarities with the AKS. Yet, it was closer to the programme of the Lutheran Church by stressing for example religious-patriotic education and the significance of work done by the Church in general.

328 Kena 1979, 325, 329.

329 Kena 1979, 334. “As already stated before, a pressure of different expectations to influence the Church after the Civil War strove to shape the position and attitudes of the Church. The aim was to form a bourgeois service Church for the public good and/or to keep it down as a national Church that echoed nationalist thoughts. The Church itself tried to prevent too much influence of these tendencies, but the leading clergy, among others, had internalised certain nationalist devices in their own attitudes and theological thoughts.”
male critics turned out to be misogynist in their reviews of literature written by women.

The Finnish literary war can be compared to the one that took place in Sweden at almost the same time. The situation in Sweden was also often mentioned in these discussions during the 1930s, for example in the magazine Kotimaa (“Homeland”), a weekly Christian paper founded in 1905 that took actively part in political discussions. There, one writer for example implies parallels to Finland: ecclesiastical educational study circles had in their readings of literature realised that one could not trust reviews in their estimation of morals. The religious cultural elite, the article says, opposed itself to the more ‘primitivist’ writers who “gave sexuality the wrong position within life”330. In Sweden, a group of Christians had founded a Christian literary committee that gave reports on literature for libraries. This action had resulted in a big discussion about the freedom of speech in Sweden. Those defending the committee stressed their view that literature would always be a declaration of some kind and that it would be important to know what literature declares. The stress in the article lies on the following sentence and shows the author’s sympathies for the Swedish committee: “Literature also needs to be reviewed according to its influence on the nation’s education and cultural life, not only from a literary point of view.”331 With this argument, the reviewer strives to set a guideline for the readership on how to review writers that do not fit into their task as educators in a broader sense, as well as he sets a guideline for publishers following Christian values on what to publish.332

The rather small group of people that officially was involved in decisions that concerned cultural politics in Finland formed, together with critics and university teachers, a quite uniform assemblage of gatekeepers. They followed, as shown, the nationalist’s ideas of the 19th century, like Snellman’s, and were additionally influenced by the Lutheran Church.333 Moreover, most of these influential people were men which resulted in the fact that literature written by women was often not appreciated, “since it did not, in the mind of the male gatekeepers within cultural life, promote national ideal realism, but rather concentrated on dealing with such problems as prosaic everyday life and

330 N.N.: “Kirjallisuusarvostelu kristillisen elämänkatsomuksen kannalta herättää Ruotsissa myrskyn”, Kotimaa, 21.5.1935a. “[…] ja antaa esimerkiksi seksuaalisuudelle vääran paikan ihmiselämässä” The background to the Swedish situation certainly was the so-called “Pahlenfejden” (1933–35), a discussion about the relationship between literature and morals around Agnes von Krusenstjerna’s novel series Fröknarna von Pahlen.


332 Politics and culture were closely linked, and also the Lutheran Church tried to intervene in politics. Accordingly, their magazine Kotimaa expressed worries about literature and its influence on people, especially the youth, when dealing with inappropriate topics. The article “About bad literature” in 1934, for example, was concerned about the rising amount of bad quality books being published in Finland – names like Waltari and Sillanpää – and their bad influence on the youth, though without explaining in more detail what “bad” means. Good literature, however, needs to be “pure”, and it should stimulate readers by, for example, being well-written, but it should not awake the imagination of young people or stimulate their feelings. N.N.: “Hyvästä ja huonosta kirjallisuudesta”, Kotimaa 9.10.1934.

corporeality that challenged the patriarchal order and the bourgeois family ideal,” as Karkama/Koivisto point out. Thus, one more decisive factor for or against publication might also have been the sex of the author. It is, then, no wonder that especially with regard to topics that dealt with female homosexuality, official censorship was not really needed:

Suomessa ei ollut varsinaista poliittista ennakkosensuuria, mutta hegemonisen ideologian ylivalta ja sen palveluksessa toimivat instituutiot, kuten kustantajat, ja niiden edustajat saivat aikaan sen, ettei ideologian perusarvioksi julistamia arvoja loukkaava tekstiä juurikaan julkaistu. [...] Yleisesti ottaen vallitsi tietyynlainen itsesensuurin ilmapiiri.

When talking about gatekeepers one has to keep in mind both points of view: the publisher and the author. And, as I would add, also the literary field around, with its expectations, possibilities and limitations. The literary scholar Johan Svedjedal notes that


So what is the right “dress to wear” when addressing queer topics? That is, which literary techniques are helpful? A small book market like the Finnish one did not leave many possibilities of choosing a different gatekeeper. Rather, the attempts to pass these gatekeepers with direct references to queerness in books seem to have been only few, and subtleness was the key word. Moreover, it did not occur as a topic one needed to talk about; not even within women’s rights groups it was much of an issue. There, namely, the 1930s meant a tightening of values, as well as a time of “consensus”. Even the working-class women’s movement committed itself more and more to bourgeois values, i.e. to the ideal of the nuclear family and housekeeping as women’s task.

Interestingly, this consensus happened at the same time when the literary war

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334 Karkama/Koivisto 1999, 12. “[...] sillä se ei kulttuurielämän miehisten portinvartijoiden mukaan ajanut kansallisen idealiarealismin asiaksi vaan keskittyi sellaisten ongelmien, kuten proosallisen arkielämän ja ruumiillisuuden, käsittelyyn, jotka kyseenalaistivat patriarkaalisen järjestyksen ja porvarillisen perheidealin.”

335 Karkama/Koivisto 1999, 13. “There was no real political preventive censorship in Finland, but the supremacy of the hegemonic ideology and the institutions that served it, like publishers and its representatives, achieved that texts offending the values that had been declared as basic ones were rarely published. [...] Generally speaking, a certain atmosphere of self-censorship dominated.”

336 Svedjedal 1994, 12. “A publisher is hardly a simple gatekeeper. Rather, as a gatekeeper, he is a teacher and a leader in taste. Seen with the eyes of the gatekeeper, the author needs to fulfil certain demands to be passed through, both as a stylist, storyteller and thinker. [...] From the viewpoint of the author, the gatekeeper is a ruler one needs to pass, preferably as pleasant as possible. Thus, the author does as others who want to pass a gatekeeper – choosing the right dress.”

337 Koivunen 1999, 266.
had its climax: while some of the authors and representatives of the literary elite saw a threat in this conservative consensus, those that represented the conservative values saw a threat in a too liberal attitude.

One of the most influential Finnish theologians, Yrjö J. E. Alanen (1890–1960) saw in his work *Kristinusko ja kulttuuri* (*Christianity and culture*, 1933) the reason for the literary fight in the 1930s in the fact that there was not one valid moral instance any more, but that rather a pluralism of values and morals had emerged. It was the loss of authority on the part of the Lutheran Church that had resulted in the fact that culture was becoming autonomous of ecclesiastical guardianship and of being subordinated to traditional authorities. That the Church played only a participating role in society by then, rather than ruling it, was blamed on the loss of belief that had been caused, according to the Church, by the war rather than by the changing society.\(^{338}\)

Alanen himself saw moral questions culminate particularly in their relation to art. He did not believe that art itself could function as a moral-improving factor, since art is always bound to the world view of the maker behind it and would demand a Christian artist. The art of the time created by his contemporaries lacked, in his opinion, a devote position with regard to religious and moral values. He demanded then that literature should continue with its task to educate the people.\(^{339}\)

The representatives of both the Lutheran Church and the patriotic elite, then, demanded stable gender-roles that also needed to be confirmed by literature, which still had a strong position in presenting role models to the common readership. Educating people in terms of values meant the confirmation of set morals also via published literature. Good examples for this hypothesis are two opposed works I will examine: Mika Waltari’s *Suuri illusioni* and Helvi Hämäläinen’s *Kaunis sielu*, written in 1927 and 1928, both dealing openly with queerness, yet in opposite ways.

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\(^{338}\) Mikkeli 1996, 129.


\(^{340}\) Mäkinen 1989, 163–164. “Alanen, then, talked with the voice of the church that was concerned about the cultural and moral situation, and on the other hand with the voice of a patriotic elite concerned about the firmness of the nation. Their common demand was controlled, approved, continuous and from above structured norms and values, in whose name anything divergent, relative and uncontrolled was restrained. [...] Literature that contained elements that diverged from established gender- or family morals received strict judgement. In this area, a mere description was already regarded as pernicious, no matter what its function in the whole of the work was.”
Also the topic of education and literature and their relation to morality was discussed in the literary fight. The critic and poet Lauri Viljanen, a member of the literary group Tulenkantajat, named the education of the people in his book Taisteleva humanismi (“Fighting humanism”, 1936) as one of literature’s most important moral tasks. The real moral task for him lay in the realisation of the tension between the prevailing reality and the ideal. He demanded to dismantle the immoral features within the dominant, conventional morals to open the way for real morals. Thus, it was the idea of man and his possibilities that became central in the contradiction that emerged between Viljanen and the theologians: does the human being need a system of norms or does such a system only prevent to bring out the optimal good? Viljanen accordingly demanded that literature should contain what life contains, i.e. it should try to achieve an ideal, human moral foundation which could be reached with the help of the artist’s veracity of instincts. It was literature itself, then, that could bring a new image of reality to life. One major disagreement between Alanen and Viljanen lay in the question of the role of literature: should it interpret the cultural hegemony and its moral values, or should it question them? The literary works analysed accordingly also represent both ideas. While some confirm set values, others present alternatives.

In addition, Mäkinen, who has analysed the connection between literature and morals, makes another important observation: Alanen, in contrast to Viljanen, also included the reader into the discussion. That means when talking about morals in literature, one has to consider the readers who always read texts in the light of their own concept of morality and experiences. The literary fight, thus, was also a fight about reading habits that had their origin in the different world views and value systems. There was not any more only one acceptable moral system, but many different ones. Therefore, I conclude that at a time, when literature still was regarded as an educational institution and a part of the national project by many, but did not or could not fulfil this task any more, those who wanted literature to create role models needed to ensure that in this fragile and transitional phase the content of literature would correspond maybe more than ever to the old and dominant values which they wanted to strengthen and maintain. Any reference to non-heterosexuality in these times of insecurity with regard to moral values, one can assume, was accordingly much less possible than before. While the 1920s rather “bloomed” with queer topics, the mid-1930s did not any more: it is not linearity that prevails within the issue of morals.

To sum up, it was especially literature that challenged the position of the Lutheran Church as the moral gatekeeper. More important, it also challenged ruling morals and values per se. That literature at least partly had neglected its role as the educator of the people became, according to many, mostly evident in the emergence and popularity of light fiction with its loose set of values, as described above. Some, again, also saw concrete threats to Western culture in

the 1930s, as mentioned: first and foremost the rising middle-class and its new values. The fear was that if bigger parts of the people started to dominate culture, degeneration would be inevitable.342 But also the labour movement and even more so the educated class were accused by the Church of having fathered negative cultural changes. However, the church still managed to function as a more or less official gate keeper of the nation’s morals in the 1930s, as the literary wars reveal; at least in the background. Although its role had weakened, the Church was still regarded as the institution that could restore lost values. Since it actively participated in integration policies after the Civil War, it got the chance to place Christian moral values in a central position within society and get them widely accepted. The Church, thus, became a partly official guardian of the national morale.343 Decentralisation and heterogeneity of opinions and values, thus, were not totally possible yet.

### 2.4 Two Worlds Apart? Finnish and Finland-Swedish Publishers

This chapter will provide background information on the most important publishers. Based on the published histories of the different publishing houses, I will give an overview over their practices, which facilitates the analyses of books they published. It is noticeable that almost all of the books that deal with publishing history in Finland (be it in Finnish or Swedish), mostly deal only with the broader historical outlines of the companies.344 This means that they introduce the most important figures within publishing, offer helpful outlines of the publishers’ programmes and list the most important books of certain periods and thus show which topics were favoured. What these works only rarely offer is a critical approach, neither to publishing itself during the time period in question here and to the ideologies behind decisions, or to books that were not published. However, the question of finances that often lay behind a decision is of course named in all of them. Also in this context, then, the question of power over knowledge is acute.

One explanation for this limited approach is the reason why many of them were written: they were published because of an anniversary or because there had not been any kind history of a certain publishing house before. Others, again, were written by the publishing directors or owners themselves; they, of course, would have only in a restricted way been able to criticise or question their own decisions, like Aukusti Simojoki (1882–1959) who wrote down the history of Karisto until 1950 while having been its literary director. Thus it is again by reading between the lines – e.g. with the information on the particular figures behind the decisions on which also research exist – that one can draw

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342 Mikkeli 1996, 134.
conclusions about how certain topics or authors might have been dealt with. To be able to evaluate the decisions for or against books, the analysis of archival material, combined with the information provided by the diverse publishing histories, is indispensable.

When analysing queer topics and the expectations of women expressed in literature, the peculiarity of the Finnish book market with two independent book markets is interesting in several respects. First, literature has played an important role within Finnish society and the building of the nation. Second, the Finnish book market is relatively small and thus allows insights into the workings of the book industry that would otherwise not be as visible. Although Finland’s small book market is itself a minor one with regard to world literature, it also itself includes minor literatures like working-class literature that was quite strong until rather late in the 20th century, and also literature with queer topics. Additionally, Finland-Swedish literature can be seen as a minor literature in Finland, too. It is, however, different from, for example, working-class literature, since it has its own position and influence, a book market and network that differ from literature in Finnish.

According to the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, the normative public forms an area of free discussion within a civil society in which everyone can participate. The public, following Foucault, can be interpreted as a network and touches upon the term hegemony; both terms namely consist of power to impose norms that need to be jointly accepted. This kind of public did not exist in Finland in the years after 1918. It was a restricted public, and the consequences of such restriction can also be seen in the outcome of the publishers. Nonetheless, it was not restricted without exception: within Finland-Swedish literature, a “heyday” of queer topics within quality fiction can be observed in the 1920s.

In the 1920s, the interest in literature in Finland rose and as a consequence the literary production grew. However, it not necessarily brought out high quality fiction and thus did not satisfy the expectations of the literary elite, according to Rafael Koskimies (1898–1977), who was one of the most influential critics of his time:

Kirjallinen sivistys levisi yhä laajempiin lukijapiireihin, seikka mikä on ollut erityisesti havaittavissa 1920-luvulta lähtien, samalla kun kirjallinen tuotanto myöskään on viime aikoina kvantitatiivisesti kasvanut. [...] Valtiollisen itsenäisyyden saavuttamisen jälkeen tuntui monina vuosina kuitenkin siltä, kuin kansakunnan parhaat voimat olisi käytetty käytännöllisen valtio- ja yhteiskuntalämnän palvelukseen, päätäten siitä, että kirjallisen ja yleensä taiteellisen tuotannon kvaliteetti ei osoittanut aivan korkeata astetta. 346

346 SKS/KIA: Rafael Koskimiehen arkisto, C. Käsikirjoitukset, Kotelo 20, “Suomen uudemmasta kirjallisuudesta 1936”. “The literary education spread more and more into the broader readership. This could especially be discerned since the 1920s, and at the same time also the literary production has recently grown quantitatively. [...] Having reached independence as a state, it still seemed for many years that the best forces of the nation had been used for the service of the practical state- and societal life,
Voices like these had been many, as shown before; some criticising Finnish literature, others translational policies. The biggest and most influential publishers in Finnish after independence were WSOY, Otava, Gummerus and Karisto; the first two published much more works than the latter two. Besides these four, there were a number of smaller publishers that mostly focused on a special kind of literature, for example Christian or socialist literature. Then there were the two Swedish-language publishers Schildts and Söderströms. They merged in 2012 into one company.

Christian-conservative and national-patriotic values on the Finnish-speaking side were, due to historical reasons, stronger than on the Finland-Swedish side. Also the literary programmes were quite different. The Finland-Swedish publishers, moreover, co-operated partly with Swedish publishers and thereby widened their readership to a great deal. Moreover, they had the possibility to distribute their books in Sweden via Svenska Bokhandelscentralen (The Swedish Centre for Booktrade).

To provide a deeper insight into the dimensions of the Finnish book market during the time span of this study, some numbers are essential. The division and development of the book market of the four bigger publishers besides WSOY and Otava, show these: in 1928, Gummerus published 50 titles, Karisto 116, Söderströms 171 and Schildts 83. In 1938, Gummerus published 49, Karisto 98, Söderströms 138 and Schildts 79.\(^{347}\) The book production altogether in Finnish and Swedish hit its peak in 1929, with a total number of 1932 publications (1403 in Finnish, 454 in Swedish, and 75 in other languages). Both in the year before and in the year after, about 200 books less were published; another peak can be seen in 1923 with a total number of 1822, which was partly due to a high number of publications in Swedish (529 in total). In the years between, the total amounts were usually about 1650–1700.\(^{348}\) In 1933, Suomen Kirjakauppalehti noted that there had been a constant decrease in Finnish-language publications. First, due to the caution because of the financial situation, and second – and this also has to do with the depression – due to a decrease of the number of publishers. The numbers that are available show that both Finnish literature and translations were affected by this decrease. Translations, however, were affected slightly less. The case was also different with publications in Swedish, which is at least partly because of co-editions with Swedish publishers.\(^{349}\) In the years following the depression, however, the production rose again to numbers over 1000 in Finnish originals, over 150 translations into Finnish, 300–350 publications in Swedish original and slightly over 80 translations into Swedish.\(^{350}\) When talking about these numbers in the book production one

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has, again, to remind of the Berne Convention that was acknowledged during a financially difficult time and thus led to a twofold decline in the production during an economic boom that still prevailed in 1928 and the beginning of 1929; the depression from 1929, then, only added to the decline for a while.\footnote{N.N.: “Suomen kirjallisuuden kasvu viime vuosikymmeninä”, Suomen kirjakauppalehti 7/1937, 49–50.}

The decline of the numbers is also connected to the fact explained above, namely the tightened attitudes towards literature from the late 1920s onwards which made the publishers more careful with and probably also conscious about what they published. This concerns especially literature that might have introduced new genres or aimed at transforming moral norms or social attitudes. WSOY’s publishing editor Reino Rauanheimo (1901–1953) portrays the situation in 1933 quite tellingly, according to Kai Häggman, who has largely researched the Finnish publishing field: “We stand in a draught. Our noses sniff. Shut the windows, dear people, and get inside to do your own work.”\footnote{Häggman 2001, 378. “On ristivetoa. Nenät tuhisevat. Lyököä, hyvät ihmiset, ikkunat kiinni ja painukaa talon omiin töihin.”}

With this statement, Rauanheimo is very obviously opposing the demand of Diktonius to open the windows towards Europe that was directed against growing nationalist moves and provincialism within book publishing.

Although the focus of my analysis of publishing lies on social, cultural and political factors, it is nonetheless numbers that are just as decisive. The numbers mentioned above are an integral key to the understanding of the selection of books by publishers for their programmes, too. The book production in Finland has because of the country’s small population itself been rather small. Moreover, since Finnish language is relatively young and the first major Finnish novel, Aleksis Kivi’s Seven Brothers, was published as late as 1870, there was firstly a big need to build a canon, and secondly a need to translate the works of canonised world literature that should serve as examples for Finnish authors. Likewise decisive was the background of the publishers. The Christian background especially of WSOY is obvious. Its founder Werner Söderström was not only skilful in economics and listed the publishing company at the stock exchange, but he was also very religious. His belief even influenced his testament where “§ 2, ‘the constitutional paragraph’ for WSOY, says the following: ‘In its publishing activities, the company has the aim to publish good literature in Finnish with regard to national, progressive and religious foundations’”.\footnote{Zweygbergk 1958, 70. “I § 2, ’grundlagsparagrafen’ för WSOY, heter det sålunda: ’I sin förlagsverksamhet upptäcker bolaget som sitt mål att utge god finskspråkig litteratur på nationell, framtstegsbefrämjande och religiös grund’.”}

These foundations can of course be interpreted rather broadly, and have to, since these terms are not static, but religion and nationalist ideas nevertheless form the core thoughts in the testament. To combine these terms with the term progress seems to be challenging from today’s perspective. Progress, then, presumably means a progress that both nationalist and religious ideas allow, since both terms are not static, either.

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\textsuperscript{351} N.N.: “Suomen kirjallisuuden kasvu viime vuosikymmeninä”, Suomen kirjakauppalehti 7/1937, 49–50.
\textsuperscript{353} Zweygbergk 1958, 70. “I § 2, ’grundlagsparagrafen’ för WSOY, heter det sålunda: ’I sin förlagsverksamhet upptäcker bolaget som sitt mål att utge god finskspråkig litteratur på nationell, framtstegsbefrämjande och religiös grund’.”
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Werner Söderström was also behind the foundation of the Finland-Swedish publishing house Söderströms & Co. Since he wanted to concentrate on literature in Finnish, he allocated all his Swedish titles to a new publishing company in 1891. It was a time when WSOY – despite its reserved attitude towards new literary styles like modernism – grew to be the financially most efficient publisher in Finland. Until 1925, it reached a capital stock of nine million Finnish marks, whereas Otava as the second biggest publishing house reached a capital stock of seven million Finnish marks in the same year. WSOY’s success, however, came not from publishing fiction, but from school books and big non-fiction works. The most influential person at WSOY during the time of this study was Jalmari Jäntti (1878–1960) who, after the death of Werner Söderström in 1914, became the publishing director and stayed in this position until 1951.

While religion and the native country formed the ideological base for WSOY, Otava was based on Finnishness. From 1917 onwards, Otava concentrated on a new genre, on so-called soldier-literature. This was a genre that could not be published before when the country had been under Russian rule. Otava became also the leading publisher of light fiction in the 1920s. Hannes Reenpää, one of the members of the family that has led Otava since 1892, writes in the history of the company that, after World War I, it had to improve its financial situation which had been much influenced by the war, not least by the inflation. Reenpää also shows that the number of translated novels did not rise directly after independence; rather, non-fiction in Finnish was favoured, since there was a lack of it. Also Finnish poetry saw a heyday in the programme. Reenpää’s writings, one has to add, seem to be affected by the political atmosphere within the conservative/ anti-Soviet circles of the late 1960s (to which he seemingly belonged). This can be observed for instance in the following example where he evaluates the situation of the 1930s:

Teollistuminen ja kaupallistuminen olojen modernisoiutuessa kävivät käsi kädessä yhä kiinteämpien ja nopeampien yhteyksien alati laajentuessa muihin maihin. Venäläisvallan aikainen protesti- ja puolustusasema oli vienyt merkittävän osan kansan henkistä voimaa samalla supistaen sen näkökenttä. Nyt kun oltiin jo toista vuosikymmentä irti tuosta rasittavasta noidankehästä, riitti voimia ottaa valppamaan ja myös nopeammin osaa yleismaalallisesti ja henkisesti rientoihin, niin vähäiseltä kuin ne 60-luvun kannalta vielä näyttävästi. Takana päin oli kertaa kaikkiaan tuo idyllimäisen idealistinen, sanoisimmekoa akateeminen

354 Zweygbergk 1958, 68–69.
357 Hellemann 2002, 38–39. Tammi was founded in 1941 and is nowadays the third/ fourth biggest publisher in Finland, belonging together with WSOY to the Swedish Bonnier group.
358 Hellemann 2002, 137.
359 Leino-Kaukiainen 1990, 121.
While the tone he uses when writing about the Russian rule tells about his political standing, the content of the quotation with regard to new literature, new genres and new topics is quite interesting: there were no ideals at all, and additionally a critical stand towards Finnish literature. However, as can easily be noticed, the changes were slow and the atmosphere towards new genres, for example, restrained, as the literary fight of the 1930s has shown. Nevertheless, such a fight or discussion always also shows that there is room for negotiating new things that are not taboo any more. According to Reenpää, censorship as such had never been a topic for Otava due to its tradition; “it was founded in its time out of the sense of a liberal Finnishness against the control by the Swedishness.” This self-evaluation about censorship is not wrong concerning queer topics either: both Pennanen’s and Soini’s works were published by Otava, and also in the 1950s Otava published works with queer content, e.g. Dorothy Strachey Bussy’s *Olivia*.

The third biggest publisher has long been Gummerus, closely followed by Karisto – both based in the Finnish province. Gummerus was founded in Jyväskylä in 1872, Karisto in Hämeenlinna in 1900. One reason for being only third in the ranking for Gummerus was, according to Pirkko Leino-Kaukiainen in her research of the company, their remote domicile in Jyväskylä. The Finnish book market was for a long time dominated by Helsinki-based publishers and people. During and after the Civil War, however, Gummerus was for a short time even in a better position, since Jyväskylä was all the time in the hands of the Whites, so that the work could continue without bigger disruptions. During that time, Gummerus concentrated on literature of current interest. In the 1920s, Gummerus received many of those manuscripts that had been left over from the bigger publishers, amongst others many début novels. However, this helped the house to make its way into Finnish literature, as well. Before, Gummerus had specialised in translations, whereas it was Finnish literature they promoted in the 1920s, not least of course due to the fact that Finland joined the Berne Convention and that, as Leino-Kaukiainen pictures

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361 Reenpää 1970, 67. “After the modernisation of the conditions, industrialization and commercialisation went hand in hand with the invariably expansion of more compact and faster contacts to other countries. The position of protest and defence during the Russian rule had taken a good part of the mental energy of the people and had at the same time reduced their field of vision. Now that we had been free from this strenuous vicious circle for the second decade, there were forces enough to take faster and more attentively part in more universal mental projects, as minor as they might seem from the viewpoint of the 60s. Behind lay once and for all this idyllicly idealistic, we could say academic publishing-pondering and the gentle, but active nursing of Finnish literature. Publishing became ‘professional’.”

362 Reenpää 1970, 85. “[...] syntyi aikoinaan liberaalisen suomalaisuuden puolesta ruotsalaisuuden hallintaa vastaan.”

it, “the society was flooded by a wave of Finnish nationalism”\textsuperscript{364}. It was for example with the help of books written by Uuno Kailas or Antero Kajanto, members of Tulenkantajat, that they published many known poets of the time. Yet, as Leino-Kaukiainen states, the group of novelists they had in their programme was less representative. After independence, Gummerus underwent big changes with regard to its programme of fiction: the share of fiction was half of what they published in the 1920s, while its share during times of autonomy was only a fourth: between 1917 and 1931, Gummerus published about 120 translations, mostly from English, and two third of these were quality fiction. Most of the publishers aimed at bringing out good literature for cheap prices, so that people could afford to buy books. However, high standard fiction did not sell well, so that Gummerus introduced a series with ten books that consisted of “quality entertainment”; they did not manage to compete about the big international names. Also with regard to the company itself, Gummerus underwent changes in the year of the independence: the new director Sakari Kuusi (1884–1976) sold the majority of shares to WSOY. The first years after the Civil War meant economic well-being for Gummerus, since there was a general boom in book-selling. The union with WSOY remained nonetheless or just because of that short, and Gummerus was again its own master in 1920.

In the 1930s, Gummerus published début novels of later famous authors or works by realistic or critical writers with often leftist background, like Uuno Kailas who belonged to Tulenkantajat, Martti Merenmaa and Einar Vuorela. Also writers like Pentti Haanpää and Helvi Hämäläinen, whose manuscripts had been rejected at least by Otava for being too leftist or radical, formed the flag bearers of the house at that time. That Gummerus published them was, as Leino-Kaukiainen writes, a sign that the atmosphere after the right-wing Lapua Movement and the depression was becoming more relaxed. Gummerus also did not publish any literature that was related to Nazi-Germany or Fascist Italy: literature that opposed dictatorship and Fascism was one of the red threads in the programme; another one was a critical approach to society and the questioning of set values.\textsuperscript{365} This is especially worth mentioning, since Gummerus had long been famous for its deep roots in Christian belief and for publishing many works related to religion until the independence. Leftist authors then meant a big change in the ideological course of the house, as Olli Arrakoski in his book \textit{Gummerus 100 vuotta} (“Gummerus 100 years”) aptly knows to summarise:

\begin{quote}
Kaarle Jaakko Gummerus oli selvästi kustantaja, joka tiesi kenelle kirjallisuutta kustansi ja minkäläista sen tuli olla. Hän oli myös aatteellinen kustantaja samoin kuin seuraajansa: he eivät luopuneet linjastaan vaikka lukijat luopuivat. Gummeruksen eittämättä loistokkaimmalla kaudella, 1930-luvulla, asetelma oli
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{364} Leino-Kaukiainen 1990, 119. “Yhteiskuntas huuhteli aitosuomalaisuuden aalto [...].”
It was especially the merit of the literary director Lauri Aho (1901–1985) that Gummerus bloomed with its pioneering literary programme in the beginning of the 1930s, although he was its literary director only for three years. Aho was one of the leading figures of the cultural student life in Helsinki, where Gummerus by then also had an office, and he had managed to turn Gummerus into an important literary meeting point. His follower, Esko Aaltonen (1893–1966), then only had to continue his line. Matti Kurjensaari (1907–1988), author and journalist, who also was part of these circles and worked at Gummerus for some years, compared these meetings even with Parisian salon culture in the end of the 18th century. Nevertheless, the second paragraph of the publisher’s articles still stated that the main aim of publishing should be “good Finnish literature in Christian spirit”. The reference to Christian values makes it then no surprise that, despite the pioneering spirit of the house in the 1930s, they seemingly did not publish books with queer content, despite their concentration on light fiction. However, in the 1960s Gummerus indeed did pioneer work in the field of queer fiction with the first translation of an outspokenly lesbian novel into Finnish, the Swedish Annakarin Svedberg’s *Din egen* in 1968.

The fourth Finnish-language publisher that was important at this time is Karisto. Its long-term director Väinö Hämeen-Anttila (1878–1942), who led the company from 1915 until 1942, stood behind a rather progressive programme in the 1920s concerning the share of female writers and translators. Juhani Niemi interprets his work even as part of the sign of a “democratisation” of the whole culture. Hämeen-Anttila emphasised the importance of translations with his programme and suggested to cut down transient literature, i.e. works that were only interesting for a season or two and too much bound to current topics. His aim was not to abandon entertaining literature from the programme totally, but he encouraged to think more carefully about it. What he might have meant, according to Niemi, was to more or less ignore light fiction addressed at women. Also in the later 1930s, when most of the publishers had turned to Finnish literature and emphasised Finnishness, Karisto, like Gummerus, can be called politically neutral in contrast to Otava and WSOY. Moreover, Karisto can be seen as an exception with its decision in 1935 to publish the most contemporary foreign literature. In this context, Hämeen-Anttila’s archive is worth having a look

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366 Arrakoski 1972, 5–6. “Kaarle Jaakko Gummerus [1840–1898, founder of the company] clearly was a publisher who knew for whom he published literature and what kind of literature it should be. He was also an ideological publisher, as his followers were: they did not deviate from their line, even though the readers did. During Gummerus’ unquestionably most splendid time, the 1930s, the arrangement was the same, but now the publishing house built its programme not only by diverging from the traditions, but also outside the mainstream and thus did literary pioneer work.”


368 Zweygbergk 1958, 168.

369 Niemi 2000, 66.
at, since it includes an interesting proposal he gave in a meeting in 1930 that shows his interest in contemporary world literature that was in general on the decline in Finland at this time resulting from the reasons explained above:

Ehdotan että julkaisemme esim. nimellä *Romaanikirjasto* tai *Uudet kertojat* vuosina 1931–1932 kaksikymmentä romaanikäännöstä uusimman maailmankirjallisuuden kaikkein huomattavimmista saavutuksista, pitäen silmällä kahta seikkaa: romaanien tulee edustaa eri maiden kirjallisuutta, jotta tämä valikoima antaisi kokonaiskäsitystä suuren maailman etevimmistä kerronnoista nykyvuosilta, ja samalla niiden tulee olla laajalle yleisölle kiintoisia aiheeltaan ja käsiteltävältään, ei pelkästään valiopiirille omistettua tyylitaidetta. Edelleen rajoittaisin valinta teoksien laajuuteen nähden sellaisaksi, että nämä suomennokset olisivat sivuluvultaan 160–240-sivuisia, tullakseen kaikki julkaisutuksi samanhintaisina: 25 mk sidottuina.\(^370\)

While the testaments of Gummerus and WSOY could be interpreted flexibly to a certain degree, this very concrete proposal disqualifies many books because of the restriction of page numbers. The other criteria, however, were quite ambitious at a time, when translations were neither appreciated nor cheap to publish any more. Already from 1918 onwards, Karisto published an ambitious series called “Kariston klassillinen kirjasto” (Karisto’s Classic Library) which was from the beginning rather idealistic and meant as a series that brings important world literature into Finnish homes. Arvi A. Karisto (1879–1958), the founder of the publishing house in 1900, was aware of the fact that it was financially not profitable.\(^371\) The series included works from different eras, from Epictetus to Julius Caesar, from Jane Austen to Immanuel Kant, Adalbert Stifter, Anton Chekhov, Victor Hugo and Charles Dickens, to name only a few; all in all it consisted of 64 works until 1950. In 1926, Karisto started yet another series called “Uusia romaaneja” (New Novels) that was aimed at a larger public and also consisted only of translations by, for example, Paul Morand, Berta Ruck, P.G. Woodhouse and Thornton Wilder. Also Rosamond Lehman’s *Dusty Answer* was part of this series.

By 1927, the number of pages Karisto had published had tripled within a year; only the financial crisis in the end of the 1920s set an end to the steady upswing. However, as Aukusti Simojoki notes, the publishing house still tried to continue with about the same amount of works, since they did not want to discard their staff.\(^372\) Half a century after Simojoki’s book on the history of

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\(^{370}\) SKS/KIA: Väinö Hämeen-Anttilan arkisto, mf 2004:12, D Toimintakirjat, Kirjallisen osaston esityslista, 4.6.1930. “I suggest that we publish, e.g. under the title Novel-Library or New Storytellers, in the years 1931–1932 twenty translations of the most notable achievements of the latest world literature, keeping an eye on two things: the novels have to represent literatures of different countries, so that this selection gives a general impression of the most gifted narration of the big world within the recent years, and at the same time they need to be of interest for a broader readership, both with regard to their topic and to the way they treat their topic; it should not only be genre art for elite circles. I would furthermore limit the selection to works with a total of 160–240 pages and they would all cost the same price: 25 Finnish marks in hardcover.”

\(^{371}\) Simojoki 1950, 72.

\(^{372}\) Simojoki 1950, 121.
Karisto, Juhani Niemi does not share this opinion and states that although the financial crisis had affected all the publishers, it was Karisto and Gummerus who suffered even more, since they had built new central offices. Karisto, according to Niemi, had to vitally cut down the literary production and concentrated on “safe” books. It was new editions of older books rather than new ones they published. Especially with regard to Finnish fiction any risk was tried to be avoided, and in 1933 not one newly offered manuscript was published. Still, Karisto was able to save its position as the third biggest publisher during that time.\textsuperscript{373} Also Hämeen-Anttila’s archive gives the impression of aiming at safety rather than at risks in the end of the 1920s. In 1927/28 he noted that the storage of manuscripts could be for the first time made smaller and that he aims at being free from publishing books he would not publish under the premises of the present conditions.\textsuperscript{374} Besides, Hämeen-Anttila’s archive also gives interesting insights into the company’s activities as well as its problems as a publishing house that was not based in Helsinki where all the literary life happened. In a draft of a letter to Otava, he is rather straightforward about the condition of the publishing house in 1920:

\begin{quote}
Kaikki tarjoukset alkuperäisistä ja käännösteoksista menevät ensin muille kustantajille, – ja näiden rippeet eivät kelpaa. Kirjallisen johtajan täytyy tallöin hankkia jok’aiin alkuperäinen teos, itse valikoida maailmankirjallisuudesta jokainen suomennettava teos, järjestää kaikki painokuntoon kirjeenvaihdolla, kun suomentajakin on kaupungissa vain yksi ja hänkin heikko. Toisekseen on mahdoton saada kunnollista apuväkeä viihtymään kaupungissa, jossa heille ei muodostu seurustelupiiriä. […] Edelleen on vikana, että meidän kolmen ulkopuolella ei yhtään isännistöön tai henkilökuntaan kuulu ainoatakaan edes ruotsinkielen-taitoista henkilöä.\textsuperscript{375}
\end{quote}

Yet, although Hämeen-Anttila had to do everything himself, he managed to build up an interesting programme. The lack of Swedish language-skills not only resulted in the fact that the greater part of the correspondence was his task, but no one could follow either the Finland-Swedish book market or the Swedish one. That means that also a many interesting foreign books from languages like English, German or French were missed. But this lack of language skills, especially of the English language, was not the problem of Karisto alone. Rafael Koskimies writes in his memoirs that

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\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{373} Niemi 2000, 70–72.

The letter is a job application which tells about the difficulties of the job and he also mentions that he does not want to spend his whole life in Hämeenlinna: “All offers of original works and translations first go to the other publishers – and their remains are not good. The literary director, then, has to acquire every single original work by himself, he has to choose himself every single work from world literature that needs to be translated, to organise everything via letters into the condition to be printed, since there is only one translator in the city, and he rather weak. Furthermore, it is impossible to get capable people to enjoy themselves here, since there are no people to mingle with. […] Besides, it still is a fault that we do not have, besides the three of us, staff or member in the board of directors who know Swedish.”
The Finland-Swedish publishers

The Finland-Swedish literary field was, according to Trygve Söderling, “until 1960 relatively homogeneous. It’s “inner room”, in addition, is in a Bourdieusian meaning autonomous; own valuations, an unambiguous role of the author, “reverse economy”, high entrance qualifications and a marked distance towards the public (both the ‘bourgeois’ and the so-called ‘people’).” Due to the rather natural connection to the Swedish book market, the Finland-Swedish publishers had a better starting position concerning knowledge about foreign literature. A great change within the Finnish book market had happened in 1892, when Werner Söderström decided to publish books in Swedish in a new publishing house called Söderströms. This change divided the Finnish book market into a Finnish one that served the majority of the people, and a Swedish one that served the Finland-Swedes and orientated itself towards Sweden. The language division was moreover confirmed and lasted, with the exception of a small interlude in the 1920s when Schildts published in Finnish, until the 1990s. In 1912, Holger Schildt (1889–1964), Söderström’s nephew, began his work as a publisher with his publishing house Schildts and grew into a vivid competitor of Söderströms within only a few years. The first years of his work coincided with the breakthrough of Finland-Swedish fiction – he published famous authors like Arvid Mörne, Jarl Hemmer, Runar Schildt and many more. Until the beginning of the 1920s, he had become the leading Finland-Swedish publisher with writers like Edith Södergran, Hagar Olsson and Elmer Diktonius. In 1917, he also bought the small publishing house G.W. Edlund as well as the printing house Lilius & Hertzberg and with them their copyrights. After that, Schildts owned most of the Swedish-language literature, e.g. also Topelius, Runeberg and Tavaststjerna, and secured a certain amount of sales for other financially difficult works.

SKS/KIA: Rafael Koskimies. C. Käsikirjoitukset, Kotelo 20 Muistiinpanoja elämästäni. Muistelman käsikirjoitus. Viimeisen sivun päiväys 22.5.1972, 155. "The knowledge of English literature and its critics in those days [the 1920s] in Scandinavia was in general worse than that of French. [Werner] Söderhjelm was a professional Romanist, [V.A.] Koskenniemi never learned to read English with ease, and only [...Georg] Brandes had a direct influential relationship to the culture of the island kingdom, as far as I know. Almost no one talked about America in this context in the beginning of the century.”

Thus, as soon as Holger Schildt began his work, Söderströms suddenly had a harsh competitor. Schildt also tried to get some of Söderströms’ more successful writers (e.g. Yrjö Hirn) under his wings. Besides, he tried to become an investor in Söderströms, but the owners voted against it. Despite Schildt’s attempts to take over Söderströms, Göran Stjernschantz states that Schildt had a healthy impact on the Swedish-language literature in Finland, since it broke the monopoly Söderströms more or less had had before. Schildt, then, took over the leading position within Finland-Swedish publishing before 1920. Both publishers had by then made an agreement to compete only about new names, not about already published authors.379 Many of the young authors, like Hagar Olsson or Edith Södergran, who were just emerging, however, chose Schildt, since they regarded the older Söderströms to be conservative and unwieldy.380 Some numbers are also here important: despite the competition with Schildt, Söderströms published 48 titles in 1915, in 1916 already 68 and in 1917 it was 92 titles. In the early 1920s, Schildt was nonetheless the leading publisher in the Finland-Swedish field, with authors like Rabbe Enckell and Elmer Diktonius, but also with many women writers.381 For the years 1920–1925, the Fennica database gives 779 hits for Schildt, while 761 hits for Söderströms (these include, of course, reprints).

Since there were not enough readers in Finland to make Swedish-language literature financially worthwhile, a co-operation with Sweden was finally indispensable. For Schildt, especially the co-operation with Albert Bonnier in the end of the 1920s became financially crucial. Their trade was based on a simple exchange: book for book. This system, however, made it sometimes difficult for the Finland-Swedish publishers to find enough books from their company (or Finnish-language ones) that could be of interest for the Swedish readership. Schildt succeeded in this exchange so that he worked together with Bonnier for more than 15 years in a row. Part of his success was that he sold Swedish translations of Finnish books to Bonniers. Moreover, Schildt also started to translate books from other languages in 1920 (English, German and Scandinavian languages), and thus also had the right to works with which he could trade with Sweden. In this latter case, again the Berne Convention played a role here, since Sweden had belonged to it already since 1904, but Finland not yet at that time, and so it was in principal (although Schildt, as said before, usually still paid for the rights) cheaper for Schildt to translate those works than it was for Swedish publishers.382

Schildt was a very active publisher; he went to the then very important Leipzig book fair as one of the first Finns. He had also started to publish translations from Finnish, like works by Aleksis Kivi, Juhani Aho and Frans Eemil Sillanpää. Moreover, he had very good connections to many foreign

379 Stjernschantz 1991, 73–76. The contract between Söderströms and Schildt lasted from 1919 to 1922. In 1922, Söderströms was of the opinion that Schildt did no longer commit themselves to the contract, especially when it came to literature from Sweden. See Ekberg 2013, 28.
380 Ekberg 2013, 47.
381 Ekberg 2013, 81.
382 Hellemann 2002, 117–118.
publishers, e.g. the Danish agent David Grünbaum, from whom he bought many English language rights before even Swedish publishers had heard the name. He bought for example the rights to Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) already in 1927 and became also a pioneer with regard to translations into Swedish: books like John Dos Passos’ *Manhattan Transfer* (1925, Swedish rights bought by Schildts in 1926) was published in Finnish only in 1945 by Tammi. As Jarl Hellemann notes, these works could have been published in Finnish also already in the 1920s, if only Schildt’s plans to widen his activities to translations into Finnish had been more successful.\textsuperscript{383} Schildts also brought many translations from world literature, which were already translated as part of the Swedish print run to the Finland-Swedish readership.\textsuperscript{384}

Schildts’ publishing activities in Finnish, however, were seen as highly problematic by his colleagues, and the story around it is significant for the relationship between the Finnish-speaking and the Finland-Swedish literary field in the 1920s. After having shortly before started to publish books also in Finnish, Holger Schildt moved in 1928 to Sweden. This move was probably the consequence of language struggles and outward pressure, so that he finally gave up publishing books in Finnish. The final catalyst for his move seemingly was that “Maalaiskirjakauppayhdistys”, the association of book shops in the countryside, did not accept him as a member, since he, in their opinion, had given up basic principles: the principle, i.e., that Finland-Swedish publisher should not interfere with Finnish-speaking ones.\textsuperscript{385} In 1925, namely, Schildts had started a series of translations of Nordic literature into Finnish with the aim to develop the fellowship between the Nordic countries. This was a highly provocative act and seen as interfering with Finnish-language publishing which led to harsh reactions and the refusal of the membership of the economically important association of the book shops in the countryside. Henrik Ekberg sees especially the language question, which was at that time a quite delicate one, as the background to this discussion. He quotes an article from the nationalist magazine *Aitosuomalainen* from 1927 that saw a conspiracy behind Schildts’ action from the part of the Swedish funds to oppose the Finnish cultural work and the national education. According to the magazine, the proportions of the marketing by Schildts with for example free copies had given Schildts’ books more space also in the Finnish press than the Finnish publishers had. In a joint reply to the article in *Suomen Kirjakauppa-lehti* on the matter, Schildts and Söderströms together criticised the use of national passions as an advantage for one’s own profit.\textsuperscript{386}

\textsuperscript{383} Hellemann 2002, 118–23.
\textsuperscript{384} Ekberg 2013, 86.
\textsuperscript{385} N.N.: “Suomen Kustannusyhdistyksen päämäärä ja sen nykyinen asema”, *Suomen Kirjakauppa-lehti* 7/1927, 38. The writer of the article might have been G.L. Söderström.
\textsuperscript{386} Ekberg 2013, 108–111. See also *Aitosuomalainen* 9/1927, 4.3.1927. Ekberg assumes that the article might have been written by Gideon Gyllenberg, who was head of sales at WSOY and had wanted to publish the same article also in *Suomen Kirjakauppa-lehti* but who hindered to do so by Alvar Renquist, who was the chairman of the publishers’ association.
But already in the middle of the 1920s Schildts had come into serious financial troubles due to investments into the small publishers/ printing houses he had bought, as well as into too many new works.\textsuperscript{387} There were even discussions about a fusion with the competitor Söderströms.\textsuperscript{388} To improve his situation, he wanted to invest more into the Swedish book market and bought the publishing house Bohlin & Co that was for sale in 1928 and that owned the rights of the best-sellers Jack London and Hall Caine (the rights of London, however, he sold immediately, since London did not fit into his programme). At the same time, Schildts also sold his school-book department – a very good, that is constant source of capital – to Söderströms and moved to Stockholm. The problem with this step, however, was that the Swedish publishers now saw him as a competitor and did not want to continue the exchange system as before; Bonniers even founded an office in Helsinki. The financial crisis did one last bit to put Schildts into serious trouble so that he had to sell his company in Finland to the printing house-owner Eugène Nygrén. The publishing house Schildt Helsingfors continued under a different leadership from 1931 onwards. Schildts himself continued, partly also with a lighter programme and writers like Edgar Wallace, and succeeded to keep his position as one of the medium-sized Swedish publishers in the 1930s with about 80 titles per year. However, Holger Schildt had to give up his own company and had to co-operate finally with another publisher, Wahlström & Widstrand, in 1938.\textsuperscript{389}

The First World War had changed the financial conditions for all publishers, since the production costs rose within the recession and, important for the Finland-Swedish publishers, the Swedish crown changed a lot. Only in 1923, an industrial upraise and more export normalised the conditions again. But the war had also made an impact on the contents of books in Swedish: patriotic topics were favoured, especially books about the war. Moreover, popular science-books about culture and history became fashionable, as did collected works of famous authors. Although the book markets were more or less the same in Swedish and Finnish, there was a slight difference with the Swedish being more conservative and favouring memories of the big ancient days, like the life around the monarchy.\textsuperscript{390} This is an interesting observation by Göran Stjernschantz, since this conservatism with regard to history was on the other hand compensated by a relative openness towards queer topics, as Alma Söderhjelm’s novel published by Söderströms and Hagar Olsson’s published by Schildts, show.

Söderströms’ long-time director Bertel Appelberg (1890–1977) led the publishing house from 1917 to 1960. Such long-term directorships within

\textsuperscript{387} Hellemann 2002, 121–123.
\textsuperscript{388} Ekberg 2013, 151–152. This fusion happened finally in 2012. In October 2015, however, a new publisher was founded under the name Förlaget, since many authors were not satisfied with the monopoly of Schildts & Söderströms. Already in the mid-1930s, there were the same discussions as there were in 2012, namely whether the monopoly of only one publisher would be good for the literature, if there is basically only one house an author can chose.
\textsuperscript{389} Hellemann 2002, 128–134. See also Ekberg 2013, 138.
\textsuperscript{390} Stjernschantz 1991, 87.
publishing houses are another parallel between Finnish and Finland-Swedish publishers. Stjernschantz describes Appelberg as “[…] the clever householder who saw himself as a company owner in the branch of the trade, the feeling for cultural responsibility grew with the years. […]” And, more important, “[a]s a publisher, Appelberg sometimes made impulsive and even broad-minded decisions: despite his sense for finances and an often stated frugality, he could […] explain that a publisher does not have to care about calculations. If an idea appeals to him, he should realise it. It would balance itself in time.”

Appelberg stood also behind the publishing of Söderhjelm’s novel Kärlekens väninna that caused a scandal with its open approach and empathy towards homosexuality. In 1923, Appelberg suggested to widen the exchange with Swedish publishers, since it seemed that Swedish books would compete better now. In the same year, the total number of titles by Söderströms was 219, while 117 of them were fiction, poetry or non-fiction (i.e. not schoolbooks). Of these 117 titles, one third was books imported from Sweden. Within two years, the direct sale of Swedish books had grown considerably, and the Swedish “billighetslitteratur” (cheap/ popular fiction) was entering the Finnish book market; the exchange trade like Schildts did it, i.e. book by book, became also the model for Söderströms and was rather successful, because it split up the risks between the publishers. Since Schildts, however, was already co-operating with Bonniers and Norstedts, Appelberg started co-operations with smaller publishers, but in the end managed also to establish ties with bigger ones, like Natur och Kultur. Interesting in this context is also that Söderströms had close contacts with the Swedish publisher Tidens Förlag that published Radclyffe Hall’s novel The Well of Loneliness in Swedish in 1932. There are, however, no direct references to this book in Söderströms’ archive. The correspondence between the two publishers consisted mainly of the exchange of books that might be of interest; there was also a mutual distribution of books.

As Stjernschantz notes, it was the contacts to Sweden that brought new ideas in the 1920s, when Finnish publishing was marked by patriotic topics. Appelberg tried to enforce foreign literature, but the publisher’s board was hard to convince. Still, enabled by the co-operation with Stockholm, he could let grow this area of publishing. And also within the Finland-Swedish literary field Söderströms grew: via the modernist wave, new authors were introduced to the public by the beginning of the 1930s. The interest in Söderströms had grown in these circles also because they had published new Anglo-Saxon writers. In this context, when much knowledge is based on archival material, Stjernschantz’ makes an important remark: it is difficult to trace the


393 Svenska litteratursällskapets arkiv: Söderströms arkiv (SLSA: 996), Tidens Förlag (SLSA 996: E 87).
publications (and many more material) due to the bombardment of Helsinki in 1944 that destroyed important parts of the publisher’s archive.\footnote{Stjernschantz 1991, 102.} Another important adventure for Söderströms with regard to the image of the publishing house was the short-period funding of the modernist literary magazine Quosego in 1928–1929. The house that was often regarded as an old, conservative and dusty publisher had invested in an unconventional way. Appelberg, who disliked the modernists, as Stjernschantz writes, had made a brave move and thus also attracted the modernists that would have otherwise avoided Söderströms. Elmer Diktonius or Hagar Olsson, who were both Schildts’ authors, nevertheless published a few works at Söderströms.\footnote{Stjernschantz 1991, 136–137.}

Söderströms’ translation policy in the beginning of the 1920s was rather weak, but at least some classics were translated (and some before they were published in Finnish) in a series with the title “Famous Books” (Balzac, Dumas, Maupassant, Dickens, Conrad) or “Older Classics”, as it was called later, before it finally got the name “Modern Novels” (with authors like Stevenson, Twain, Kipling, Wells). All in all, the number of foreign titles was usually around 30 per year, including children’s books and light fiction; they were mostly parts of the print run from Sweden. Since it was impossible for a relatively small publisher like Söderströms to follow all the interesting book markets abroad, they, like Schildts, also used the Danish agent Grünbaum. Thus, for example D.H. Lawrence’s Sons and Lovers was published by Söderströms already in 1925 (in Finnish in 1934).

Despite their competition, Schildts and Söderströms had a very similar ideological profile during the decades between the two World Wars; both were marked by activism in the Finnish liberation movement, i.e. the liberation from the Russian Empire.\footnote{Ekberg 2013, 77.} What is striking with regard to Söderströms’ programme is the absence of translations from Finnish after independence. Even though Söderströms had translated for example Minna Canth, Juhani Aho and Maila Talvio in the first decades of its activities, there were hardly any translations from Finnish after 1918. This fact corresponds with the almost non-existent numbers of translations from Swedish into Finnish. Schildts, in contrast, had some Finnish authors in his programme, like Frans Eemil Sillanpää, Johannes Linnankoski and Mika Waltari. So maybe it was not the lack of interest on the side of the Swedish speaking readership that caused this lack of translations in Söderströms’ programme, but rather a lack of interest in Finnish-language literature on the side of Söderströms themselves.\footnote{Stjernschantz 1991, 147–150.}
3 Possibilities of Queer Topics in Literary Works

After having illustrated and analysed the theoretical and socio-cultural background essential for this study as well as the diverse relationships within and around the literary field, the following part will present an analysis of representative works and their interlacement to societal discourses and the rulings of the literary field. An introduction into the most striking phenomena of the time that enabled queerness in literature, namely the concept of the New Woman, is followed by the analyses of literary texts that represent central authors with essential contributions to the topic of queerness in Finnish literature, both with a positive and a negative attitude towards it. The analyses of the works concentrate on the queer topics and their reception and will thus not necessarily go deeper into other interpretations of these works.

By regarding literary texts as fabrics out of discursive threads that are versatilely interpretable and that can bring to public what has been kept silent before, I will examine these works by a queer reading between the lines. As I have explicated in the introduction, a queer reading assumes that the queer possibly exists in every work; it catches the silences of the text, those that the text at the same time reveals and hides, and takes a look at what appears as deviant and odd and which breaches normative understandings about gender and sexuality. One focus, then, lies on the question in which way authors addressed queer topics and in which way these topics were published or rejected/censored. The power within the literary field, and publishing as a part of it, consists of the interplay between authority, knowledge and money that are all decisive for the access to the public. This power is always exerted as an action directed at an action: in the case of queer topics this can mean the censorship of passages or whole works, but also giving a text or an author access to the public. This, again, leads to the question of legitimacy. Following Bourdieu, the literary field is structured by a series of unspoken or unspeakable rules that determine what can legitimately be said. Decisive is in the end the monopoly of legitimacy: who has the power to say who is an author and which texts get published? Thus, as Foucault stated, the working of institutions such as publishers, but also of critics, always have to be analysed against the background of power relations. What kinds of power were exerted, and in which way did authors correspond to them? Or how could they resist prevailing power relations, how did they undermine them, and where did they not succeed? It is all these questions that will form the background of the analyses of the literary works.

Of course, in this context also the terms gender and sexuality are in the focus of analysis. Both terms are intrinsically tied to the question of power relations – sexuality and power are coextensive terms, while power always creates regimes of in- and exclusion. The question is then what women’s
position in the literary field of the 1920s and 1930s was and what they could/did write about. And in which way was written about women in literature, reviews and archives? Also in literature, gender is always both a norm and performance. The performance of gender is a repetition of norms which enables a subject. The central question in the analyses of the literary texts with queer topics will be to what extent gender is the effect of a regulatory practice that can be identified as compulsory heterosexuality? Another question will be to which extent publishing in the time span in question represents institutionalised heterosexuality: how can this be observed in the texts and how was it undermined with literary techniques or certain ways of writing? When gender is a performance and a norm, it is not static and thus can be challenged, undermined or subverted by the repetition of the regulatory practices with an alternation of its terms, as I will demonstrate with the example of some of the works.

Although the circumstances within Finnish society in many ways seem to have been contrary to the depiction of non-heteronormative topics in literature, as shown – nation-building, the emphasis on procreation and the importance of literature for the self-conception of the nation or the conservative background of publishers –, Finland also had a strong tradition of women writers who discussed difficult topics that problematised the concept of the nuclear family already at the turn of the 20th century. Topics such as divorce, violence within marriage and children born out of wedlock are examples that were dealt with via literature. Also same-sex desire was a topic that was not totally impossible to address, as the queer reading of the works show. Strikingly, several of these queer plots are weaved into a triangle love story, i.e. one male and two female characters. This triangular constellation has actually always been the basic plot within Western romantic literature, yet based on the “right”, i.e. heterosexual desire and consisting of usually two men and one woman, gender-hierarchically organised. A female character that does not act according to the patriarchially defined frames, in contrast, poses a threat, as many reviews show. What all the works I chose for the analyses have in common is their discussion of gender roles in one way or the other. This apparent need to discuss the topic via literature can be read as a synonym for ongoing changes concerning morals, ideals and power on a broader scale: Finnish society saw suddenly more alternatives to the roles of women than before and thus woman became the symbol of the crisis in questions of morals, values and population policies. Male and female authors reacted to these changes, yet often in different ways.

398 Lönngren 2007, 16-17.
3.1 Enabling Queerness: New Women, Social Motherhood and Decency

The use of the concept of the so-called New Woman in the literary texts is manifold and offers different approaches to the topic of queerness. Therefore, it will be introduced here separately. Yet, this observation is not surprising – it was the figure of the New Woman that enabled to play with gender roles more than any other figure would have allowed, since it was the symbol of change which feminism had brought with it. It was a symbol that was anything but undebated and must be seen as a part of the wider social changes which had as its counterpart the idea of Finnish literature offering enough for the readers and being better for them than foreign literature.\textsuperscript{399} The latter was a response to the fears and challenges that came from abroad as well as from within society itself. As Ritva Hapuli writes, “[t]he moral disorder, the decline of the arts, the collapsing male garrison stations, the decline of womanhood, the omen of a new Sodom and Gomorrah, the chaos of sex and gender and the difficult and moral problems seen from the perspective of the 1930s – the women had to carry the guilt of these disorders and phenomena of chaos.”\textsuperscript{400}

One has to remember that Finnish society was still in the 1930s rather agrarian, though on the threshold to a modern one. Modernisation had by the 1920s also reached the realm of morals and values, with, as elsewhere, the admiration of technology and popular culture. While women’s task as mothers was emphasised, those in the cities who were not married but went to work followed different routes and introduced also modernisation with regard to gender-roles. The appearance of this type of women which several characters of the novels analysed represent, can from case to case be seen as having a queer aspect, in literature as well as in reality. This depiction of female characters corresponds to the new time and the changing values after World War I. Not only in Finland, but all over Northern and Western Europe or North America had women been forced to become more independent during the war, and they wanted to keep this independence. In the 1920s, they suddenly could leave for the cities, worked and lived there alone without necessarily being married. They became more independent and active also with respect to their sexuality; they dressed more comfortably and became fashion-conscious. The short-haired young woman who danced to foreign music and wore trousers was not unusual any more, also in Finland. Thus, with the emergence of the figure of the New Woman arose the demand for more freedom for women and the possibility of different choices. The New Woman as I use the term means a figure that demands the freedom to express herself, both with regards to a career and to her sexuality; the New Woman does not necessarily see the goal

\textsuperscript{399} See for example Waltari 1933, 73–74 or Räilo 1935, 98.
\textsuperscript{400} Hapuli 1995, 156–157. “Moraalinen epäjärjestyys, taiteen rappio, sortuvaan miehisten varusasemat, naisellisuuden perikato, enteet Sodoman ja Gomorran tuhosta, sukupuolielämän kaasoa ja 1930-luvun näkökulmasta vaikeat ja siveelliset pulmat – naiset saivat kantaakseen syyllisyden näistä epäjärjestystä ja sekasortoa merkitsevistä ilmiöistä.”
of her life in marriage and family, but she wants to fulfil herself and live independently; she possibly travels and earns money herself.

This New Woman was adored, but many also saw her as a threat to patriarchal, masculine and national norms and values, since the idea of the nuclear family still prevailed within the male-dominated society. After independence, the nuclear family was seen as the society in miniature and its national duty was emphasised, as shown earlier. Thus, the nuclear family gained a special position within the renovational project of the society; there were on the one hand attempts to protect it from decay and dispersion, but on the other hand the nuclear family also needed to be disciplined to guarantee the welfare of the nation. This means, according to Ilpo Helén, that the family was a means to discipline that helped to harness the individuals to serve the nation. In the mien of the population policies between the 1920s and the 1940s, the nuclear family still was the main focus of the nation and society, but its function was defined and evaluated differently from the turn of the century. The idea of protection had changed into the idea of production. The family was organised for the service of the nation, i.e. to produce healthy new life.401 The mother as a concrete child-bearing body had become the apple of the population policies’ eye: the intensification of women’s reproductive capacity, care and discipline were central to it. Infertility and birth control were seen as a threat by the populationists. The same applied to unmarried/ single life.402 The most important means to discipline women was then the assertion of the role of motherhood, decency and the denial of sexual desire. Kukku Melkas notes that with the emphasis on motherhood, also women’s body is emphasised and becomes a social body via its possible reproductional ability – women’s body becomes a potential producer of the nation and its new generations. It needs to be regulated and normed so that it can fulfil its task and stay pure, and is preserved. It is these features that the social and moral balance of the nation is based on and that make women responsible for it. Those who deny this responsibility – like all women do who do not fulfil the heterosexual norms of getting married and bearing children – might be accused of shaking the social order and become a potential threat. But a threat was also reversely experienced by women themselves: the home and the embodiment of home and motherhood had often become a menace for women that was expressed via literature. Iris Uurto’s Ruumiin ikävä (“The Longing of the Body”, 1930) serves a good example of the critique of body and home-politics within Finnish women’s literature of that time.403

Melkas furthermore argues that the concept of social motherhood changed after World War I to a much more normed and regulated one which in turn led to a more regulated and limited social space for women. At the same time, especially in the 1930s, the fear of the female man and male homosexuality

403 Melkas 2006, 210–213. See also Helén 1997, 211.
grew: the strong “new” women were feared to weaken men. Women were, moreover, also feared within the literary field in general, as Mari Koli shows in an article on Hagar Olsson. She writes about the fear of a feminisation of the arts that reigned in the 1920s and 1930s, when the number of women also rose at universities. Hagar Olsson, Koli writes, saw this misogyny that she experienced for example from her colleague Elmer Diktonius as a result of the rise of the women’s movement at the turn of the century. Female authors like Helvi Hääläinen, Iris Uurto, Hagar Olsson or Kersti Bergroth created female characters that strove to live independently, fulfilling their own will, feelings and sensual desires. It is then two types of modern female characters in Finnish and Finland-Swedish literature of that time that can be spotted. The first one represents the career type and is an answer to the question whether women should work and whether they could even make a career besides having a family or even favour a career. The second one is the bachelorette (the “poikamiestyttö” in Finnish), a young middle-class woman from the city who is smart and optimistic towards life and who wants to be independent in all parts of her life. The latter type was especially in the 1930s regarded as a growing problem and accused of representing selfishness. This accusation of being selfish, again, had its background in the idea of a tightened version of social motherhood within population policies in Finland that defined woman’s task and value mostly through child-bearing and taking care of the home. The unmarried woman, teachers, nurses or office women had no place in this concept any more. Being unmarried meant a problem for population policies. It is interesting to note here that almost all research on female characters and motherhood within Finnish literature leaves out queer characters, although these works are otherwise very useful works on family and family policies in Finland. These characters appear only between the lines, when topics like purity and unmarriedness come up – in the same way, thus, as they usually did in literature. Therefore, this study also contributes to research within the realm of literature dealing with family policies.

Also within the literary circles the new woman and her possible state of not being married, i.e. the bachelorette, was a topic of discussion. Ritva Hapuli examines amongst others one of the most important figures of the time, Olavi Paavolainen, and his relationship to gender roles. He is an interesting example, since he on the one hand had a rather conservative view on gender roles; on the other hand, there were rumours about his own homosexuality. Paavolainen saw a threat in the phenomenon of the bachelorette when he writes about what he had observed especially in Berlin in the years 1919–24, where decadence in his opinion reigned: “When people did not talk about food, they talked about sex. [...] The women at that time were naked, veiled only into gold and glittery aprons, dazed by dance, alcohol and poisons, cold and clearly calculating beasts.” Nevertheless, Paavolainen would not have called the

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405 Koli 1997, 143–145.
situation merely immoral, since the war had contributed to free people in the realm of eroticism with men having been far away for years from their families and women. In this respect, he differs from Mika Waltari and his more judging point of view.

As the novels by Waltari exemplify, it was mainly the cities that were seen as the New Woman’s place of sin: big cities were associated with uncontrollable sexual freedom. Thus, it was women who were accused of being guilty of this disorder, as well as of the ruling moral disorder and of the decay of the arts or the doom of womanhood. The bachelorettes had led to a chaos in the area of gender life. Those accusations, or rather the fear behind them, namely that men were losing control and power, was not only the fantasy of the men who wrote about it, but it was partly corresponding to the social truth that had increased women’s autonomy and emancipation. The bachelorette, then, became the symbol of this decline. Paavolainen directly connected her and the problems within the gender system of the time after the war. The garçonne, as he named her, would try to copy men in all areas and strive for a wrong equality – so that Paavolainen suggests that woman needs to be brought down to the level of men until the right equality is found.

In an article from the magazine *Maailma* (“World”, 1926), the journalist Thea Malten defines the differences between the different types of “New Women” of the time – i.e. those that are sporty, have small hips and short hair: there is the “poikaneito” (boy-maiden) and the masculine one. The latter one fights for women’s rights, wears male clothes, does not want to please men and is beyond any female vanity. The “poikaneito” on the other hand still has preserved her female features and her coquetry, with which she succumbs to men. The garçonne is also described in the German sexology book *Sittengeschichte der Nachkriegszeit* (1931) by Magnus Hirschfeld who states that the both physically and mentally altered attitude towards sexuality that happened during the first decades of the 20th century, can best be seen within the transformations of the types of women and within fashion since the end of World War I. The garçonne, namely, has taken the outer and mental masculinisation furthest by using unfeminine gestures and appearance which symbolise self-esteem and financial independence.

According to the sexologists of the 1920s, manly appearance could also mean lesbianism, i.e. wearing men’s clothes was on the one hand associated with women’s sexuality, and on the other hand with abnormality. Already since the turn of the century manly appearance had been a symbol of lesbians, though, as said earlier, rarely in Finland. Yet, lesbians can be seen as one form

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407 Paavolainen 1990 (1929), 390–394. See also Hapuli 1995, 155. “Mikäli ei keskustella ruuasta, keskustellaan sukupuoliasioista, [...] Naiset olivat silloin alastomia, vain kultakimalteiseen esiliinaan verhottuja, tanssin, alkoholin ja myrkkyjen huumaamia, kylmästi ja selkeästi laskevia petoja.” (Quote on p. 394). In her novel *Säädyllinen murhenäytelmä*, Helvi Hämäläinen addressed Paavolainen’s supposed homosexuality in the censored character Arthur for whom he apparently was the model.

408 Hapuli 1995, 155–159. See also Paavolainen 1929, 429.

409 Hirschfeld 1931, 391. He also mentions that both masculinity and femininity were lost to a great deal due to the war: while men had lost their sexual self-confidence, women had become more emancipated. Hirschfeld 1931, 392–394.
of the New Woman. The difference between the lesbian and the masculinised woman did not so much exist in the outer looks or in her behaviour. The image of the lesbian rather not only denied motherhood, but also men. Thus, the biggest threat became the fear that manly women would deny both husband and marriage.\footnote{Hapuli 1995, 160–161. Hapuli quotes Paavolainen 1929, 416–417 and Hirschfeld 1931, 410–423.} Within the literary works that I deal with in this study, it is the examples of Mika Waltari’s and Ain’Elisabet Pennanen’s works that provide a more detailed picture of this phenomenon, though from different perspectives. However, homosexuality was usually not mentioned directly in the works and articles of the time. Also Paavolainen only mentions it en passant as a problem of modern times, but does not go deeper into the topic. A mixture of the ‘poika-neito’ and the masculinised woman is represented by Margareta Suber’s main character Charlie in her novel with the same title.

Within research, the Finnish 1920s are often described as a joyful decade. Melkas, however, rightly notes that one should have a closer look at it also from the perspective of a more and more tightening control and stern discipline, i.e. an ongoing need to define women’s place in society. The literary wars of the 1930s then were only the culmination of discussions that had started much earlier, actually already with the First World War and the Civil War and the changes they had brought to gender roles. I also agree with Melkas when she points out that most of the studies about the cultural crisis have not taken into account how much femininity and sexual tropes have shaped the rhetoric of the discussions and how central femininity became within them.\footnote{Melkas 2006, 171–174. See more: Koivunen 1999, 269–79.} Ritva Hapuli emphasises that it was by writing about and discussing women that the traumas and fears of the war were dealt with. The new human being in the discussion and writings after the war usually was a woman. Women’s lives, namely, had changed dramatically and this change had become a threat as well as a promise. As Hapuli states, when gender is discussed in society, it usually means much more: this more includes changes in identity, morals and power – changes, that is, that were visible in Finland at that time. The changes with regard to women concerned three types: the modern one, the one living alone, and the mother. While the first two implied change, the latter promised stability and continuity.\footnote{Hapuli 2000, 93–98.} Women became the symbol of the crisis, since the clear division of roles had been questioned by and after the wars and had to be arranged anew. In the debates at the turn of the century, the prevailing point of view was that middle- and upper-class women were seen as rather asexual, while sexual desire was connected with working-class women or even prostitutes. Sexuality was seen as a natural part of only men’s selves.\footnote{Melkas 2006, 189.}

The way in which female authors dealt with this topic of the New Woman, their sexuality and their position, as well as how publishers and male authors did, will thus be in the focus of the analyses. The different approaches to queer
topics or characters show that the discussions about moral values – that concerned mostly women’s position – were intensively dealt with via literature and publishing: from Mika Waltari with his description of the “dirty” and Helvi Hämäläinen’s destructive queer protagonist to Ain’Elisabet Pennanen’s and Elsa Soini’s ideas about social motherhood and the masculine female that are still in the end caught up by the spirit of the time, and to Margareta Suber’s, Hagar Olsson’s and Alma Söderhjelm’s rather modern descriptions of queer characters. All these literary works are exemplary for the question of the possibilities of literature to deal with discussions within society. Fiction, it seems, can enable to write about things that cannot be talked about officially, since it is open to interpretation and to a reading between the lines, depending on the background and the knowledge of the particular reader.

3.2 Early Examples of Queer Topics

The work in focus in this first chapter of the literary analysis is the play *Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin* (“And the ship left nonetheless”) written by Ain’Elisabet Pennanen (1881–1945) and published in 1919. I will also introduce her début novel *Voimaahmisiä* (“Strong people”), although it was published in 1906, since it also addressed erotic attraction between women as one side topic. Both works were published by Otava. Although the company had to improve its financial situation after the First World War, a play like Pennanen’s, or any theatre play, that is, was certainly not published due to its financial worth for the publisher. Moreover, a theatre play, apparently not even shown on stage, was rather improbable to reach a big public. The recent decade within Finnish queer literary and archival research has, however, shown that in the first decades of the century Finnish theatres had also staged foreign plays that addressed the topic of lesbianism: Frank Wedekind’s *Earth Spirit* (*Erdgeist/ Die Büchse der Pandora*, 1895, Finnish: *Maahinen*) which includes a lesbian side-character was shown at Tampere Theatre in 1909 and in 1919 in Helsinki on the stage Vapaa näyttämö. In 1931, Édouard Bourdet’s *La Prisonnière* (1926, Finnish: *Kahlehdittu*) was shown on the stage Kansan näyttämö in the Helsinki Student House. The latter especially, with a lesbian main character, received a lot of reviews, many of them regarding the topic as “foreign” to Finland and therefore not relevant.\(^{414}\) However, Pennanen’s play that also takes up the topic demonstrates that the topic was not at all foreign.

Ain’Elisabet Pennanen is a nowadays rather forgotten author, although she enjoyed modest success during her life-time. She published nine works, mostly novels, some poetry, and three theatre plays. In her rather vast archive there are still some unpublished works. Only two of her works are mentioned in a

\(^{414}\) Hepolampi 2007, 137; 142-143. In Bourdet’s play, however, the object of the main character’s desire never appears on stage. It is invisibility that functions as a strategy of representation, as Hepolampi states; the only contact between the two female characters is metaphorical, when the main character kisses the flowers sent by her possible lover.
standard work on Finnish literature called *Elävä kansalliskirjallisuus* ("Living national literature") from 1946 and written by Rafael Koskimies, one of the most influential literary scholars and critics of his time. Koskimies, known for his rather conservative position within the literary field concerning both style and content, mentions the poetic value of her drama *Rossit* ("The Rossis", Otava 1917) that, however, did not receive much publicity. Yet, Koskimies does not appreciate all her works – "Mrs. Pennanen published also several slightly confusing novels, which are, however, full of life [...]" – but praises her poetry collection *Huomensynty* ("The birth of tomorrow", WSOY 1943). Also Finnish literary research has scarcely analysed her work, and the play *Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin* even less, probably because it was never staged. There were apparently also only two reviews of it.

*Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin* is set in a boarding house where four women meet; three of them have run away from their marriage. Ilva and Sisko (the Finnish word for sister, but also a common first name), the two female main characters, are very close friends. Their friendship makes Sisko’s husband Onni (the Finnish word for luck) accuse them of having an intimate erotic relationship. Whether there has ever been more to their friendship remains open. Also Leo, a writer from Lapland, stays at the same place. Ilva is fascinated by him, they become lovers and he asks her to leave all behind and follow him to Lapland. Ilva accepts, since she knows that her husband Armas (the Finnish word for beloved) has betrayed her with Sisko. Armas even comes to the boarding house to visit Sisko, but at the same time he also tries to get Ilva back when he hears that she has met Leo and wants to leave him. The reason that he wants her back is because Ilva has inherited some money that could improve the rather poor journalist’s position. As it namely turns out, Sisko had told Armas about the money before he arrived. In the end, after a long talk of reconciliation with Armas, Ilva follows Leo to Lapland; he has promised her a better life than the one she had with her husband. Also her friendship with Sisko is of no importance any more.

The play circles around the topic of betrayal and mistrust, and therefore also addresses women’s (in)decency: friends betray each other – Sisko betrays Ilva twice by having an affair with her husband Armas and by telling him about Ilva’s inheritance. Armas betrays both his wife and Sisko. Trust can only be spotted between Ilva and Leo. The other women around them gossip all the time, spread rumours and mix the whole situation up even more. It is an inconvenient setting, but at the same time it is amusing to follow the intertwinnings. The literary style of the play is light and entertaining, its characters are superficial and extrovert; there are a lot of exclamation marks in the dialogues. The play is a melodrama, which is why it is not exceptional that the “love story” between Leo and Ilva is overdone: Leo is immediately sure about having found the love of his life when he first sees Ilva – but this lies in the nature of the genre. Although its subtitle is “marriage drama in three acts”,
it is not only a melodrama – with its stylised characters and over-emotional happenings between the characters –, but also a satire of the genre of marriage dramas. With its many entanglements, its language and the very uncommon and surprisingly direct hints at homoerotic attraction between women, it even overdoes the genre of melodrama and mocks it in unconventional ways.

When a queer reading analyses the heteronormativities which a literary text communicates, as well as its possibilities of questioning and undermining them, then a starting point can be the relationships of the play. There are two love triangles in the play: one between Ilva, Leo and Arman, and one between Ilva, Sisko and Armas. Such triangle situations are typical for melodramas or comedies, but here one of them is subverted by its queer plot. Classic heterosexual erotic triangles have been a part of literary history since the middle-ages, from Shakespeare and Molière to Goethe and Dostoevsky, Strindberg, Ibsen and Zola. In contrast to a “ménage à trois”, however, which is a form of living together with a common understanding about the three-parted relationship, the triangle constellation rather ends with one of the three leaving. Consequently, it usually includes jealousy. The classic triangle is one between two men and a woman, while usually the second man is needed to give the woman desirable value.416 René Girard in his work Deceit, desire and the novel saw the triangle as a fight between two men about a woman who only via the acknowledgement of a second man becomes desirable. This is the case with the triangle around Ilva, Leo and Armas, the latter recognising that he might lose his wife (and her money) to Leo. For Girard, desire, is in these cases defined as a triangular relationship, between subject, object and a mediator who directs the subject’s desire to the object: “A [vain person] will desire any object so long as he is convinced that it is already desired by another person whom he admires. The mediator here is a rival, brought into existence as a rival by vanity, and that same vanity demands his defeat.”417 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in Between men criticised Girard’s theory for being historically blind by assuming that all within the erotic triangle are equal and not taking into account factors like gender or social class. She sees many asymmetries between the sexual continuums of women and men, between female and male sexuality and homosociality, and most pointedly between homosocial and heterosocial object choices for males; and on the other hand that the status of women, and the whole question of arrangements between genders, is deeply and inescapably inscribed in the structure even of relationships that seem to exclude women – even in male homosocial/ homosexual relationships.418

417 Girard 1984, 7. He also states that “[t]he triangle is no Gestalt. The real structures are intersubjective. They cannot be localized anywhere; the triangle has no reality whatever; it is a systematic metaphor, systematically pursued.” Girard 1984, 2.
418 Kosofsky Sedgwick 1985, 25. Furthermore, she writes (p. 22–24): “[…] Girard’s account, which thinks it is describing a dialectic of power abstracted from either the male/ female or the sexual/ nonsexual dichotomies, is leaving out of consideration categories that in fact preside over the distribution of power in every known society.” […] “Thus, both Girard and Freud […] treat the erotic
Terry Castle, in turn, has criticised Sedgwick of her view on men, since relations between women have no place in it. Especially in settings that favour lesbian plots – namely within the world of adolescent young women, i.e. premarital relations, or divorced or widowed women, i.e. postmarital relations, there is not necessarily a male involved in the erotic triangle. Yet, she admits that in many of these plots there is a man with whom the woman gets married in the end. In these cases, as in Pennanen's play, “female homosexual desire [is] a finite phenomenon – a temporary phase in a larger pattern of heterosexual Bildung [...].” In homo-erotic triangles like Pennanen’s, where two women and a man are included, it is then the figure of the man who is needed so that the two women can relate to each other in an erotic way; but the man is only needed in a subordinate function; yet, some sort of hierarchy always is needed within a triangular structure. “Reversed” triangles consisting of two women and a man can be found in several of the novels I analyse, while some triangles, like in Rosamond Lehmann’s *Dusty Answer*, consist even only of women.

In Pennanen’s play, then, the main erotic triangle definitely makes a queer turn: it is not only the husband who has a stereotypical relationship with the best friend of his wife, but the wife and her best female friend are rumoured to have an intimate relationship, too. The queer topic runs like a red thread through the play and forms a constant parallel sub-plot to the marriage-topic within the dialogues. The hierarchies within the triangle, however, are clear from the start: Ilva decides about all the qualities of the different relationships. She ends her marriage, leaves Sisko behind and continues her life with Leo. Sisko and Armas might also stay together. The heteronormative order, thus, is restored in the end. Moreover, the supposed erotic relationship between Ilva and Sisko seems to have been imagined by Onni. Yet, Ilva gives the impression that she could have imagined herself more than mere friendship. She again and again turns back to her feelings for Sisko and how important she has been to her:

Ilva: [...] Nyt vasta, kun muu elämä on luotani paennut, sinun arvosi oikein tiedän. Kun sinä istut tuossa, on kuin Armaskin vielä istuisi, kuin rakkaus ja onni siinä vielä hieman istuisi tuolin syrjällä [...].

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Triangle as symmetrical – in the sense that its structure would be relatively unaffected by the power difference that would be introduced by a change in the gender of the participants. [...] In addition, the asymmetry [...] – the radically disrupted continuum, in our society, between sexual and nonsexual male bonds, as against the relatively smooth and palpable continuum of female homosocial desire – might be expected to alter the structure of erotic triangles in ways that depend on gender, and for which neither Freud nor Girard would offer an account. Both Freud and Girard, in other words, treat erotic triangles under the Platonic light that perceives no discontinuity in the homosocial continuum – none, at any rate, that makes much difference – even in modern Western society. There is a kind of bravery about the proceeding of each in this respect, but a historical blindness, as well.”


But then, in the same breath, she restores the momentarily disturbed heteronormative order by saying:

ILVA: Rakkauksen ja laulun jälkeen on maailmassa ihana tällainen ystävyys. Niin että vasta kolmannellahän sijalla sinä minun sydämessäni olet. Sano se Onnille, sille epäluuloiselle herra miehellesi. No, kuinka hän nyt laski sinut tulemaan minun, sinun – Sapphosi luo?

[...] SISKO: Onni väittää, että minä rakastan sinua enemmän kuin häntä, ja on siksi niin mustasukkainen.

ILVA: Onkin mahdollista, että rakastat minua enemmän kuin Onni dandya, tuota lahjakasta, mutta voimatonä enemmän kuin minua – – Sapphosi luo?

This person she loves more, then, is Ilva’s husband Armas. This extra-marital affair becomes one of the main plots within the play and central for the topic of betrayal as its leitmotif, since Ilva is betrayed twice by Sisko (concerning the husband and her money). However, the play is full of ambiguities. While this dialogue and the terms Sappho, girlish man and dandy directly refer to homosexuality, the affection between Ilva and Sisko is mostly pictured as a deep friendship. Yet, there are several passages that indicate that there is or had been more to it; or they give signs that point to same-sex desire. The reader also stumbles upon dialogues like these:


SISKO (hieman häpeissään): Ei se ollut minulle taakkaa. Minäkin olen aina sinusta pitänyt, ei kukaan ole ollut minulle niin hieno kuin sinä.

These lines might be read as deep emotional affection, but in the context of this work that plays with the topic of same-sex desire and even uses terms linked to it, they at the same time must be read as the expression of an erotic attraction between the women. Moreover, the term queer, as defined in the introduction as “the representation of female identities at odds with heterosexual norms” applies quite accurately to these characters that play with

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Pennanen 1919, 33–34. “ILVA: Only now, when all other life has left me, I really know your value. You sitting there is as if Armas would still sit there, as if love and happiness would still for a little while sit on the edge of the chair [...]” ILVA: After love and song, this kind of friendship is the most wonderful thing in the world. You are only on the third place in my heart. Say this to Onni, this suspicious husband of yours. So, how did he now estimate that you came to me, your – Sappho? [...] SISKO: Onni claims that I love you more than I love him, and that is why he is jealous. ILVA: That you love me more than Onni Dandy, this gifted but weak girlish man, is quite possible. But I know someone you love even more.

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Pennanen 1919, 136. “ILVA (after a silence): Forgive me, Sisko, that I have loved you so much. My feelings must have been a burden to you. SISKO (slightly ashamed): It has not been a burden to me. I have always liked you, too, no one has been as grand to me as you have.”

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identity, and especially so Ilva. Yet, also the term “lesbian continuum”, coined by Adrienne Rich in 1980, might be useful here. For Rich, this term

include[s] a range – through each woman’s life and throughout history – of woman-identified experience; not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman. If we expand it to embrace many more forms of primary intensity between and among women, including the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of practical and political support [...].423

This means that the term lesbian is not necessarily bound to homosexuality, but offers a wider range of identities. Like in this play, it can also include female characters who are defined as heterosexual, but who nevertheless are deeply connected to female friends. The term shows that heterosexuality is an institution that oppresses women. In Pennanen’s play, the female characters demonstrate in the sense of the quote above that there is more to female identity than being married and caring about their husbands, or even following their husbands for whatever the price may be. They, and especially so Ilva, resist male oppression.

The language of the play continuously circles around the topic of same-sex desire and plays with this ambiguity, until, towards the end of the play, the word “lesbian” is finally spoken out. Here at the latest, also the reader who might expect heteronormativity, cannot help but understand. A reading between the lines is at this point not really necessary any more, since the choice of words is obvious. Already before, Ilva again and again returns to the topic of her love for Sisko, partly motivated by Sisko’s betrayal, and partly also by the appearance of Onni who does not believe his wife who tries to tell him that she has no intimate relationship with Ilva.

ILVA (hetken kuin poissa suunnaltaan, astuu Onnin eteen kädellään viitaten):
Kuule siis, Onni! Nyt sen voin sinulle sanoa ja nyt sen sinulle sanon, – sinäkin pieni pahan rukki! Sinun monivuotiselta epäluuloltasi minua ja Sisko-ystävyyttäni kohtaan nyt riistän sen salaperäisen naamion: se on tuo mies tuolla! Katso häntä! Siellä on Siskon Sappho! Ja nyt pois, menkää pois, – pois, pois, pois!

ARMAS: Lesbolaiset pois! Mutta muuten näkemiin, Onni! Puhumme tarkemmin jahka pääsemme näitten kuohahtaneitten enkeleittemme käsitä.424

These lines are situated at the end of the play – so even when the hints on the relationship between the two women seem to have been still suggestive so

424 Pennanen 1919, 137–138. “ILVA (for a moment like beside herself, steps in front of Onni, motioning with her hand): Listen, Onni! Now I can tell you and now I will tell you, – you little spinning wheel of evil! I will now pull down the mysterious mask of your suspicion during all these years against Sisko’s and my friendship: it is this man there! Look at him! There is Sisko’s Sappho! And now go, go away, – away, away, away! ARMAS: Lesbians, away! But otherwise, goodbye, Onni! We will talk more when we get rid of our overexcited angels.”
far with terms like Sappho, then it is at this point certain that it has not been
mere speculation after “lesbians” is spoken out. Although the topic of same-
sex desire between women is quite present in some of Pennanen’s works – in
Voimaahuomi as well as in, for example, an unpublished work with the title
“Karadja Nikolajevna” – it is only in Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin that the
topic is so explicitly named. The play has a strong queer sub-plot, and same-
sex desire remains until almost the end of the play a possible and even slightly
positive alternative within the interpersonal relationships. Yet, when Armas
shouts “Lesbians, away!”, he also introduces the discourse of decency and of
what is accepted into the play. He resists having to do with the topic, or the
characters connected to it. Yet, also this scene is mostly comical. Consequently,
I argue that it was its satiric way of dealing with the queer topic that made it
possible to publish the play. And could one take the play even seriously with
its critique of all kinds of relationships? The question is also whether it was
never staged due to its queer content/ vocabulary, although comparable, yet
foreign ones had been staged.

Although it was published by a big publisher, it was not recognized by a
broader public and not acknowledged or taken seriously by the few that had
read it, as one can derive from the reviews it had received. One of the two
reviews of the play appeared in the student magazine Ylioppilaslehti in 1920.
Its attitude is not totally negative, but is characterised by an amused tone and
ends with the conclusion: “All in all, the writer has collected many features of
our time into her play.” This statement is interestingly opposed to most of
those the plays Earth Spirit and La prisonnière received. The reviewer cites
sentences he/ she liked and sees the play that puts all its many events into one
day, as a representative of the contemporary world view: when a person has to
choose between laughter and grief, one should choose laughter. It is a carpe
diem-mentality in the play that the reviewer recognises and appreciates.426
The reviewer does, however, not name the queer topic, but might have
included it in the phrase cited above. He remains silent, yet with an amused
attitude. The review in the daily newspaper Aamulehti, in contrast, is purely
critical. The critic O.A. Kallio calls the characters “eccentric” and “futuristic”.
He seems to be disturbed by the characters and their way of behaviour and
wonders what Pennanen had aimed at. In the quite long review, the obvious
and central dialogues about the supposed lesbian relationship are not
mentioned at all. It is heteronormativity that the reviewers expected, and thus,
it seems they also do not see it as necessary to even mention the queer side-
plot which falls out of the view and the selection of what needs to be said about
the play. But the reviewer still expresses his opinion on the morals of the play
with lack of understanding: “They all run wild, [...] reason [...] like maniacs,
they make a terrible fuss about all their insignificances, squirm and twist in
their heartaches, flirt, make love here and there, quarrel, swear, lose their

kaikkiaan monta nykyajan pirettä on tekijä näytelmäänsä koonnut.”
temper and reconcile in the sweetest mess.”

He furthermore wonders whether Pennanen only wanted to make fun on the costs of the reader and the characters, and whether she just wrote what came into her mind. Interesting is also the end of the review: “Maybe there are many of those ‘bunglers’ [...] She at least thinks to know such women, since she has introduced them into the book. Also when brought into a book, one does not get more joy out of them.” The reviewer expresses here once more that he knows nothing of the world described there or the topics and characters depicted – a silence (calling the possibly queer characters “bunglers”) that tells much between the lines and can be compared to the negative reviews of Bourdet’s play. It is a silence that I earlier described as omissive. One can assume that the reviewer avoids to take up the topic which is so obviously present in the play, in the same way as the reviewer of Ylioppilaslehti remains silent. This indicates that there is a possibility to speak about the queer characters (and the review in Aamulehti almost does so in the last sentence), i.e. the issue is present and it would be possible to broach it, but they avoid to do so. This way of revealing the queer topic and at the same time not mentioning it, is a typical example of the “closet” as Sedgwick describes it. The reasons to do so might be that the reviewer did not regard the topic as worth to be mentioned, or he did not want to offend the readers, or it was seen as unsuitable for Aamulehti to print a more direct reference on queerness, so that it remained hidden between the lines. Here, the question of power comes in: the action of including queerness into a play is answered by the action of a (deliberate) omission in the review. Would a review have openly addressed the queer topic, the play would have received a totally different character and it might have even caused a scandal. But since Aamulehti reviewed it negatively, the chance that it would have been read more widely is presumably much smaller – the access to the public, which is one form of power, thus was minimised, although the play was published. Here, also the pertinence principle comes into play: as quoted, it is implemented in perceiving the social world and defines all the characteristics of persons or things which can be perceived, and perceived as positively or negatively interesting, by all those who apply these schemes. In this case, it is the interest the reviewer has in recognising the queer topic in the play. While the publisher seemed to have no trouble with the playful introduction of Sapphism, the reviewers certainly see it as either not suitable or not worth to be addressed.

In this context, it is also worth having a look at the situation of drama written by women in Finland in the beginning of the 20th century. Kyösti

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Wilkuna (1879–1922), a famous author at the time, wrote in 1922 that the degradation of the Finnish stage could be explained by hysterical and eccentric women who fussed around. The art of drama, for him, was the most masculine genre of writing and women should therefore be expelled from it. He named explicitly Ain’Elisabet Pennanen and Maria Jotuni.\textsuperscript{429} Also the writer and poet Juhani Siljo, with whom Pennanen had a relationship, was of the opinion that the new literature written by women was too decorative and concentrating on the Übermensch, while lowering itself to the hysterical.\textsuperscript{430} The beginning of the 1920s was, all in all, characterised by a hostile attitude towards women within drama writing and thus it was difficult for them to be accepted as writers. With this situation in mind, then, it is also no wonder that Pennanen’s play received so little attention. Moreover, as stated above, literature written by women was in general not very acknowledged by the conservative parts of the literary elite, since it often dealt with everyday life and corporeality and at the same time challenged the bourgeois family ideal and the patriarchal order; on the other hand, some women were of course valued, like Hagar Olsson who was one of the most important critics in the 1920s in the Finland-Swedish literary field, wrote plays and was also appreciated in Sweden.

Symptomatic for a female artist, it was her relationship with Juhani Siljo, who died in the Civil War in 1918, what Pennanen became most famous for in Finnish literary history. Siljo had tried to bring Pennanen into the acknowledgement of the literary public with his appraisal, however without success. To Pennanen’s exclusion from the literary world, to negative reviews and to being forgotten by literary history contributed also her attitude towards literary norms. She set herself above and outside the codes, norms and ideologies of drama that prevailed at the time. According to Tellervo Krogerus, Pennanen had therefore no possibility to access the world of the literary elite. Moreover, she was mostly reviewed as a woman, not as a writer, which is not least owed to the fact that women’s perspective and experiences were central in her work. Her approach to writing was unusual for women of the time, so that it is not surprising that she was critically reviewed by her male colleagues and rivals. But it is striking that also the first work that dealt with Finnish women writers on a broader scale, \textit{Sain roolin johon en mahdu}, edited by Maria-Liisa Nevala in 1989, does not mention Pennanen’s play.\textsuperscript{431} Following Foucault, such omissions are also a way of silencing voices; a work that is not mentioned in a feminist canon that wants to set a counterpart of the established male canon, is marginalised twice.\textsuperscript{432}


\textsuperscript{430} Juutila 1992, 31.

\textsuperscript{431} Krogerus 1993, 46–47.

\textsuperscript{432} See Kalha 2005, 236/ Foucault 1990, 8. In his study on the reception of the painter Magnus Enckell, Harri Kalha points to the fact that also academic circles were not free from the taboo of writing about homosexuality until the law on homosexuality had changed in 1971. He also states that the first time the “h-word” was mentioned in research on Enckell, was as late as 1994. The reviews of his paintings, moreover, often criticised the style of the works to be able to reject it. See Kalha 2005, 220;
In 1921, the poet Aaro Hellaakoski (1893–1952) wrote a review on Pennanen’s whole oeuvre until then which is exemplary for the attitude of many male writers and the literary elite towards female authors. Too much feelings and too little content and form, it seems, were most disturbing for him:

[...] one can bear to read Mrs. Pennanen’s works, but not review them. With the nose deep down in the book one gets the painful pulse of their blood circulation with its desire for life, and their undisguised smell of human skin, all their effusive erotic creation. But having a look at them from a distance, their brokenness and obscurity does not feel good, and neither does the total lack of lines that keeps the chaos on the other side of the border, regardless of the fact that their emotional content can be outstandingly dense.\footnote{Krogerus 1993, 46. Quoting Aaro Hellaakoski’s review of Pennanen’s work Eräään perhosen joulualahja, in: Aika 1921, 215–217, 215. “[...] one can bear to read Mrs. Pennanen’s works, but not review them. With the nose deep down in the book one gets the painful pulse of their blood circulation with its desire for life, and their undisguised smell of human skin, all their effusive erotic creation. But having a look at them from a distance, their brokenness and obscurity does not feel good, and neither does the total lack of lines that keeps the chaos on the other side of the border, regardless of the fact that their emotional content can be outstandingly dense.”}

In the context of these reviews and the literary field that was rather hostile towards female writers, also Pennanen’s first novel, Voimahmisiä ("Strong people") from 1906, is worth having a look at here, since it shows how contemporary Pennanen was, even ahead of her time. However, it is not a stylistic master piece, for what it was also criticised in contemporary reviews\footnote{Krogerus 1993, 45. Krogerus names a review – the apparently only one the novel received – in the magazine Valojoja (1907, 123–4) by the anonymous T.S. that describes the novel as written by a gifted young female writer with a lot of fantasy and a sensitive emotional life, but criticises it for being insufficient in terms of language and being incoherent and partly irritating. Krogerus defines this review as representative for setting male, patriarchal norms that were directed against women writers as well as avant-garde writers.}, but rather an entertaining novel turning into a drama. As one of the few who have done research on Pennanen’s works, Krogerus sees it as typical for her to deal with difficult topics or even taboos in her works: she addressed incest, homoeroticism, sexually transmitted diseases and divorce. Homo-eroticism is brought up also in Voimahmisiä. The novel’s main character Hellevi is on the search for the right way of life, and through her perspective the novel touches topics that were radical at the turn of the century, especially when expressed by a female author. The topics Voimahmisiä deals with are rape, homoerotic attraction and incest, and they are all brought up in connection with the main character. This abundance of difficult topics is certainly one reason for the mostly negative reception. The novel tells about Hellevi who had a relationship with a young man, an orphan of whom her father had taken care. He is, as it turned out, her uncle both from the mother’s and from the father’s side. They split, but Hellevi cannot forget him. Having moved away from home to the city, she meets “Ms U.”, a woman

\footnote{Krogerus 1993, 36. Quoting Aaro Hellaakoski’s review of Pennanen’s work Eräään perhosen joulualahja, in: Aika 1921, 215–217, 215. “[...] one can bear to read Mrs. Pennanen’s works, but not review them. With the nose deep down in the book one gets the painful pulse of their blood circulation with its desire for life, and their undisguised smell of human skin, all their effusive erotic creation. But having a look at them from a distance, their brokenness and obscurity does not feel good, and neither does the total lack of lines that keeps the chaos on the other side of the border, regardless of the fact that their emotional content can be outstandingly dense.”}
living opposite her house and by whom she gets fascinated, but who also frightens her. Here, the queer plot appears, since the friendship between the two women also has an erotic dimension.

While in *Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin* the outspoken references on lesbianism/ sapphism form a red thread in the play, in *Voimaihmisiä* the figure of the mermaid appears continuously and needs to be seen as a trope for same-sex desire. The mermaid was a rather common literary symbol at the turn of the century, symbolising female desire in general. In *Voimaihmisiä* it is Ms. U. who through the figure of the mermaid symbolises an independent, sexually autonomous character. Moreover, Hellevi in her fascination for Ms. U. lets her compare herself to a mermaid, though with mixed feelings that range from love to fear: “She is my only one! I go to her emotionally; I find a cat, a mermaid, a cold star, a weathercock. A colourful spot she is on my wall, treading down my roses, picking my roses! The Lord blesses us all!”

Also the topic of rape is very openly and at the same time intriguingly dealt with. Rape is interpreted not only in a physical, but also in a mental sense: Hellevi gets to know a conductor called Braun who belongs to the same category as Ms. U.: a “voimaihminen”, a strong person that soaks up everyone and everything around him. He can also be compared to Armas in *Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin*, since they both are characterised as egomaniacs who use women, but have no respect for them. Both Ilva (as well as Sisko) in the play, and Hellevi in the novel, however, revolt against these men, and in the end they succeed in their revolt. Braun wants to make Hellevi his inferior, but she refuses, although torn between her feelings for him that r, she feels that she is being raped by him. Later in the novel, Braun also physically rapes a young girl who explicitly tells Hellevi about it. Pennanen’s novel, thus, was radical in its way of dealing with these difficult topics; it undermines what was expected from female authors. The text’s critical attitude towards everything that suppresses women and that is expressed in the character of Hellevi is summarised in passages like this one: “Speak, Hellevi! Declare women’s new thankful truth! Write hymns for the new “strong people”, for the haters of churches, homes, marriages, children!”

This sentence is a hymn against all values: church, home, marriage, motherhood. Pennanen was not economical with words in her critique towards set values. She targeted heteronormativity not so much with subversion, but rather directly, showing the ways it worked with the examples of her characters.

Alongside this criticism, also eroticism plays an important role in all of Pennanen’s works and characterise her style. As Krogerus points out, the erotic topics and the means of an erotic narrative that can be spotted in Pennanen’s work are an essential part of her theme in *Voimaihmisiä*. But, I would add, also to some part in *Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin* that deals on a more

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435 Pennanen 1906, 51. “Hän on ainoani! Menen luokseen tunteellisena, löydan kissan, merenneidon, kylmän tähden, tuuliviiren. Kirjaa pilkku on hän harmaalla seinälläni, ruusujeni polkija, ruusujeni poimiä! Herra meitä kaikkia siunatkoön!”

436 Pennanen 1906, 205. “Puhu Hellevi! Julista naisten uusi kiitollinen totuus! Sepitä hymnit uusille “voimaihmisiille”, kirkkojen, kotien, avioliittojen, lapsien vihaajille!”
entertaining and ironic level with many of the same issues. Pennanen deals with questions of woman’s identity, her sexuality, her ability/possibility to be creative and women’s possibilities in life per se. In Pennanen’s world, a woman can only be free under the preconditions of feminine eroticism: she has to follow her feelings and the desires of her body. Moreover, both of Pennanen’s works have the motive of women’s mutual feelings in focus. This motive includes affection between women, but also comparisons between women, envy and hate. In the play, the inheritance makes the women envy each other, but they are also characterised by a strong affection for each other that turns into harder feelings when one gets betrayed by the other. In Voimaihmisiä, Hellevi is on the one hand attracted by Ms. U., but then gradually starts to dislike her.

Also Pennanen’s own story seems to be predicted within the novel when Hellevi wishes to be a respected artist, but does not succeed in this. In the course of the novel, Hellevi and Ms. U. think and speak a lot about the situation of women and especially of female artists. Hellevi has inherited many talents from her late mother who was a professional opera singer, but a real career in the arts is not an option for her. She also demands from Hellevi to choose between love/femininity and art: a typical choice female artists had to make at the time the novel was written. Still, Hellevi wants to have both and thus ends up as an unknown artist. One interpretation that remains in the end of the novel is that for women marriage was still the only institution that made them socially acceptable and through which women generally were defined. In this sense, both Voimaihmisiä and Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin are exceptional works in their attitude towards marriage and eroticism on the whole. Both question the position of women within the system of marriage and love – shouldn’t love define who we marry? They also question the position of women within the field of the arts as well as the impossibility to combine both being a woman and an artist and still be taken seriously within both. That both works were published, and both by a big publisher like Otava, shows the possibility literature had – entertaining literature at least, that was outside of the watchful eyes of the elite, or rather ignored by them – in the first two decades of the 20th century. Within the boom of book-selling in the years after independence, it seems, there was space for a variety of topics. That Pennanen’s works (also due to their partly weak style) were not much appreciated by the reviewers is an indicator of the attitude towards women writing and especially women critically writing about difficult topics that were taboo. Both the silence about the queer topics within the reviews, and the small amount of them in general, are an indicator of the power of those who decide about the access to the public. These works and/or their topics were not regarded as meaningful enough to be reviewed, or they were silenced within the reviews.

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437 Krogerus 1993, 48; 54.
438 Krogerus 1993, 47.
439 Juutila 1992, 35–37; 42.
Pannanen’s archive does not give any references to how, for example, Otava reacted when Pannanen offered them the play or the novel. There is only one letter from Otava from the time when Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin came out, but it deals with another novel and play that were published around the same time; however, it gives an impression of the relationship between publisher and author, as well as of the way they worked together.

Thus, although Otava was not very pleased with the manuscript of the novel, as well as they did not expect it to be a success with the readers, to reject it was not an issue. The work was appreciated as a work of art, it seems, that needed not to be sold as a bestseller. It presumably was Pannanen’s position as an author of the house that led to this decision. She had published all her works at Otava and the novel Vuorenviemät (“Those gone with the mountains”) was her eighth work since 1906. It deals with the relationship between her and the poet Juhani Siljö, who had by then already died; it has to some degree sensational value, since it hints on incest between the stepfather and the stepsister of the female protagonist and it tells about the young couples’ love that is overshadowed by the past of the man: he had a relationship with an older woman who infected him with a sexual disease. It is also not written very well, not to say rather kitschy. One can conclude that Otava probably also did not expect a large readership for the play Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin and thus it was accepted as such, not being a success either.

3.3 A Queer Ironic Hetero-Romance and the New Woman’s Dilemma

The novels to be discussed in this chapter are Elsa Soini’s Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit (“The Favourites of Gods and Men”) that was published in 1926, and Uni (“Dream”/ “Uni”), published in 1930, both by Otava. These novels are exemplary representatives of the discussion about the role of the New Woman and motherhood, but they also, as I will argue, undermined prevailing discourses within society to a certain degree, both with regard to the topic of motherhood, and to gender roles. The literary techniques, especially irony which Soini uses to question prevailing norms, differ from the rather straight-

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440 SKS/KIA: Ain’Elisabet Pennasen arkisto, Kirjekokoelma 841, 54:1–2 (Otava 28.5.1919). “Your novel Vuorenviemät feels heavy, but you have yet promised to still improve it. It will certainly not become a book for the ‘great audience’, so that the print run needs to be comparatively small and the royalties need to be decided accordingly. — Your play Arvolan kauhea lapsi lacks, however, less emendation than what it seemed like when we first read it.”
forward satirical style Pennanen used in her play. She also goes deeper into the analysis of heteronormative ideas than Pennanen and additionally makes use of some of the ideas of the women’s organisations of her time.

Elsa Soini (1893–1952) was a Finnish author and translator from languages like French, English and German. She wrote more than 20 novels and plays and also film manuscripts and became especially known for writing the very popular radio play Suomisen perhe (The Family Suominen) in the years 1938–45 under the pseudonym Tuttu Paristo. She translated works by many writers, amongst them Edna Ferber and the romantic novelist Berta Ruck. Her own books resemble these works in the way that they have strong female characters like Ferber’s, and belong to the genre of light fiction like Ruck’s novels. Soini was categorised as a writer of light fiction, although her books deal with psychological problems, society and arts on a broader scale. After having made her living especially as a translator in Finland, she spent the years 1920–1922 in New York City with her husband who worked there as a consul. Back home in Finland with her children, Soini started to write novels, while her husband continued his work in New York. Soini was very active within the literary circles and did not limit herself as a writer to one genre, but rather played with set genre limits and tried different ones like prose, drama and books for young people; she even wrote a tennis guide. Already with her first novel Oli kerran nuori tyttö (“Once there was a young girl”) in 1923 she caught the spirit of the time by telling about a young woman starting university during the time of the Civil War. The novel was positively received, not least since its main character depicted a representative of the new, independent woman.

A modern characteristic within Finnish publishing that developed during the 1920s was, as said, the emergence of a new readership that consisted of a much larger range of people than before. This had become possible especially by the introduction of Finnish-language light fiction writers, of which Soini was one of the more well-known. As shown, publishing had to a certain degree distanced itself from the mere (re-)production of the normative society, and so more and more books that could not directly be placed within the elites’ positive value system were published – Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit is a splendid example here. In the middle of the 1920s, it was no longer possible to avoid (moral) diversity within publishing, also due to financial reasons. Rather, the publishers had to try to reach different kinds of readerships. In the beginning of the 1930s, the term culture implied not merely high-brow culture any more – a fact that led to the earlier explicited literary fight about morals and readership, since everything “modern” was equalled with immorality. The question of female decency is then also a central topic in Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit, Soini’s second novel. It tells about two women, Hertta and Aino, who, emotionally attached to each other, live together in Finland and then travel to the United States. There, their life is mixed up by encounters with men. Especially Hertta’s life gets messed up, since she meets a man who turns out

to be married. She decides to leave the States after this tragedy – but: she is pregnant. Without even letting Aino know about it, she decides to keep the child. The baby, however, dies not long after its birth. Aino goes back to Finland with Hertta, after she also has experienced the end of an unhappy affair with a man. Back home, their paths soon went separate ways. Aino continues her work as a teacher and remains unmarried. The novel suggests that she might have found another woman to share her life with, or at least that she is happy the way her life has turned out. Hertta marries and gives birth to another child.

By applying a queer reading – i.e. the assumption that the queer possibly exists in any work, catching that which the text at the same time reveals and hides and which breaches normative understandings about gender and sexuality –, the analysis of *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit* will carve out the many different layers the novel contains. On the surface, it fulfils the expectations of the time concerning literature which Risto Turunen lists (see Chapter 2), i.e. primarily a nationalist attitude, to a sufficiently large degree. However, as Malmio has observed, the literary models Soini uses in her books, as well as the genre of light fiction they apply and mock at the same time, are of foreign origin. That Soini’s novels received positive reviews was, besides being obviously well-written, due to their ironic and parodist view on the genre and on ruling ideas. Distance and criticism were in principle regarded as positive characteristics, a sign for good quality. Especially *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit* is characterised by a strong ironic undertone, typical for light fiction of the time. As Kristina Malmio in her dissertation on, amongst others, Elsa Soini and theatrical meta-language has shown, it was rather popular in the end of the 1910s and during the 1920s to write in a “parodic-ironic-self-reflective” way within Finnish and Finland-Swedish light fiction; it might have even been the prevailing style of writing. In the 1930s, this trend ebbed away again. For example J.V. Lehtonen (1883–1948), among others one of the first researchers of Aleksis Kivi and translator of especially French literature, was intrigued by *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit*, exactly because of its continuous irony: “I have to say that your book is scarily intelligent, full of little plays and flashes, one more insightful than the next, so that it makes one completely dizzy. Where do our women writers get the blessing to produce so unbelievably many of these enjoyable, flying, wisecrackingly light French wits?” This quote can be linked to what I stated in the context of Pennanen: women writers were not fully appreciated by many within the literary elitist field; however, they were praised when writing light fiction, since this genre was not attributed an educational function. The fact that Soini’s novels have

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442 Malmio 2005, 78.
443 Malmio 2005, 7.
444 SKS/KIA: Elsa Soinin arkisto, B. Kirjeenvaihto, kirjekokoelma 300, B.a, saapuneet kirjeet. J.V. Lehtonen 30.11.1926. “Täytyy suoraan sanoa että kirjanne on aivan pelottavan älykäs, täynnä toinen toistaan terävämpiä “leikkimisiä” ja välahdyksiä, niin että ihan päättä huimaa. Mistä ihmeestä niille meidän naiskirjailijoilleemme on oikein siunautunut niin uskomattoman runsaat määrit tuota herkullista, lentävää, ilakoivan kepeätä ranskalaisista ålyä!”
mostly been defined as light fiction is, I argue, one reason why her topics – urbanisation, modernisation and independent, middle-class women – were also in the beginning of the 1930s possible to be published. The topics Soini addressed became already in the end of the 1920s again less popular in publishing, since they were seen as one of the catalysts for the cultural crisis. Also Soini herself had her opinion about the topic of light fiction, the borders between art and entertaining, and its acceptance in Finland: “Art is not allowed to entertain here in Finland... If you try art, don’t write entertainingly, and if you write entertainingly, do in God’s name not try to suggest that this is art. It would be an unforgivable error.”445 Thus, to label Soini as a writer of light fiction underestimates her books that include much more than romance; they rather take a stand to important matters of the time. By using irony in *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit*, she questions the genre of light fiction and uses it to address important topics. Yet, to be taken seriously by the literary elite was all the more difficult. This thesis is underlined by an obituary that sums up her work: “After the author has passed away in the summer of 1952, one has to state that she all through her life wrote funnily, and that she had to observe many times how difficult it is to balance between these two concepts [of art and light fiction] when it comes to the reception of such literature […].”446 The struggle between the wish to write clever and witty novels for a broad audience on the one hand, and the wish to be acknowledged as a serious author on the other, was a dilemma Soini had to fight with during her whole career. This struggle is also visible in the novel *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit*: on the one hand, Soini wrote an entertaining novel about two female teachers, and on the other hand she discussed actual societal problems within it.

The reviews the novel received were due to this entertaining style not very positive. An only half-convinced review wrote O. A. Kallio for *Aamulehti* in Tampere – the same reviewer, that is, who also wrote the slating review about Pennanen’s play. Kallio suspects Soini to have written the book “out of the desire to show the world how easily she gets on with the “literary handicrafts”, that is the writing of a thickish novel in comparison to trivial things”, and he wonders “how easily our contemporary young women writers empty their pens into a torrent of words and make a topic out of nothing.”447 Kallio on the one hand praises her talent in the literary handicraft, but at the same time accuses her to invent, although skilfully, a topic out of something that does not need to be written about. Again, the common attitude towards female authors is mirrored here. The other reviews were also rather undecided in their opinion.

445 Toini Havu: ”Elsa Soini kuollut”, *Helsingin Sanomat* 13.7.1952. ”Eihän taide saa olla hauskaa täällä Suomessa... Jos yrität taidetta, niin älä kirjoita hauskasti, ja jos kirjoitat hauskasti, niin älä Herran nimesä koeta väärtää sitä taiteeksi. Se olisi anteeksiantamatonta erehdyss.”

446 Toini Havu: ”Elsa Soini kuollut”, *Helsingin Sanomat* 13.7.1952. ”Kirjailijan kesällä 1952 poistututtaa elävien mailta on todettava, että hän kaiken ikänsä kirjoitti hauskasti ja että hän monta kertaa saa havaita, miten vaikkea näiden kahden käsityteen [taide ja hauskasti kirjoitetut kirjallisuus] välillä balansoinnin olisi, mitä tällaisen kirjallisuuden vastaanottoon tulee”.

Viljo Kojo from the newspaper *Karjala* reviews the novel with three others that belong to the same genre he calls “literary herb garden”, a genre that had so far been imported from abroad – Hedwig Courts-Mahler being the most famous representative of it – but now, he states, also Finnish women writers had adopted this genre that morally or artistically neither was fruit- nor harmful. However, the Finnish representatives in his opinion were not as full of feelings or beauty as those by Courts-Mahler. Deprecatingly, he notes that many of these authors had travelled abroad and then showily used some foreign words every now and then. As a conclusion of the scathing review of the genre (without going deeper into one of the novels), he asks: “[I]s the above mentioned literature inevitable for the publishers due to their business principles and maybe also due to the promotion and the advocacy of Finnish literature, or is it so much more difficult to “reject” female authors than male ones [...]?”

In short, he represents a misogynist view on these works that favours male authors. The reviewer of *Uusi Suomi* in turn focusses on the fact that the two protagonists are tired of Finland and leave to America; he also notes that the style of the novel is American: vigorous and care-free, and whenever the text is in danger to become sentimental, Soini succeeds in saving it with jovial, unexpected turns.

These examples combine the core of the problems Soini faced: male vs. female, art vs. entertainment, nationalism vs. international culture.

The genre of light fiction, as the reviews show, was then not fully accepted by the literary elite, that the reviewers represented, but those who took the novel seriously recognised its credits: its style, the characterisation of the protagonists and the topic of unmarried women. However, none of the reviewers names the queer references. Thus, the question arises whether these references were not identified and could only be recognised by an “insider-readership”, or whether the reviewers simply ignored or silenced them. In the latter case, then, the novel would have not succeeded in subverting set norms, since, as stated earlier, a tacit acceptance of a topic makes resistance all the more difficult: if no one speaks about it, it cannot be discussed. The topic exists, but it has no impact if it remains undiscovered. Moreover, as stated earlier, the reader activates the topics of a text by his/ her own knowledge. If only heteronormativity is expected, every other dimension is in danger of remaining invisible. Thus, I argue that the silence of the reviews is a result of “blindness” towards non-heteronormativity, but also of the genre and the gender of the author: the novel per se is not taken as seriously as high-brow literature would have been, and the author is not taken as seriously as a male author would have been. The result of these reviews then is that the topics the novel takes up were not examined thoroughly, in case the reviewer even had read the novel properly. As Viljo Kojo in his review even proudly admitted:

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448 Viljo Kojo: “Kirjallisia yrttitarhureita”, *Karjala* 21.11.1926. “[...] onko mainitunlainen kirjallisuus kustantajille välittämöntä liikeperiaatteiden ja ehkä myöskin suomalaisen kirjallisuuden edistämisen ja kannattamisen takia, vai onko naisia niin paljon vaikeampi "hyljätä" kuin mieskirjailijoita [...]?”

“[…] but although I do not want to brag that I would have been able to read even one of those books from beginning to end without skipping a page every now and then, I almost dare to swear that I have not lost any “grain of gold”.”

Thus, by disdaining and ridiculing these works and their (female) authors, Kojo refused to detect their full value.

While Soini’s work is nowadays only known to small circles, by her death in 1952 her work had been appreciated, as the big amount of obituaries shows, of which I will cite another example from Karjala, saying

[...] että kukin kirja ilmestymisaikanaan käsitteli juuri sen hetken kipeää probleemaa tai jotain sellaista epäkohdta, joka saattaa ilmetä näennäisesti hyvinkin sopuisuisen perheen keskuudessa. [...] Meistä oli kaikki ollut juuri niin kuin ollakin pitää – kunnes äkkiä havaitsimme, miten typeriä ja naurettavia piirtyneet ennakkoluulomme olivat olleet. [...] Harva meidän naiskirjailijoistamme on niin monessa muodossa antanut maansa kulttuurielämällä henkensä rikkauxia.

The attitude towards her writings, then, had changed enormously by the time she died – the topics that were not appreciated, but ridiculed in the 1920s were now the ones that had made her special as an author. During the time when Soini was most active as a writer, it was mostly the world of the home and (“normal”) relationships women were expected to write about, i.e. stories that involve love and have a (positive) solution in the end. Foreign light fiction, in contrast, was disapproved of and held responsible for the decline of morals in the first decades after independence, especially by representatives of the church. As said, changes in the class-structure that had taken took away power especially from the educated (upper) class, led to discussions about morals and an emphasis on religious values in order to restore earlier (but now lost) power relations.

This again leads me back to the Foucauldian five points listed in Chapter 1.2.1 that he regards as helpful for the analysis of power relations within institutions like publishers. Especially the first three points are useful in this context: Which forms of differentiations in status can be found? What are the aims that stand behind possible interferences – is it privileges that one tries to protect, is it authority that is being exercised? And the question of instrumental modalities is of course important, i.e. in which ways is power


451 N.N.: Elsa Soini on poissa, Karjala 18.7.1952. “[…] that each book at the time of its date of publication dealt with one of the painful problems at exactly that time or some fault that might have appeared also in the centre of an apparently very harmonious family […] Everything was just as we could have wished for – unless suddenly we discover how stupid and ridiculous our established prejudices had been. […] Very few of our female writers have in so many forms given the riches of their minds to the cultural life of our country.”

452 Lappalainen 1992, 78.


performed? The first question can be answered by taking a look at the status of the writers: were they debutantes when addressing queer issues, and did this status help to evade censorship, as I will ask in the case of Suber and Söderhjelm, or was it rather a problem, as Hämäläinen’s case demonstrates? Soini was not a debutante, but an established writer and translator when she introduced queer topics into her work, so that it was her position combined with the genre of light fiction that made it possible to publish the novel. Besides, her way of subtly undermining heteronormative values that required some kind of inside-knowledge, was certainly useful. The passing of queer topics namely depended on the way in which they were addressed: were they confirming prevailing discourses, or were they aimed at undermining them, and if so, in which way? Soini does both, I argue, and tries to find a way to present different alternatives for how women can live, yet often between the lines. In both Pennanen’s and Soini’s case, the way power/authority was performed happened by the means of rejection or silence – it was the reviews that omitted to mention the queer topics. Thus, when the educated (male) elites felt a need to protect their status, this happened in these cases by demanding tighter morals and exercising authority by more or less devastating criticism, or silence. The question then is: what kind of possibilities really were there to undermine this exertion of power in the literary field by authors like Elsa Soini?

In the centre of most of Soini’s novels we can find a certain kind of women living in Helsinki, then the only big Finnish city: these women were ambiguous and torn between independent careers and family life. Soini’s novels have often been seen as giving a detailed description of Helsinki and women’s position there during the 1920s. Already since the end of the 19th century, a large number of unmarried women had moved to the city to work for example in offices; in fact, more women than men had come from the countryside. Those women, the earlier introduced “bachelorettes” were suspected of rejecting marriage and a life as housewives, while preferring and enjoying their independence: they were accused of selfishness. Moreover, they also might have had erotic experiences before getting married. Soini’s novels, then, as Emilia Cronvall puts it, with their independent female characters who wanted more from life than marriage, gave the educated women a picture of the possibility of pre-marital life, as well as ideas about life outside of marriage – in contrast to what for example the Martha organization or guide books taught them. Soini’s women, in short, were allowed to do what was traditionally accepted only for men. They studied, travelled and lived alone. But when they finally got married, these female characters lost their independence; they had to give it up for the life as wives. Their education, in the end, is of not much help, since they are still bound to the traditional roles.

Women’s emancipation in the Finland of the 1920s cannot be seen without its connection to the war. To Olavi Paavolainen, for example, in his essay

collection *Nykyaikaa etsimässä* (“In search of the present”, 1929) it seemed only natural that those who had survived the war simply wanted to enjoy life. One, maybe the main sign of this corruption of morals in his opinion was the emergence of the New Woman. A critic of the women’s magazine *Naisten ääni* (“Women’s voice”) accordingly suggested *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit* to those interested in “examining the mental life of different types of women, so-called modern women”, since it “offers a lot to think about in all its nuances.”

The public discussions about the phenomenon of the “bachelorettes” had their background in the concerns about morals on the one hand, and in the decline of the numbers of marriages on the other. It was especially the question of sex and gender that was used to stoke cultural fears and the unmarried woman thus became one of the main targets. She was, rather contradictorily, regarded as androgynous, almost sexless and as sexually passionate and self-sufficient. Moreover, the unmarried woman was a “surplus” with regard to the demographic development that was so important for the young nation. Important to keep in mind here is that the line between the representations of the New Women who emerged as manly, dressed for example in male clothes or going to work and living alone, and a lesbian was very thin. Lesbianism can be regarded as one form expressed by the category of the New Woman.

In Finnish literature, this interpretation of the New Woman hardly ever appeared in texts of the 1920s and 1930s – which is why the protagonist of *Uni* becomes even more interesting, since she is situated at the borders of heterosexuality and queerness.

Soini’s female characters can be described as modern women and they are on the surface all heterosexual. They are successful in their youth, they study and work, as Soini did herself, being a representative of this kind of New Woman as well. She was well educated and came from a rather wealthy family. But often the new women in Soini’s novels at some point, unlike Soini herself, have to decide between family and career, between themselves and a man. As Liisi Huhtala describes their situation, “when they fall in love, they on the one hand want to belong to the man totally, on the other hand they know that a woman belongs and should belong only to herself. They always choose feelings while denying, and being fully aware of it, their whole former being and their vocation.”

This observation leads directly to Ellen Key’s ideal woman: Key attempted to claim that it would be woman’s nature to bear children. Soini’s female protagonists show, following Key, that neither reason nor education can free women from the yearning for a child. They choose body over mind and accept that a good education is suitable for a young girl, but that at a certain age they are expected to concentrate on being a mother.

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457 H.C., *Naisten ääni*, no 21—23, 1926. “[...] tutkii erityyppisten n.s. nykyajan naisten sielunelämää, tarjoaa kirja kaikessa monivahteisuudessaan paljon ajattelemista aihetta.”


460 Huhtala 1989, 469. “Kun he rakastuvat, he haluavat toisaalta kuulua kokonaan miehelle, toisaalta tietävät, että nainen kuuluu ja hänen pitää kuulua vain itselleen. He valitsevat aina tunteen ja kieltävät samalla, sen täysin tiedostaen, koko entisen olemuksensa ja kutsumustyönsä.”

461 Huhtala 1989, 471/2.
always needs to win over an autonomous life, it seems, since the society they live in offers them no other choice.

Exactly this is also the dilemma in *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit*. With its final episode, where Hertta is getting married to her landlord, the novel indicates that it mirrors the prevailing discourses regarding motherhood and the nation: both women are back in their native country, Hertta even as a mother. Aino, again, continues to be a teacher and thus fulfils her duty with social motherhood. But the novel also contains queer notions. Its protagonists Hertta and Aino are on the surface depicted as heterosexual, but can be read as bi- or homosexual. They circle around the topic of same-sex desire, even refer to it, but at the same time also know that it is not allowed and do not act on it despite small caresses. Liisi Huhtala describes their relationship even as a potential, but not openly depicted lesbian one, and definitively as a positive possibility within the otherwise rather unhappy relationships in the novel. However, the mere uncertainty about sexual identity was not seen as a suitable topic for literature at that time. “Homosexualism is modern, Soini’s works communicate, but it still is difficult to relate to it.”462 But Soini’s characters are certainly either androgynous, or they bring up a new idea of man- and womanhood in the form of manly women and womanly men.463 They are as modern as they could be in the genre of light fiction in the late 1920s. And the novel was very up to date: in the same year as it was published, in 1926, the law that forbade extramarital sex was abolished. Hertta, thus, who became pregnant in the USA without being married, but instead having an affair with a married man, did not act illegally any more. She was as modern as a woman could be at that time within legal borders. However, the abolishment of this law meant at the same time a focus on phenomena that were regarded as abnormal or deviating, i.e. homosexuality, amongst others.464 Thus, it is all the more obvious why the topic of the relationship between the two women is dealt with rather tactfully, albeit often ironically. Hints at same-sex attraction between the two women, intimate affection and erotic attraction, are suggested for example when Hertta asks Aino to come with her to America:

“Minähän tarvitsen sinua.” Hän painoi poskensa poskeani vastaan ja hieroi niitä vastatusten. En koskaan ennen ollut tuntenut lämmintä ihoa omallani, se miellytti, veri kohosi pintaan sellaisesta. Hertta suuteli minua. Tunsin äkkiä olevani niin lähellä jotakin, tunsin elävän olennon kärsivän ja koetin ymmärtää ja auttaa. Siitä hetkestä lähtien tahdoin aina auttaa Herttaa, vaikka nyt en kyennyt edes vastaamaan hänen hyväilyynsä.465

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462 Huhtala 1989, 473. “Homoseksualismi on modernia, viestivät Soinin teokset, mutta siihen on vielä vaikea suhautua.” The Finnish word “homoseksualismi” is an obsolete word for “homoseksualisuus” (homosexuality) that was still in use in 1989.
463 Huhtala 1989, 472.
464 Sorainen 2011b, 204–205.
465 Soini 1926, 63. “‘But I need you.’ She put her cheek on mine and rubbed it. I had never felt warm skin on my own; it pleased me, made my blood rise to the surface. Hertta kissed me. I suddenly felt very
Aino, apparently surprised by her sudden feelings, from this moment on has to suffer. On the way to America, Hertta meets a man from Norway who falls in love with her and with whom she, after scoffing at him, starts a relationship – an unhappy one for the both of them in the end. Aino is forced to witness Hertta’s temporary happiness: “I was the only spectator, wet, cold and bitter. I was dreadfully sober, but drowsy. I watched for a little while; then I turned around and went away.” Again, also in this novel there is a triangle situation within the queer plot with one man and two women; as said, in homo-erotic triangles where two women and a man are included, the figure of the male character is needed for the two women to relate to each other in an erotic way; but also here, the man is only needed in a subordinate function. We do not get to know him, except in dialogues about him. He is the reference that is needed for the queer plot to work, a figure responsible for the female characters to act: to both leave the place where they live, and to address their mutual affection.

Throughout the novel, getting married seems to be no convincing option for neither of the protagonists. They meet men, but in the end never take it seriously. And although Hertta, quite surprisingly, gets married in the end, this must be understood as an ironic turn in the plot:

Entä Hertta? [...] Hämmästytkö teitä? Olisihan tämä varsin huono romaani, ellei kumpikaan sankarittarista pääisisi naimisiin. [...] Hän väitti itse olevansa onnellinen. [...] Hänen romaaninsa loppui siis asiaankuuluvasti häihin, loppui iiaksi minun puoleltani [...].

Here, the novel suddenly moves to a meta-level, exposing itself as a fictional work on which the author can exert influence, and commenting on the novel’s own possibilities in creating its story and its characters. With the expression “bad” novel, Soini refers at the same time to quality and to the expectations the reader might have towards the progression of the novel. It also refers to good and bad morals: Hertta’s new status as a wife, though, does not cast a positive light on marriage, either; it has rather taken away her loveable features, although the reader does not know who the man is she marries. It is only Aino’s opinion about him we know. Aino finds herself again in a triangle situation, this time a final one in which she loses. But she finally realises that the world is full of adventures also without Hertta. The end of the novel, in an outlook on the future, namely suggests that Aino finds other alternatives in life than becoming the wife of a man. Describing people in her neighbourhood, Aino shows alternatives that might be worth a thought for her, too: “And those have not been two bitter spinsters who tried, with their flat-

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467 Soini 1926, 272/3. “And Hertta? [...] Will I surprise you? It would be a rather bad novel, would not one of the two heroines get married. [...] She claimed to be happy. [...] Her novel thus ended, as it is appropriate, with a wedding; it ended forever for my part [...].”
share and dinner-delivering, to content themselves with their destiny – they rather lived an overexcited love life together, despising the bourgeois small town. Etcetera.”468 The “etcetera” leaves an ironic notion to the whole statement, too, but still – a same-sex relationship is a positive option at the very end of the novel. The choice of words, moreover, shows that these neighbours are modern people of their time: they share a flat and get their dinner delivered instead of cooking themselves. They are representatives of the new time in all respects. However, even if two women living together is an option in the novel, same-sex desire is not overtly named, as it is the case with Pennanen’s works.469 The more direct references are mainly to be found in the ironic outlook on the future and thus suggest that also morals and ways of life might change and not be static. But they require inside-knowledge and a queer reading to be detected.

Yet, there is not one aspect of heterosexual marriage in the novel that is presented in a positive manner, either, besides Hertta’s; and also this happiness has an ironic notion. A fact which Kristina Malmio has observed in another novel by Soini, applies also to Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit: there are two levels of narration. On the first level, it is a stereotypical romance novel – women on the search for their Mr. Right, and Hertta finally getting married and becoming a mother. But on the second level, the novel plays with the conventions and restrictions of the first in an ironic, sometimes parodic way: is Hertta happy, is this the happy ending they had waited for? It is Aino’s self-reflexion that signals that she is situated between the two levels: she is a product of the modern time, a woman that might have other expectations from life than marriage and motherhood in a time when both career and family were no option.470 What might seem ironic today may not have been in the 1920s. Yet, the ironic passages, as the one quoted above, in their use of words and images show quite clearly that they were also then meant ironically. Linda Hutcheon writes in her study on irony: “The closer the cultural or discursive overlapping of contexts, the more likely both the comprehension of specific ironies and also the acceptance of the appropriateness of irony in certain circumstances.”471 By mocking prevailing values of her time, Soini’s irony (as also some letters and reviews quoted above show) was well-understood.

A critical, albeit non-ironic attitude towards marriage and family life can already be found in the beginning of the novel, when Hertta tells Aino about her stance on marriage: “I do not want to love again. When I fall in love, I suffer. […] Getting married, all that – it does not suit me. […] I do not fear anyone more than I fear myself. All women are raving mad when Mr Right

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469 Especially “flat–sharing” was a very modern phenomenon that followed the fact that young women came to the cities to work there without being married. Cohabiting was tried to be criminalised by law some years later, since it supported “immoral” life-styles, as noted above.

470 Malmio 2005, 11.

471 Hutcheon 1994, 97, quoted after: Malmio 2005, 94.
takes them by his warm hand." This statement must be seen in a broader perspective of women’s decision making as stated by Liisa Huhtala, who says that once the female characters get married, they give up their independent life. Also Hertta feels the pressure of having to decide between marriage/husband or independence, and she seems to know that she would decide the same way: choose feelings and deny herself. And she feels that she would not be happy with the decision. Whether she is happy in the end or not, we do not know. It is only Aino who speaks in the end and who ironises Hertta’s development. Hertta is lost in silence, both for Aino, and the reader.

More generally speaking, women like Hertta returned to the ideal of the Martha organization that supported the idea of the nuclear family, which was part of the ideology of all of the emancipatory middle-class organisations during that time in Finland; or if they did not emphasise family, then social motherhood, as Aino’s example shows. At the turn of the century, there were in general two ideal types of women: one being unmarried, going to work and being active in society, the other being married and taking care of the family. Getting married, thus, usually meant to move from type one to type two. It is also worth mentioning here that the changes in society after the turn of the century had had deep impacts on the situation of the bourgeois housewives, who, as a result of the problematisation of the servant culture, had to work themselves in their household and take care of the children and the family. This change of roles was actively supported by the Marthas. The new role of the housewife, was not, however, a personal decision, but rather a societal task. Freedom, then, did not equal a liberal freedom, but it was one that emphasised moral values, i.e. one had to act not for one’s own advantages, but for the benefit of the nation. This becomes obvious both in the case of Hertta in Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit and of the protagonist in Uni: the final marriages end the independent life. Emancipatory topics, one has to bear in mind, were not necessarily very common in in the years after Finland’s independence. A life that was dedicated to science, as is the case in Uni, might have been seen as selfish. Still, also when Soini’s female characters strive for intellectual or erotic fulfilment in life, it usually does not happen without considering the question of motherhood, which is always present in the background as a possibility (yet: not a necessity).

Soini’s emancipatory point of view is also indicated by the choice of names. Aino is a character from the Finnish national epic Kalevala, where she is the beautiful sister of one of the main characters, Joukahainen, who promises her

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473 Ollila 1993, 57–61. The Marthas, I would conclude, oscillated between progressive ideas (participation of women in society) and conserving the old values by supporting the nation-building ideas of women as decent and passive. However, as Ollila writes, the right-wing atmosphere of the 1930s was also by the Marthas experienced as a threat from Central-Europe spreading to Finland and trying to put women (especially married women that were working for the state) back to stove and cradle. See Ollila 1993, 146–147.

474 Huhtala 1986, 36.
as a wife to his rival Väinämöinen. But Aino refuses to marry the old man and rather drowns herself. This story parallels Soini’s to some degree where also the Aino of the novel refuses to marry. Moreover, Aino is also the name of the writer of the probably first Finnish short story with queer content, Aino Malmberg. Hertta, in turn, is a direct reference to feminist literature. As mentioned in the chapter on Snellman, the most influential novel by the Swedish feminist and author Fredrika Bremer (1801–1865) is called *Hertha eller en Själs historia* (1856). The novel tells about the question of becoming a citizen, shaping the world and freeing women from being trapped in a family; the protagonist Hertha refuses to marry. It is not possible, as the book tells its readers, that life is fulfilled by marriage. Bremer, as Ulrika Kärnborg in her work on the author writes, aimed at depicting the motherly part within women who have no children – social motherhood, that is. Hertha is a school teacher, and it is those school-children she, as Aino in Soini’s novel, regards as her own; being a teacher is her share of motherhood. Moreover, Bremer aimed to influence the Swedish parliament with regard to the question of the political maturity of women. The novel raised a public discussion that was called the “Hertha-debate”, since it led finally to the decision of the Swedish parliament in the 1850s that also unmarried women became politically mature at the age of 25.\(^ {475}\) Soini’s character, then, most probably is depicted after a feminist role model, and she also struggles with many of the questions that Bremer’s novel raises, especially the question of motherhood. Here, it again becomes clear that Soini strove for more than being a merely entertaining author. She obviously had a clear agenda with her novel: she problematised the question of motherhood and marriage that both had become nationalist issues in the first decade after independence and had led to the tightening of women’s social role.

The attitude of the protagonist Hertta in *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit* towards the subject of social motherhood mirrors mostly the position of the Swedish feminist Ellen Key\(^ {476}\) in its demand of an absolute right for motherhood for every woman, married or not. Moreover, Key saw love and motherhood both as a possibility and an obligation; Elsa Soini seems to have adopted these thoughts almost directly, as *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit* on the

\(^{475}\) Kärnborg 2001, 140–146.

\(^{476}\) Ellen Key’s direct influence on Finland can be seen in the discussions about the term social motherhood, but also insofar as there have been relatively many translations of her works into Finnish at the turn of the 20\(^{th}\) century. While some within the women’s organisations, for example writers like Minna Canth or Alexandra Gripenberg, rejected Key’s ideas, the Finnish Naisasialiitto Unioni (Feminist Union) again responded positively to Key’s thoughts on “den nya sedligheten” (the new decency), since they themselves saw motherhood as an active and emancipatory act. Also the Martha organization partly adopted her ideas. The women from the educated classes saw a new kind of motherhood being outlined that was regarded as a particular cultural force and gave women the possibility to be active, as Kukku Melkas writes. Melkas makes another important point when she comes to speak about the effect of this emphasised motherhood on women as writers or artists: in the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century, there was no self-evident space for women to be artists; those, in contrast, who represented the new and active female artists were easily seen as a threat to the established orders. Writers like L. Onerva with her novel *Mirdja* or Maria Jotuni with the play *Tohvelisankarin rouva* (“The Henpecked Husband’s Lady”, 1924) who wrote about erotics and sexuality were not appreciated, since they violated dominating ideals like decency and purity. See Melkas 2006, 199; 64; 82.
surface suggests. Heterosexual love for Key was the most distinguished means to fight for a better society, and it was its goal. Hertta calls it God’s grace that she has received a child from her affair in America, but would not have wanted to marry the man. The thinking of her midwife parallels this idea of motherhood, too. For her, also following Key’s ideas, it is a greater misfortune when a woman has no child at all than when a young girl has an illegitimate one. Friendship between women, as Key on the other hand states, should never threaten the interest for men, it should always be “natural”, not erotic, so that the feelings and energy otherwise reserved for husband and children could be useful for society, as Eva Borgström in her critical analysis of Key writes. Such kind of a friendship also Aino and Hertta live. The friendship between women, the use of a woman’s love for another woman for Key helps to hold on to a feeling that would otherwise wither away. Rita Paqvalén, in contrast, writes that these ideas remind of the concept and the tradition of “romantic friendship”. Such a friendship between women was accepted between the 17th and the 19th century in Europe, as long as the women remained feminine and did not threaten men’s power; as long as women were seen (and behaving) as asexual, there was no threat – women wearing men’s clothes, however, was not accepted. With the emergence of sexology and psychoanalysis and the focus on women’s sexuality, the concept of romantic friendship came to an end. These romantic friendships, of course, could, but not necessarily needed to be also erotic or sexual ones, as it is the case in Soini’s novel. A new understanding of morality concerning both queerness and motherhood is undeniably on the way in the world of this novel, but the time is not ripe yet – and one has to bear in mind here that Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit was despite its clearly feminist ambitions aimed at a broader readership: Hertta, being unmarried, is punished with the loss of her child. Almost ironically, she gets married after the death of her baby – an option she had not even taken into consideration before. Sometime later, at the end of the novel, we get to know through Aino that she has born another child, so that her destiny as a woman is finally “fulfilled” and that she is happy, as Aino tells, but: within legal and morally accepted borders. Also here, Key’s ideas come in. In the work Missbrukad kvinnokraft (“Abused female power”, 1896), Key named motherhood as the means for women to be superior to men, who, again, are intellectually superior to women. In the same work, she also writes about gender equality and the dangers it would bring, since it would finally lead to the end of humankind. Key sees women’s task in developing their womanly characteristics at home, in the family, and then bring them into

477 Soini 1926, 259. “Jos tyttö saa lapsen, on se paljon pienempi vastoinkäyminen kuin jos nainen ei koskaan saa lasta.” (“It is a much smaller misfortune if a girl has a child than if a woman never has a child.”) Here, also Karin Smirnoff’s novel Under ansvar is worth mentioning. Already in 1915 (published by Schildts) it dealt with the topic of a woman having a child born out of wedlock. Smirnoff (1880–1973) was the daughter of August Strindberg.
478 Borgström 2008, 257; 271. Eva Borgström’s study focuses on desire between women in 19th century Swedish literature. Borgström sees same-sex desire as well as other forbidden desires as a constant threat haunting the background of Key’s writings and ideas, yet rarely really names them.
society. According to Borgström, this is for Key the way to change society and to participate in the development of humankind. Many of these thoughts appeared also in the writings of the Martha organization, and they are adopted by Soini who lets Hertta end in a traditional marriage with clearly defined roles.

The ending of *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit* then mirrors on its surface the prevailing ideas of the late 1920s within politics and society, as well as the ideas of the Martha organization: the expectations of women’s role in society tightened again and the ideal of the Martha organization, social motherhood, was no longer regarded as suitable. To fulfil her duty by being a teacher or a nurse was not necessarily enough for a woman any more. She had to give birth to a child to contribute to the continuation of the nation in times when right-wing politics were on the rise and the Great Depression was already in the air. And at least Hertta contributes in the morally and nationally requested way, even securing her position in society at the same time through marriage. As Cronvall rightly sums up, Soini’s novel on the one hand preaches the outward signs of modern urban life – travelling, American jazz, independent women –, but at the same time it repeats traditional moral values and roles for women, for example when Hertta leaves the married man as soon as she finds out about him being married, or when her illegitimate child dies. The impossibility to have a child born out of wedlock corresponds to the impossibility of divorces in Soini’s novels.

Aino, in contrast, is happy without a man, and she learns to appreciate the compensations the future has in store for her, although her life with Hertta has ended. Unsurprisingly, it is no bitter outlook on the future:

> Minun oli ilo herätä aamuisin työhön. [...] Minä olin onnellinen, sillä minun oli sallittu pysyä omassa valtakunnassani, minun oli sallittu valita ystäviä ja tulla itse valituksi. Minä olin onnellinen, sillä minun oli sallittu vanhentua ilman kapinaa, niinkuin vain miehistä riippumattomat naiset kykenevät vanhenemaan.

Also Aino’s destiny can be interpreted through the lens of Key’s ideas and Eva Borgström’s critical analysis of them. In a work on female psychology, Key also indirectly addresses the topic of homosexuality. She uses the concept of the manly woman – the lesbian? – to warn feminists: It is the manly woman’s appearance she wants to counteract, since it is her who threatens the order.

Women who did not fulfil their duties as mothers had to expect heavy seas ahead:

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481 Cronvall 2000, 116; 121.

482 Soini 1926, 269/270. “It was a joy for me to get up in the mornings and to go to work. [...] I was happy, because I was permitted to stay in my own empire; I was permitted to choose friends and to be chosen myself. I was happy, because I was permitted to get old without rebellion, just as women who are not dependent on men, are able to get old.”

Men det är ej endast lärarinnor, som bli förgrämda, färglösa och försvagade långt före ålderdomen. Mångfaldiga kvinnor, som kunde blomstrat upp på nytt i äktenskap, skola – om detta ej erbjuder sig – förr eller senare höra till de urspårade. Inre sjukdomar, hysteri, vansinne, perversitet, självmord bli följderna af “kulturens offerväsen”, som här har sin hemligaste ritus.484

Key emphasises here heteronormativity and reflects thereby the (non-emancipatory) spirit of the time. Important to mention here is the difference Key makes between motherhood and motherliness. It is the latter that is used in the word “samhällsmoderlighet”, that actually is social motherliness; Key defines the term motherliness as a cultural one that has nothing to do with biological motherhood. For Key, there is no natural motherly instinct, but motherly love comes from child rearing. She also points out that woman’s desire has nothing to do with motherhood, but lives its own life, independent of motherly instincts. In the focus of Key’s writings is then motherliness as a cultural phenomenon.485 Key’s concrete picture of the mother per se is not the one sacrificing herself for her children, but rather a mother who concentrates herself on her own development and is thus able to be the best possible example for her children. As Claudia Lindén notes,

[m]oderligheten i Keys version är inte en passivitet, utan en i högsta grad aktiv kraft med kapacitet att dana moraliska och politiska värden, ja, hela samhällen. [...] Ellen Keys kvinna lever i kulturen, hon kan förändras av den och skall framförallt – detta är påbudet – förändra kulturen. [...] Ellen Keys samhällsmoder är inte primärt vårdande, hon är en språklig och politisk kritiker mot ett samhälssystem som under skenet av det allmänna representerar ett manligt särintresse.486

It is the woman without children, then, who can function as a universalising principle, as Lindén calls it, since (only) she can transform motherliness from a biological function to a political one. The term “samhällsmoder” (“society’s mother”), then, becomes a metaphor for women’s political involvement in

484 Key 1903–1906, 164. “But it is not only female teachers who will become embittered, colourless and weakened long before they are old. A multitude of women who could have bloomed afresh within marriage will – if this possibility does not arise – sooner or later belong to the embittered. Inner diseases, hysteria, madness, perversity, suicide are results of the “being a victim of culture” that here has its most secret rite.”

485 Lindén 2002, 178–180. Lindén quotes Ellen Key here (Missbrukad kvinnokraft 1896, 186): “All tal om faran av att odla moderlighetskänslan beror på den oavlåtliga förväxlingen mellan moderskap och moderlighet.” Lindén takes a look at the development of motherly love, which had been “naturalised” by the time Key wrote, but it is by no means anything biological. She cites: “Vår tid lämnar mångfaldiga bevis för det faktum, att modersinstinkten lätt kan försvagas, ja, kan vara helt försfunnen, ehu du den erotiska driften fortlefver; att moderligheten sålunda ej är en naturinstinkt allena utan en produkt, icke årtusenden af barnafödande men af barnafostran.” See Ellen Key: Kvinnornas del i moralens utveckling, Stockholm 1920, 167.

486 Lindén 2008, 182. “Motherliness in Keys version does not mean passivity, but an active force in its highest power with the capacity to shape ethical and political values, yes, the whole society. [...] Ellen Key’s woman lives within the culture, she can be changed by it and especially – this is decreed – change the culture. [...] Key’s social mother is not primarily a caring one, she is a linguistic and political critic against a system of society that under the light of the common represents a manly special interest.”
Aino represents exactly this kind of woman: she does not need a man to be happy, and neither does she need children. Aino, then, does not have to decide between career and family; she rather belongs merely to herself until the end, without changing her vocation. Her place is not the home, as the bourgeois values emphasised in the 1920s; rather, she was ahead of her time and the ideas of the Martha organization that demanded women’s participation in society in the 1930s with the home as the point of origin. Aino can only ridicule Hertta. Still, also Aino’s life corresponds to and repeats the values and roles for women to some degree: she is the stereotypical spinster – a teacher, who even says herself that she is “a born spinster and therefore put into the most ideal position for a spinster – a pedagogue.”

Being a teacher may not be her vocation, since she was “made” into one. Therefore, also Key’s ideal of social motherhood does not necessarily fully apply to Aino. Nonetheless: the very last paragraph of the novel again reasserts the legitimacy of different ways of life for its main characters when Aino tells about the last time they met, at Hertta’s home, with her family. “I knew that Hertta watched the old spinster pitying, and I knew that Hertta knew that the old spinster watched her, the rural housewife, pitying, when we separated an hour later.” Both know that the other has kept or gained something she herself cannot have. Soini does not force her modern women to get married, but rather shows that the unmarried lead a life as legitimate as those that adjust themselves to set expectations; she shows alternatives, that is. And although Soini in many respects adopts Ellen Key’s ideas, it is in the character of Aino that we can also find opposite features. It is namely Aino who does not see a family as an option, but rather sees Hertta as her family. In Keys terms, this means she is taking away the energy reserved for men and childbearing, i.e. for society. However, neither for Soini’s characters nor for Key women’s sexual desire was dependent on motherhood. Rather, Soini lets her protagonists gain experiences outside marriage, without dooming them. Nor is Aino characterised as a threat to the social order, although she does not intend to get married. Soini, thus, discusses different perspectives on women’s role in society and strives to present alternatives within the novel.

This again lets me refer back to the topics of intelligibility and subversion dealt with earlier. As explained, subjection, in this case the subjection to set gender roles, always also implies the possibility of subversion by questioning heteronormative structures and thus rendering the unintelligible intelligible. When it is, as said, heterosexuality that needs to be the target of subversion, then Soini succeeds in this project maybe as much as it was possible at that time. Homosexuality is never openly mentioned in Soini’s novel, but it is a possibility for those who understood the hints at the time when it was written. It is especially in the conception of motherhood where Soini subverts...
predominant norms. Since, as presented earlier, when norms are questioned and thus become visible as norms – in Soini’s case motherhood as the duty for every woman, but only within marriage – these norms are in danger and as such already undermined and questioned. As I have already stated, it has to be heteronormativity itself that is the target when the aim is to subvert it. Soini shows that to subvert the heterosexual matrix means to repeat the regulatory practices that maintain it, but by altering their terms. Soini repeats the standards of motherhood, while she at the same time ironises them. Also with the direct references to Key’s ideas, which were accepted only in certain feminist circles at that time in Finland, Soini’s novel can be read as a critique of the prevailing norms of mother- and womanhood. Still, Soini does not go (and maybe could not have gone) further than questioning those norms. Yet, it is important to emphasise that although in terms of morals *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit* ends in traditional life models for one of the two protagonists, this traditional life model nevertheless remains an ironic return; while the alternative way of a same-sex relationship remains as a valid option.

Interesting in the discussion about marriage and motherhood in Soini’s novel is also its reception. Aarne Anttila in *Uusi Suomi* sees the final chapter as (sometimes intimidatingly) serious, with Hertta’s dead-born baby, and does not really fit to the happy beginning; he suggests that it would work better as a psychological novel. Nonetheless, he interprets the end as a happy ending for Hertta. Yet, I argue that it leaves Hertta trapped in marriage and unhappy – a perspective the book in my opinion emphasises with its ironic tone when the novel moves, as shown, to a meta-level and comments its own proceedings:


This passage of the novel is again a repetition and at the same time a subversion of the heterosexual matrix. Yet, the ironic turn is not recognised in the review, and neither is then the logic of the novel. Similar to the case of Pennanen’s reviews, the rhetoric of the closet also works here. In the expression that the “topic and manner of representation do not fit as an end” and the opinion that “it brings up a thankful contrast and problem, that should be dealt with in broader terms”, there is space for interpretation for the reader who knows to read between the lines and can unveil the meaning, but nothing

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490 Anttila, Aarne: “Kertomakirjallisuutta. Elsa Soini: Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit”, *Uusi Suomi* 24.11.1926. “Later, Hertta gets married with her land steward and lives – happily. Aino remains an old maid and spends her days as a teacher with neither anguish nor joy. The narrative of the last chapter is solid and secure, but its topic and manner of representation do not fit as an end to the gushing first part. In a flash it brings up a thankful contrast and problem that should be dealt with in broader terms. If it would be developed and deepened, it could become an independent psychological novel.”
is spoken out. In another review, the irony is understood but not appreciated, as in the newspaper *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* that rejects irony as a means to write for female authors:

Hänen [Soinin] kiistämätön lahjakkuutensa oikeuttaa meitä uskomaan hänen menestykseensä kirjailijattarenä, jos hän vain voi voittaa sentimentoaliisuuden-pelkonsa. Lempeys ja hellyys pukevat paremmin naista kuin puoli-iwallinen kriittillisyys. Todella lempää ja hellää nainen ei ole milloinkaan sentimentoaliinen, mutta puoli-iwallinen nainen on vanhapiika.⁴⁹¹

Again, certain expectations of what female authors should or should not do, are clearly expressed here. Irony and sarcasm, in the eyes of the reviewer, can be seen as an expression of frustration of a female author, since usually women are not “made” for these means of expression. It was up-coming authors like Soini who disabused these kind of critics who showed that there were no “male” and “female” features needed to be used by authors.⁴⁹²

Despite its discussion of different models of life and motherhood, *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit* also includes an interesting depiction of patriotic discourses. In the first part of the novel, the two heroines leave Finland to travel to America and to leave their disappointments behind them. Disappointments, however, lurk there, too. Both get unhappily involved with men, split up and return again to Finland, regretting the whole adventure: “I regret, do you hear me, Hertta, I regret every single breath I took in this country, every word, every move, every thought.’ [...] I was [...] the Aino who lived in Finland and who wanted to live there. This here was pure lie and pretence, and we had to get away from it.”⁴⁹³ Yet, the home they have left and sought to regain they cannot find any more.

Tämä ei huvisa ketään, eikö tota, tämä lopu. Se että tulimme kotiin, söimme tervetuliaispäivällisiä, joimme kahvia ja ryhdyimme taas työömme. Se suoraan sanoen ei huivittanut minuakaan. Se oli vielä pahemmin sekamelskaa kuin menneisyys. Se ei ollut sitä, mitä olin odottanut. [...] Mutta kuka käskee meitä vaatimaan ihmheitä, vaikka olisikin kysymys rakkaasta rakkaasta Suomenmaasta ja sen yhtä rakkaita asujaimista.⁴⁹⁴

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⁴⁹¹ E.J.: “Naisten romaani”, *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, 21.12.1926. “Her [Soini’s] undisputed talent gives us the right to believe in her success as a writer, if she only can vanquish her fear of sentimentality. Kindness and affection suit a woman better than half-sarcastic critique. A really kind and affectionate woman is never sentimental, whereas a half-sarcastic women is a spinster.”

⁴⁹² One might even go as far and say that Soini herself, with using certain means in writing, queered her authorship. Following Butler, “[t]he presuppositions that we make about sexed bodies, about them being one or another, about the meanings that are said to inhere in them or to follow from being sexed in such a way are suddenly and significantly upset by those examples that fail to comply with the categories that naturalise and stabilise that field of bodies for us within the terms of cultural conventions.” Butler 1999, 140.


⁴⁹⁴ Soini 1926, 243. “This does not amuse anyone, this end, does it? That we came home, ate our welcoming-dinner, drank coffee, and undertook our work again. Truth be told, it didn’t amuse me, either.
In the end, Aino and Hertta realise that Finland is the place where they belong to. The decision to return home proves right: It is in Finland where everything is finally put in order, where they settle down and are apparently happy, each in her own way. This short episode of Soini’s novel might be seen as an indicator of the gradually changing atmosphere within the literary field from the proverbial opening of the windows towards Europe (or America) in the 1920s with entertaining literature, as discussed earlier, to turning the attention inwards again. Soini’s protagonist travel back home, disappointed from the world outside Finland. They have, however, to accept, that their home-country has changed as well, although not so much that they could not have got accustomed to it again in the end. This episode, moreover, has also an autobiographical touch: Soini returned to Finland after having been there due to the work of her husband.

Four years after *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit*, Soini wrote another novel called *Uni* (“Dream”/ “Uni”) that very obviously questions traditional gender roles. Its female protagonist Uni Tammer is very modern and independent and works on her doctoral thesis in literature. Uni feels herself more like a man than a woman, and so the novel begins right away with the following sentences: “I am like a man. I was raised as a man, I have the position and income of a man, and I think like a man. This is not an accolade – hopefully – , it is a confession, since I have two sisters who are married, which is why I know very well how beautiful it is to be a woman.” Although she is not as masculine as men are, since she does not like to buy cars or boats and take care of them, it is not something to be proud of, either, she tells the reader. Uni finds herself in a dilemma. She fears at the same time that she is a woman, since she is concerned about the fact “ [...] that a woman is blind and deaf towards facts that a woman feels instead of doing research. I wonder from which atavistic chaos of thinking this suspicion might hail from.” Uni knows on the one hand that this fear is rather obsolete, but on the other hand she cannot help thinking that way.

The plot of the novel circles both around Uni’s research, her fears that it arouses, and around her being different from the other young women she knows who are mostly concerned with finding a husband. Also Uni has boyfriends, although she sees them not as central to her life, when all she concentrates on is her dissertation. Finally, she falls in love with a man.

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495 Soini 1930, 7. “Minä olen kuin mies. Olen saanut miehen kasvatuksen, minulla on miehen virka ja tulot ja ajattelen kuin mies. Tämä ei ole kehumista – toivotavasti – tämä on tunnustus, sillä minulla on kaksi sisärtä, jotka ovat naimisissa, joten tiedän varsin hyvin, kuka kaunista on olla nainen.”

496 Soini 1930, 13. “[...] että nainen ei voi tehdä tiedettä, että nainen on sokea ja kuuro tosiasioille, että nainen tuntee sen sijaan että tuntisi. Mistähän atavistisesta ajatuskaoksesta tuo epäilyä mahtoikan olla kotoisin?”

497 The topic of a young woman devoting her life to her academic career was not uncommon in literature written by women in the end of the 1920s. Another example is the novel *Stud. Chem. Helene Willfüer* (1928) by the Austrian writer Vicki Baum (1888–1960), translated into Finnish in 1930 by the author Joel Lehtonen and published also by Otava. In the novel, a young woman lives in poverty to finish
younger than herself called Erkki. He, however, is only looking for friendship and rejects her. As in other novels by Soini, also here the name, Uni, is significant. Uni refers to several aspects: first, in Finnish the word means dream and can be interpreted as Uni dreaming about her future as an independent woman, but also as someone who does not necessarily see the realities of her possibilities, but rather dreams. But Uni can also refer to the word “universal” which means true at all times, including all; it also is a short form of “university”. Uni, then, cannot be limited to one identity only, but has several of which all are equally true and valid.

Typical of the time the novel was written, Uni is concerned with her body, i.e. a healthy body that is fit for work. She also adores young and beautiful people, independent of their sex, if not even women more than men. At the same time, she doubts that this adoration especially for girls might not be normal:


Uni is aware of the possibility of same-sex desire, but she still wonders what it is she feels for girls, since she does not see herself as abnormal, as the prevailing moral discourses saw same-sex desire. Thus, having adored the statue of Hermes, she cannot be abnormal. Her dilemma is silence: no one speaks about such things, and therefore she cannot be sure whether also other women feel the same way. Uni, who is the narrator of the novel, suddenly interacts here with the reader and predicts what she might immediately think when reading about her adoration for girls. It is abnormality what comes into mind, she suggests. The reader, then, might on the one hand feel caught by her own prejudices and needs to question her attitude towards the topic of same-
sex desire. But on the other hand, the reader might not even have thought about this possibility, but is now, since Uni introduces the topic of “abnormality”, forced to think about it. Ritva Hapuli, moreover, notes that this passage also shows how worrying it seems to have been at that time if one was labelled as lesbian/abnormal and how suspicious a mere glance at the same sex might have been. The worst threat women could be found guilty of was the accusation of refusing both husband and motherhood. Sexuality, in the end, still needed to be directed towards fulfilling the ideal of motherhood and was not accepted as a desire in itself. Same-sex desire, although an option for Uni, has to be rejected to keep up the decency of the novel, and Soini does this quite cleverly here. She names the option of same-sex desire – she names the taboo, that is – and also leaves it as an option by letting Uni emphasise that she is not abnormal. Moreover, Uni corresponds to the figure of the New Woman: she is a mixture between the “poikaneito” who still has preserved her female features and her coquetry, with which she succumbs to men, and some ingredients of the “garçonne” who has self-esteem and is financially independent, while doing work that men usually do. Uni, thus, might be seen (also without in the end necessarily being attracted to women) as a potential threat to the order of society with her little interest in men, and those she finds either reject her or they are married.

While *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit* ends, despite the disappointments the protagonists have experienced, in an ironic and almost happy way and questions the standards of human relations, *Uni* finds a much gloomier ending. After being rejected by Erkki and at the same time feeling abnormal because of her undefined feelings for women, Uni begins an affair with a married man. She gets depressed and wants to die, but cannot. She feels like a machine, even calls herself “koneminä”, “machine-me”. Having chosen this condition, she is not even able to be unhappy any more, she is without any feelings. The novel thus ends in despair that leads to death: Uni takes her own life. The time or society, the novel suggests, is not yet ripe for a modern woman like Uni: she wants to have a career and to be loved, she wants to be independent and be cared for at the same time, and she has an affair with a married man. And on top of that there is the possibility of same-sex desire:

Minun pitäisi langeta polvilleni piikkimatlolle, paljaille polvilleni, ja rukoilla anteeksi itseltäni, minulta, Uniiltä, että olen hänet tähän johtanut avoimoin silmin ja naurnassa suin, kädestä pitäen johtanut sille kapealle kivipolulle, joka vie minut

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499 Hapuli 1995, 162.
500 Interestingly, Olavi Paavolainen notes still another phenomenon the novel addresses – and one he sees as more “dangerous for the culture” than the flapper-girl. In his analysis of the character of Erkki, a modern gigolo, he comes to the conclusion that Erkki can live in no other way than in the atmosphere of love and being loved, but at the same time his more manly erotic instincts have become blunt in this atmosphere. Olavi Paavolainen: “Elsa Soinin uusi kirja”, *Helsingin Sanomat* 9.11.1930.
She blames herself to have chosen the wrong way by having left the secure path of her studies; there is nothing wrong with society, but rather with Uni herself. That is how far light fiction was able to go in 1930, one may then conclude. It does not lead to women’s happiness when they choose the wrong way in the form of education and self-fulfilment outside heteronormative standards, and neither does it lead to happiness when they choose married men. Family still is the ideal in Uni’s world. That Uni in the end dies also indicates that the demands for literature were tighter again than four years earlier: women’s duty in society was to return to home and family.

It is also noticeable that both novels address the topic of adultery; in both cases it is destructive, as it needed to be within the prevailing value system that saw decency as the most important feature in women, being linked to religion, sexuality and motherhood. Nevertheless, both novels show Soini’s critical attitude towards the prevailing values of the time and towards the role and position women are supposed to have within society on a broader scale. She questions and criticises both women’s lower possibilities for education or for going to work equal to men, and the heteronormative standard of gender roles and expectations with regard to women, motherhood and marriage. In her use of the genre of light fiction that is spiced with comments on important topics within the women’s organisations, she makes an ironic commentary on the genre and the traditional ideas of what belongs to a certain genre and in which way it is narrated. At the same time, the genre of light fiction enabled Soini to reach a readership that would otherwise not necessarily have read novels dealing with the questioning of gender roles in such an explicit way. However, that Soini’s way of dealing with these topics was not necessarily praised by the critics was rather obvious, as the writer and poet Arvi Kivimaa immediately observed in a letter to Soini after having read Uni:


\footnote{Soini 1930, 265. “I should fall on my knees on a bed of nails, on my bare knees, and pray for forgiveness from myself, from me, Uni, that I have led her with eyes open and laughter in my mouth, hands—on to this narrow stone-path that takes people like me directly to hell, away from the broad asphalt streets of everyday life that I wandered happily for so many years.”}

\footnote{SKS/KIA: Elsa Soinin arkisto, Leikekokoelma: Elsa Soini, 150/151, A.A.: Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit. “It is such objectivity [...] that we need. To see through things and over them — this is the prerequisite of great genius. Uni is, quite quietly speaking, one of the important novels of our modern literature. It might happen that the critics won’t realise this fact. [...] Your triumph is not only the one of}
Kivimaa’s estimation proved right; Soini was appreciated for these works mostly after her death. I also agree with his appraisal of Soini being a moralist in a rather positive sense: her works show her concern with moral principles and she questions set moral values when she for example depicts characters who are uncertain about their own sexuality as Uni is – although the end result of her books rather often (and due to the fact that she had the broader public as a target group in her mind?) end in a conciliatory way with the set standards. At the most, they end with irony like Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit; at the least, however, with the suicide of the protagonist whose life has gotten out of control, like Uni’s. That her books were defined as light fiction, however, enabled those who labelled them as such to leave out some of the dimensions they include, for example the critique of prevailing norms. “By talking about jolly foolishness, the danger could be fended off that there was something very true about it as well: tradition- and myth-breaking, new creative aspects”503, as Päivi Lappalainen states. The use of that genre, it seems then, made it possible for Soini to undermine set values and ideologies, to play with them and ironise them, and to be published by Otava with its focus on light fiction that was at that time hardly influenced by the values of the Church.

The reviews Uni received were mostly more affirmative than those about Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit; they acknowledge Soini's cleverness and liveliness in writing. However, also negative points were emphasised, e.g. that the I-narrator would hinder objectivity, and, regarding the depictions of eroticism, that the story would not feel real; Aamulehti, however, credits the Finnishness of the novel with which it would defend its place as entertaining literature side by side with foreign ones, while Kansan Lehti interestingly describes the character of Uni as one from hundred years back in her helplessness concerning love matters and disappointments.504 The most positive one was written by Olavi Paavolainen in Helsingin Sanomat: he credits Soini’s novels with a modern appeal that derives from a healthily sensual relation to all phenomena in life and compares Soini to Waltari: “Besides Elsa Soini, no one except Mika Valtari knows how to get the same vivacity full of sense and a piquant modern power into their works.”505 Paavolainen especially honours her fearlessness and her talent to see the phenomena of decadence in the bourgeois circles of the Helsinki elite; but also her modern way of dealing with her female characters impresses him: “Many middle-aged women have lived a love tragedy like Uni’s in all times – new is simply […] that she falls down from such a height – from her independent position, her work and her proud self-assertion – just as a man in novels of the

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old days.” And Paavolainen goes on in his praise of Soini’s best book in his opinion: “Elsa Soini was brave. She has described an erotic tragedy in her book that is based on the most modern factors with such long-sightedness that all the new rationalist sexual psychologists and -physiologists come to mind.”

In the newspaper Suomen Sosialidemokraatti, Soini is praised for being almost the only female author of the younger generation who has stayed away from tender-hearted mush or presenting herself as an unintelligent big mouth. The reviewer praises the novel for its style, characters and its modern topic, but at the same time turns out quite misogynist in his praise when he continues with comparing Soini to other female authors of her generation: “Concerning the logic moves, not many females can beat her, she is able to aptly and sharply solve also the most difficult tasks of the intellect. [...] In her succinct message is almost male power.” Yet, also this review expresses a clearly misogynist attitude towards female authors. The amount of such reviews shows that it was still difficult for women to be taken seriously as writers, and thus it was all the more difficult for them to also get published at all. Yet, the queer aspect is not named in the reviews, which means again a silence on the part of the media that did not see it as worth writing about at all, or mentioned it between the lines, as Paavolainen did, whose review that refers to sexual psychologists and hereby to the queerness of the protagonist, also is a representative of the rhetoric of the closet that at the same time reveals and covers the queer topic.

Otava’s archive does not give any insights into whether the topics of these novels were a topic of discussion. As Otava’s archivist stated, in the 1920s, the board of directors did not discuss decisions about the publishing of singular books any longer, so that only the decisions are documented, not the discussion. This concerns especially fiction. In general, the minutes contain only a list of the books that were accepted for publishing – no reasons or information about rejected books. Moreover, authors who lived in the metropolitan area usually are missing from the archive, because the communication with them was mostly managed verbally. Since it was not possible for me to get access to the archive myself, it is difficult to say whether there really is no relevant material. But of what we know in the case of Soini’s two novels, the archive only tells about their acceptance for being published.

Since Soini’s books were regarded as light fiction, it was easier for them to discuss queerness. This genre was not seen as important for the building of a national identity and had no value in the eyes of a literary elite that

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508 Tiina Pirttimäki: E-mails from 17.5.2010 and 7.5.2010.
concentrated itself on classics and the building of a national canon. The use of the genre, combined with the subtness of the approach to queer topics helped as well, as suggested in the introduction, for her cultural survival as an author. But on the other hand, books like Soini’s were more likely to be read by the broader readership that through reading also learned about values and received alternative role models. In this respect, light fiction was exactly the right place to question heteronormative values.

### 3.4 New Women in a Corrupt World

This chapter focuses on two novels by Mika Waltari (1908–1979), *Suuri illusioni* (“The Great Illusion”, 1928) and *Yksinäisen miehen junan* (“A Lonely Man’s Train”, 1929), both published by WSOY. They contrast Pennanen's and Soini’s works and rather parallel the general notions within contemporary Finnish society concerning queerness. Interestingly enough, they both contain female characters that coquet with same-sex desire. Both novels, moreover, are based on or refer to characters that really existed and whom Waltari got to know.

Mika Waltari has become one of the best-known Finnish authors of the 20th century with his historical novel *Sinuhe egyptsiläinen* (1945, *The Egyptian*). The novel was translated into English in 1949 and made into a Hollywood film in 1954, directed by Michael Curtiz. Waltari’s oeuvre consists of novels, poems, short stories, theatre plays and film scripts – he was a very productive writer with about 40 publications of which his historical novels and crime-books about Inspector Palmu were translated into many languages and are still read.509 *Suuri illusioni* was his début novel in 1928 and quickly followed by the travel-fiction-book *Yksinäisen miehen junan* in 1929. Compared to Waltari’s success with his readers, his works have been studied comparatively little; only in recent years has he been found as an object of research. One of the few earlier researchers, Ritva Haavikko, studied Waltari’s works as well as interviewed him already in the 1970s. Panu Rajala wrote a large biography with the title *Unio Mystica* in 2008, which, however, is not very useful for research, since it lacks many references and is aimed at a large, non-academic public. The reason why Waltari had been studied so little can be attributed to his image as a writer of mostly light fiction, an image that has changed only late, as also research itself has changed and regards no material any more as “non-researchable”. In 1994, Markku Envall has systematically studied Waltari’s novels, and also Taru Tapioharju’s doctoral thesis on Waltari and the concept of the New Woman is partly of use for this study; however, it concentrates more on narrative elements than on character-painting; publishing is no issue here, and neither are the queer dimensions.510 The only article that shortly takes up the queer dimensions in *Suuri illusioni* is written

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509 For more biographical details, see Rajala 2008.
Suuri illusioni tells about a young man, a journalist called Hart, who gets to know the intellectual circles in Helsinki at the end of the 1920s. He lives with his little brother whom he takes care of after the death of their mother. Right in the beginning of the novel, he meets an acquaintance, the journalist Korte, who invites him to a salon in the apartment of a woman called Madame Spindel. Hart is introduced to several new people, amongst others Hellas, a writer, and Caritas, a young and attractive woman. Hart is fascinated by her and falls head over heels in love with her. They kiss once, then she is gone. She has gone to Europe, as he gets to know, where she spends many months per year. Hart is desperate, waiting for a sign from her that she at least has not forgotten him. When he finds out that she spends her summer in Paris, he travels there, after his life’s “great illusion”, as he calls his fascination for Caritas. Already on the first evening he meets another Finn who even has Caritas’ address. Hart and Caritas meet and confess their love for each other; they even are about to sleep with each other, but Caritas then refuses and says that she wants to keep their relationship pure. She also tells Hart that it is actually Hellas who has been the only person in her life she has ever loved. Hart meets Hellas, who is in Paris as well and who tells him finally that he loves Caritas but has refused to be with her because of his sickness. A sickness – syphilis, supposedly – he has not told anyone about before and with which he was infected by the first woman he had slept with. He did not want to spoil Caritas’ life, and so he had left her. Caritas and Hellas nevertheless meet in Paris and confess their love for each other. Hellas promises her to marry her, but kills himself in the same night. Hart goes back to Finland, his big illusion being destroyed, but still with hope for his own future.

Suuri illusioni is not only a detailed description of the time when it was written and is set in, but it also gives attention to the moral values within the bourgeois-minded circles of the intellectual elite in Helsinki. Especially religion and love and the protagonist’s attitude towards them, but also the ideal of youth and its possibilities are in the focus; the latter especially within the mind of the protagonist Hart who idealises his little brother and his generation that symbolises the future hope. As Markku Envall states, the awareness of time and generation is very strong in the novel; the borders between older generations and the one of the novel’s protagonist are solid, as well as those between the time of those who have experienced the Civil War and the First World War and the present generation of the novel that is too young for this experience. One characteristic of the novel is its many dialogues in which these topics are examined. Moreover, Suuri illusioni renewed the novel writing of the time with its depiction of city-life-style of both

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511 Karkulehto 2011, 209–210. Karkulehto observes that the two male protagonists, Hart and Hellas, in their competition about Caritas not only form a triangle-situation, but – referring to Kosofsky Sedgwick’s theory on love triangles, as I also did earlier – also intensify their mutual feelings towards each other; one might even say that these feelings are of erotic nature.

512 Envall 1994, 14.
Helsinki and Paris: before, it mostly was an agrarian milieu that served as the setting of novels originally written in Finnish.⁵¹³

*Suuri illusioni* is central in the context of this study, since it deals with the phenomenon of the New Woman and includes a female character that can be defined as queer: it is the infamous Madame Spindel who holds a literary salon to which Hart is invited one evening right in the beginning of the novel. She is an exemplary character of what I have defined as queer, namely being at odds with heterosexual norms and exploring representations which serve to question the conventional equation between heterosexuality, reproductive sexuality and female identity. Already her name is telling, it is destructive and means spider in Swedish, indicating thus a plotting character. Madame Spindel is a vague figure that is difficult to grasp in many ways. The character presents herself as dubious, interested in men as well as in women, treating both sexes with the same threatening charm. Thus, she is a representative character of a phenomenon that appeared already in the 19th century, namely the figure of the female vampire who tries to destroy her victims after having seduced them. Ritva Hapuli has analysed where this idea of the female vampire has its origin:

> Vaarallisen ja tuhoisan naiseuden ympärille kietoutuukin useita kysymyksiä, kuten naisten esittämät tasa-arvoisuusvaatimukset, naisten astuminen julkisuuteen ja sen synnyttämät eritasoiset uhat. Samoin kuvastosta on luettavissa käsityksiä seksuaalisuudesta, naiseuden ja miehisyyden määrittelystä sekä näihin sisällyvistä ristiriitaisuuksista. [...] Lisäksi vampyrismiin liitetään usein homoseksualisuus ja aristokraattinen dekadenssi.

Madame Spindel combines all of this: she is successful, on the same level with men, that is, and a woman of the public who holds salons – an aristocratic, decadent woman par excellence. At the same time, she is described as dangerous because of her non-conventional and very active sexuality when she immediately tries to captivate Hart “with the smile of a middle-aged woman, which contains plenty of vague promises and a vague pessimism. – I had of course heard about her a lot. She was rumoured to have certain abnormal dispositions, and she tried with all the possibilities she had to also maintain these rumours.”⁵¹⁴

These “abnormal dispositions” are explained in more detail shortly after that, when Madame Spindel approaches the beautiful, young Caritas. “She came and laid her hand around Caritas’ waist. – I didn’t quite realise that I
happened to think about the fact whether there might be some basis to what people had told about her. An unpleasant feeling overcame me, as if I had touched something soft and cold in the darkness.”\(^\text{516}\) This unpleasant feeling when the protagonist thinks about the mere possibility of Madame Spindel being attracted to another woman gets even stronger in the course of the evening. “Madame Spindel had come close to me. She came unnecessarily close and laughed unnecessarily loud about Korte’s speeches. Again her perfume reached my nostrils. I tried to remember its name, but I didn’t remember such things. Something about Madame Spindel left a crude mark. I had the feeling that she was in some way dirty.”\(^\text{517}\) Hart comes back to this image again 40 pages later, as if he would like to emphasise the characteristics of women like Madame Spindel: “Madame Spindel was a hysterical, old woman and Korte had stayed up all night and nursed her, although there might have been something else, too, of course. – Madame Spindel, again, possessed something dirty, something beastly. She was coldly and damply shining and hot...”\(^\text{518}\) Also these beast-like characteristic can be interpreted as belonging to the female vampire figure. The unpleasant feeling that Hart has, the threat Madame Spindel seems to be – these are features typical for the female vampire who is the antipode of the decent, married woman. Female vampires with their threatening sexuality, as Hapuli notes, imply sexuality outside marriage. The figure of the female vampire is situated outside this institution and thus represents uncontrollable desire.\(^\text{519}\) And the character of Madame Spindel is not only set outside this institution, but coquettes with same-sex desire. It is a character that wants to be understood as scandalous and decadent and who does not want to be a part of “normalcy”. Rather, this character shows that she does not need the framework of society and does not even aim at being a part of it.

Interestingly, the research and literature both on Waltari and on Minna Craucher, as her “official”, but also invented name was, do not mention this quite obvious feature in the character of Madame Spindel. A biography of the real Minna Craucher written by the historian Kari Selén, for example, cites the same passages as I have cited above, but does not make any conclusions. He rather remains on the level of description, only saying that Waltari emphasised the mysterious evil in the character.\(^\text{520}\) In a review by V.A. Koskenniemi in the magazine \textit{Valvoja-Aika} her “certain abnormal dispositions” are also named, but Koskenniemi does not go further into the topic, either. Maybe because he

\(^{\text{516}}\) Waltari 1928, 12. “Hän tuli ja laski kätenään keväästi Caritaksen vyötäisille. – Tulin aivan huomaamattani ajatelleeksi, oliko mitään perää niissä jutuissa, joita hänestä kerrottiin. Epämiellyttävä tunne puristi sydänalaani, aivankuin pimeässä olisi koskettanut jotakin pehmeää ja kylmää.”


\(^{\text{518}}\) Waltari 1928, 73. “Rouva Spindel oli hysteerinen, vanha nainen ja Korte oli valvonut yön ja hoidellut häntä, vaikka tietysti siinä saattoi olla muutakin. – Rouva Spindelissä taas oli jotakin likaista, jotakin eläimellistä. Hän oli kylmän ja kostean kiltävää ja kuumaa...”

\(^{\text{519}}\) Hapuli 1997, 123–124.

\(^{\text{520}}\) Selén 2010, 90.
also doubts that the characters Waltari depicts can be taken realistically; he was not convinced of the book, but did not dislike it either. The queer aspects of the book are, however, not mentioned: “The characters of the book do not step as living ones in front of us, all are like lyric projections of the author’s own sentimental moods. [...] Are his aestheticising and lovemaking and the boozed ladies and their gallants in a broader sense representative of the generation who will once inherit this land? I do not think this is probable.”

In his memoirs that came out one year after his death, Waltari himself came back to the character of Madame Spindel/Minna Craucher. Her salon in Helsinki had gathered especially the members of the group Tulenkantajat. She had undoubtedly made an impression on young writers, since there are several novels that use her person as the background to a character, besides Waltari’s also, for example, Joel Lehtonen’s Rakastunut rampa (1922). She was a petty criminal and also involved in the Lapua Movement until she was shot in 1932. Waltari was invited to her salon as a young man, too. At the end of his life, he still bore bad memories of that time:

Ylipäänsä hän osasi bluffata ihmisiä häikäilemättömällä käytöksellään. Minä en ainakaan tuntenut häneen minkäänlaista eroottista vetoa, se oli täydellisesti vierasta. Hän käytti minua jonkinlaisena apulaisena, toisin sanoen hän käytti minua hyväksseen, ja minulle koitui siitä paljon henkilökohtaisia ikävyyksiä. [...] Minna Craucher oli erittäin voimakastahtoinen sanokaamme huijari. Vasta myöhemmin tajusin, että olin joutunut henkilökohtaisesti tutustumaan ihmiseen, jolta puuttui täydellisesti ns. moraalinen vaisto.

This lack of a moral instinct and indecency are also ascribed to the character of Madame Spindel. It is expressed by characterising her as dirty – his description of a feeling of dirtiness corresponds not so much to her outer appearance than to her depraved character that includes all sorts of immoralities. The quote, probably written many decades after his meetings with Minna Craucher, shows the deep mark she had left on Waltari; it is no wonder then, that her appearance in the novels is so negative. Nonetheless, it is striking that it was precisely same-sex desire he used as the means to turn her into a negative fictional character, and not, for example, her criminal background.

The reasons why such a dubious and queer figure like Madame Spindel was rather natural to appear in a novel seems rather clear: the image of the lesbian figure that is aroused by Waltari’s depiction is by all means negative and it at


522 Haavikko 1980, 160. “On the whole she knew how to bluff people with her ruthless behaviour. I at least felt by no means erotically attracted to her; this was totally foreign to me. She used me as some kind of an assistant, in other words she abused me, and this caused me many personal troubles. [...] Minna Craucher was a, let’s say, fraud with a very strong will. Only later I understood that I had made the personal acquaintance of a person who had no moral instinct whatsoever.”
the same time continues the tradition of lesbian characters of French decadent literature, like in works by Zola or Baudelaire. It is connected to dirtiness, crime and decadent life. It is indecency in an unsympathetic character that restores/ confirms prevailing ideas about the moral decency of women. Madame Spindel’s character functions as a deterrent that no one would like to be compared to. The idea behind parallels to some degree Soini’s character Uni who by no means wants to be brought into connection with anything “abnormal” – being labelled as abnormal was nothing anyone would have been able to afford. Uni, however, is different from Madame Spindel in this respect, since, as Hellas observes, Spindel might not even be interested in women, but rather plays with the idea of being it to distinguish herself from the other women to make herself interesting: “Madame Spindel would, for example, be terribly insulted if I revealed that she tries to make herself interesting by spreading a certain reputation...”523 Uni’s denial of being different on the one hand, and Madame Spindel’s deliberate play with being different on the other hand then seem to demonstrate the same fact expressed by two different characters: Uni, a rather pure and sympathetic young, well-educated woman contrasts in her whole being the bad-mannered and unsympathetic Madame Spindel who does not care about her reputation and even provokes the thought of her being different and “dangerous” for the people around her. She willingly is the anti-type of her time.

The topic of female homosexuality, I argue, appeared not without reason in Waltari’s works. It was not only a means to characterise Madame Spindel, whose real-life model Waltari despised. Waltari had also acquainted himself with the scientific thoughts of the time about homosexuality in his master’s thesis on the relationship between religion and eroticism which he finished in the same year when Suuri illusioni was published. Part of his material was, for example, Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s work Psychopathia Sexualis. Yet, besides his knowledge of the discussions about sexuality, homosexuality as Waltari depicted it did not correspond to modern ideas as being one feature of the human being, but as a sign of degeneration. His characters show clear borders between the features of a decent woman and those of an evil one.524

Also the other female characters in the novel are not necessarily sympathetic ones. Caritas, in contrast to her name that means charity, compassion or dearness, is also negatively described as a woman who has had many men and who flirts with everyone. She herself sees these features as part of herself being a modern human being, a woman who is equal to men. She is, as Envall observes, at the same time both the woman of all dreams, and the symbol of the evils of the time.525 Yet, her features are described by ridiculing

523 Waltari 1928, 32. “Rouva Spindel esimerkiksi loukkaantuisi verisesti, jos minä paljastaisin, että hän yrittää tehdä itsensä intesäntisi levittämällä ympärilleen eräänlaista mainetta...”
524 Järvelä 2006, 9; 83–84. For Krafft-Ebing, same-sex attraction is inborn; he categorises women who are attracted by women into four categories: 1) they are attracted by mannish women; 2) they like male clothes; 3) they like male clothes and have taken a male role; 4) hermaphrodites. See Fjelkestam 2002, 98. 525 Envall 1994, 20. The name is also associated with religion and asexuality.
her opinion, as I will show below. Caritas nevertheless has sympathetic features; one can read her as a very unhappy character who gets involved with men only because of her unrequited love for Hellas. There are, moreover, only very few female characters in the novel – one more is mentioned by Hellas, although she does not appear herself. Also her character is endowed with negative features: “Hart, you certainly remember how I once told you about my youth, – about this woman, who awoke the devil in me. [...] Well, now you may hear it: she was sick, – and she knew it! – Say, can one imagine such a possibility, – such a lust to destroy as she had in her. See, she did it on purpose...” These are almost all the female characters in Waltari’s novel, and they do not give the finest picture of women: It is women who destroy men, women who are impure and get involved with many men (but who still are beautiful and tragic), women who are dirty, criminal, dubious and maybe also attracted by their own sex. Ritva Haavikko, who has even analysed Waltari’s female characters, interestingly had nothing to say about the non-heterosexual features in the characters of Madame Spindel or Caritas. Otherwise, her analysis of the female characters is sharp: they are described by an I-narrator for whom women regularly operate calculatingly with their charms and powers, i.e. they are cruel. Madame Spindel and Caritas also have common features. In the beginning, when Hart meets them in Spindel’s salon, they are both depicted as the dangerous New Women, although Caritas also right in the beginning has some more innocent features. She has, as Taru Tapioharju observes, the role of the modern woman of the world who carries both virtue and evil in herself.

In Suuri illusioni, we can also find a triangle constellation that is connected to the queer side-plot: Hart loves Caritas, Caritas loves Hellas (but plays with Hart), Hellas loves Caritas (but cannot be with her). Caritas is also a favourite of Madame Spindel, while she herself seems not to be disturbed by Madame Spindel’s (playful?) approach to her during her salon-evening. The triangle here, however, is a more heteronormative and traditional one than those in Pennanen’s play, since it mainly circles around the two male characters and one female, the latter being connected to queerness by the rather one-sided approach by Madame Spindel. The modernist author Elmer Diktonius in his review of the novel even remarked on this heterosexual triangle constellation. He called the book modern, being something new in Finland with its honest description of society, although comparable to Paul Morand’s works: “It is written fluidly, but composed loosely, its main topic – the erotic triangle: two men and a woman – is as old as the hills, but it is not his depiction of characters

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528 Tapioharju 2010, 80.
either that brings him the victory, but being a quite honest flasher of a rotten body and a wicked conscience of a sick time.”

Yet, it is mostly the female characters of the novel that are used to describe the sickness of the time. The male characters are rather young, idealistic men who are lonely, orphans who have much less experience than the women they fall in love with and who therefore often take advantage of these men. Again, Caritas is a good example here. She takes advantage of the young and rather pitiable journalist Hart in Suuri illusioni, since she wants to make the object of her love, Hellas, jealous. As Tapioharju states, the male experience of women in the novel is to a large degree mere theory, and they talk a lot about this theory. Moreover, the men are rather patriarchal in their attitude towards women. Caritas is often not taken seriously when she talks in the salon meetings, or by men she has met. The main male characters, in contrast to the female, are all tragic and suffer: Hart from the loss of his big illusion, but also from the time that is corrupt, as well as from his (still young) age; Hellas, again, suffers from his sickness, but also from his tragic destiny that he has found the woman of his life and is not able to be with her. It is Hart’s younger brother, however, who strongly embodies hope and the future: he is young and able to transform the corrupt times, as Hart sees it, and he also has a relationship with a young girl that is pure and equipped with the right values. She is a woman of the new generation, a pure example of the New Woman, interested in films and motorcycles. And she is the only positive female character in the novel, as Tapioharju has observed, as well as the only female character whose outer looks are described in every detail. All the features of the New Woman are elaborately ascribed to her, all her looks indicate it: boyish body, brisk, short hair, powder in her face. The motivation for this figure, then, lies in her function as an ideal of the future, rather than being a real character of the novel; she does not even have a name. As Tapioharju notes, she rather is “the man’s ideal of the future”.

There were only a few contemporary reactions to the character of Madame Spindel. The reviews of the novel do not mention her, but Olavi Paavolainen criticised Waltari in his work Suursiivous eli kirjallisessa lastenkamarissa for his moral attitude. He also accused writers like Waltari of being unaware of or uninterested in the problems of the time. According to Paavolainen, many writers had got stuck in their teenage years, fearing the fall of mankind. He also notes the relation to family values within the literary production of his contemporaries; also Waltari and his novels are the target of this comment:

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531 Tapioharju 2010, 72–73.

532 Tapioharju 2010, 95–96. ”Tyttö on enemmänkin miehen ideaali tulevasta kuin tarinan henkilö.” Tapioharju 2010, 96. For the detailed description of the girl, see for example the first meeting between Hart and her see Waltari 1928, 159.
Ja jos he ratkaisevat tämän nautintoelämänprobleeminsa, kuuluu resepti: paluu vanhaan kunnialliseen perhemoraaliin. [...] Ei suinkaan uudenaikaista nuorisoa vapauteta nautintoelämän tyhjyydestä ja häädästä kuvaamalla sitä ensin neljäsataa sivua ja määräämällä sitten: palatkaa kotielämään. [...] Vieraita kielitä ei osata. Sivistystaso on alhainen. Euroopasta olemme tuottaneet vain kansainvälisen jazzkultin, ei ideoita.533

Paavolainen goes even further when accusing his contemporaries of depicting their own time with extreme superficiality and disgusting shallowness, since they (for example Waltari in Suuri illusioni) were more interested in the vices and manners of their characters than in the inner reasons for what those characters are and what they do,534

Mitään älyllistä intohimoa ajan suuriin sosiaalisiiin, poliittisiin tai kulttuuriprobleemeihin heillä ei tunnu olevan. Näällä kirjailijoilla, joista suurin osa joi lähtelee kolmattakymmentä ikävuottaan, tuntuu elämänkysymyksistä keskeisimpänä olevan vain puberteetti-ään käsityksiä kuuluvan kammo “syntiinlankeemusta” kohtaan... Ja jos he ratkaisevat tämän nautintoelämän-probleeminsa kuuluu resepti: paluu vanhaan kunnialliseen perhemoraaliin (Karri, Waltari, Merenmaa).535

He also reproaches the young authors for getting to know cities like Berlin or Paris only through the eyes of swains who visit brothels there – as do the protagonists in Waltari’s novels. These brothels would not at all, as Paavolainen writes, represent the modern world like they do in these novels, but have rather been there already for a very long time, as, I would add, have the classic decadent lesbians he introduces in his texts. In this context, Paavolainen also criticises the way in which Waltari depicts the character of Madame Spindel, a symbol, as he sees it, for the present time, but one that is only superficially thought through:

Ei voi tosiaankaan olla ihmettelemättä, miten häpeämättömän surkeilla sivistyskellsillä tiedoilla ja perusteilla meikäläiset kirjailijat katsovat olevansa oikeutettuja ryhtymään suurien ja kipeiden kulttuurikysymysten ratkaisemiseen. Nykyäika esintyy heillä kaikilla eräänlaisena Suuren illusionin rouva Spindelinä. Tällaisen mystillisen elähtäineen, keski-ikäisen naikoksen upeassa, erotiikan ja poliittikan, tupakansavun ja viskihöyryjen jännittävästi himmentämässä asunnossa vientettä juhlanah muodostaa kuvauksen välittämättömän c l o u n 533

533 Paavolainen 1932, 77/140/142. "And in case they solve this problem with their pleasures, then the recipe is: the return to the old and honourable family values. [...] A modern youth is by no means emancipated from the emptiness of its pleasure in life and anxieties by first depicting it on the first 400 pages and then ordering: go back to domesticity. [...] Foreign languages we do not know. The level of education is humble. We only brought the international jazz-cult from Europe; ideas we didn’t bring.”

534 Paavolainen 1932, 81.

535 Paavolainen 1932, 77. “They do not seem to have any intelligent passion for the big social, political or cultural problems. The fundamental questions concerning life of these writers, of whom the bigger part soon reaches his 30th birthday, seems to be the dread of puberty, namely the dread of the “Fall of Man”... And if they solve this problem of their pleasurable life, the recipe goes: return to the old, respectable family morals (Karri, Waltari, Merenmaa).”
useimmissa “nykyaikaisissa” romaaneissamme... [...] Heitä intresseeraavat vain ihmisen paheet ja tavat, mutta eivät niiden sielläiset syggt. Siitä johtuu näiden ajankuvausten ääretön pintapuolinen ja tympeä mataluus.536

Madame Spindel, then, in Paavolainen’s opinion, is a too easy example for depicting the problems of the time as Waltari does. Moreover, the way the character is depicted is a return to bourgeois family values, the old moral values that the writers of the supposedly new time in Paavolainen’s opinion return to. This return to old values seems to derive from a helplessness to cope with the changes within society, especially with the new role of women who have become much more independent within a rather short period of time. To describe Madame Spindel as the evil without giving this evil a deeper motivation, then, is not an analysis of the time, but a rather frail attempt of an analysis. It has the harsh validation of a character in life he despised as its motive. Moreover, as quoted in Chapter 2, Waltari also was very critical towards foreign influences in literature. This attitude also comes to the fore in the character of Madame Spindel: in 1933, he had criticised, for example, the fact that foreign literature only dealt with indecent topics, like problems with sexuality. With Madame Spindel and the other female characters, he then already calls these works to account in 1928. Yet, interestingly Suuri illusioni was by some (female) critics seen as also being far away from Finnish literature. Elsa Enäjärvi (1901–1951), for example, wrote: “The guy jumps with big steps away from Finnish literature, someone said after Mika Valtari’s novel had come out. [...] Already the title of the book is a slogan of a new art form. And its new gospel is the gospel of work and life. Nevertheless, Waltari’s heroes have remained strangely untouched by the Finnish trends of ideas.”537 A review of Suuri illusioni in Ylioppilaslehti is also rather sceptic.538 The reviewer accuses Waltari of superficiality and criticises him for the fact that “[...] he has managed to fit nearly everything between heaven and earth into his Illusion: light literary-aesthetic discussions, politics, science of the soul, religion, a glimpse here and there. In all their superficiality, these with no doubt increase the feeling of modernity.”539 Interestingly, Diktonius had anticipated the

536 Paavolainen 1932, 81. “One can really not help wondering with which shamelessly lousy cultural knowledge and foundations our authors find themselves entitled to solve the big and painful cultural questions. The present presents itself to all of them as a certain Madame Spindel of the Great Illusion. The feast of such a mystic, passé, middle-aged floosie, spent in a noble apartment excitingly dimmed by erotism and politics, cigarette smoke and whiskey–steam forms the inevitable clou of the depiction in many of our “contemporary” novels... [...] They are only interested in the evils and habits of the human being, but not in their inner reasons. The result, then, is an enormously superficial and boring depth in their portrayal of the time.”


538 The paper had been important in the time between the wars and was widely recognised within the cultural circles. Yet, during the 1920s and 1930s the magazine was politically close to the right-wing radical movement of the Akateeminen Karjala-Seura whose members dominated the student’s union.

critical attitude towards the novel in his own review: “Valtari […] wakes big expectations with this book and one can only wish that the diffuse Finnish critic does not aim at crushing it into gravel.”540 But there were also positive voices, like the sample of the magazine *Tulenkantajat*, the mouthpiece of the movement of the same name that tried to bring European influences into Finnish literature. Waltari was part of the movement. Erkki Vala, a renowned journalist and author was thrilled by the novel’s ability to catch the spirit of the time that would take a step towards the European intellectual novel, and called it

ensimmäinen teos, jossa sodanjälkeinen intellektuelli suomalainen nuoriso hengittää romaanihenkilöiden kohtaloissa, heidän ajatus- ja tunnemaaillmassaan. Se kuvaa suurta henkistä häätä ja elämän turmelumista elämää kannattavien voimien puutteessa. Se kuvastaa rakkautta, joka tässä ympäristössä on luonnontonta tai koristeellista, koska siinä ei ole uskoa, luottamusta ja välittömyyttä.541

The spirit of the time which the novel conveys was thus recognised especially by those who were themselves part of the same movement, who had had the same ideas and experiences. Terms like love and the meaning of life needed to be defined anew, since the old values and role models were not valid any more. Literature was one means with which the young intellectual tried to come to terms with the changing situation, and it was also by publishers recognised as a need. Waltari’s own thoughts about publishing in the years of the beginning of his career, at the end of the 1920s, become also visible in an article by Yrjö A. Jäntti, who led Waltari’s publisher WSOY in the 1950s and 1960s and who cites Waltari from 1946:

Onnellisella 20-luvulla, nuorten runoilijain vallattoma esiinryntäysaikana vallitsi aloittelevien kirjailijain suhtautumisessa kustantajiin eräänlainen reiapas merirosvohenki. Kustantajat olivat kuin kultalastissa raskaasti merta kyntäviä kaljuunoita, joiden kylkiin kevyesti aseistautuneet merirosvoveneet iskivät entraushahkan saa menen vapaitten miesten karatessa hukai hampaisa valtamaan osaansa rikkaasta saaliista. Usein heidät iskettiin verissä päin takaisin ja silloisen Brondan tupakansavuisten pöytien ääressä saattoi silloin tällöin nähä synkän ryhmän ruudinsavun mustaamia ja hampaita kiristelviä hahmoja suunnittelemassa uusia heinäntekomahdollisuuksia.542


541 Erkki Vala: ”Mika Waltari. Suuri illusioni”, *Tulenkantajat*/ näytteenumero, 30.11.1928, 40. “[…] the first work in which the Finnish post-war intellectual youth breathes in the destinies of the literary characters, in their world of thought and feelings. It shows great intellectual distress and the corruption of life in the lack of forces that support life. It mirrors love that in these surroundings is unnatural or decorative, since there is no faith, trust and sincerity in it.”

542 Jäntti 1982, 19. “In the happy 1920s, in the time of the unruly escalade of the young poet, a certain brisk pirate-spirit ruled in the attitude of the aspiring writers towards the publishers. The publishers
The publishers, thus, were looking out for authors that could enrich them, while the authors had the possibility to choose where they wanted to get published. WSOY with its Christian background seemed to be the best choice for Waltari, while Otava was more “progressive-minded”. Decisive for the publishing of his works were also numbers. The big success of his debut novel *Suuri illusioni* made the way for the possibility to publish his travel memoir novel *Yksinäisen miehen juna* in 1929. *Suuri illusioni* sold 8,800 pieces in four reprints, followed by three editions. *Yksinäisen miehen juna* sold 7,600 pieces.

*Yksinäisen miehen juna* (“A lonely man’s train”, 1929), published one year after *Suuri illusioni* also at WSOY, presents a queer character, too. It includes many references to *Suuri illusioni* in the Paris-part of the travel novel, but also within the characters. Especially the protagonist might have been taken out of Waltari’s debut novel in the way he resembles Hart. The same applies to the attitude towards the world in general, as well as towards everything queer in particular. The decadent Paris of the 1920s is one of the many destinations of the protagonist, who, after having finished his studies at university, decides to escape Finland to see Europe. He travels via, amongst others, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Greece to Constantinople, and is in the end in Paris from where he returns to Finland, being bored, annoyed and depressed by his long travels and looking forward to his home country. During the journey, the reader gets to know the countries the protagonist visits through his perspective, and the reader also gets to know his attitude towards the people living there, in a combination of prejudices and experiences. It is Germans he especially hates, what is expressed in different scenes when he is in Berlin or meets Germans on his way. This aspect is interesting with respect to the political situation of the time, and one starts to wonder about the protagonist’s ideas about world politics, which are nevertheless not an obvious topic in the novel. One can assume that the book is based on Waltari’s own experiences, since he himself traveled at the age of 21, after having finished his studies, via Europe to Istanbul. *Yksinäisen miehen juna* has been compared to Paavolainen’s *Nykykaikaa etsimässä* (“Looking for the modern time”, 1929) in which the latter thinks about mechanisation and urbanisation and which can be read as a travel book as well. However, Waltari’s book in contrast lacks the political perspective, it hardly mentions or comments on the political conditions of Europe at the time.\(^{543}\)

Compared to *Suuri illusioni*, the mentioning of and dealing with a queer character in *Yksinäisen miehen juna* is comparatively marginal. This time it is a Finnish woman called Lisbet who lives in Paris and whom he meets there in the famous restaurant *Le Dôme*, where foreigners come together, especially Finns. As readers, we know the restaurant already from *Suuri illusioni*, since

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\(^{543}\) Hosiaisluoma 2002, 163–164.
Caritas went there to spend her evenings in company. The protagonist, after having returned from Constantinople via Italy to Paris on his way back to Finland, runs into Lisbet, an acquaintance from his earlier visit in the city. He is already slightly disappointed from his travels, since he does not feel the same quiver anymore he felt when he was in Paris for the first time. Since he does not know what else to do, he ends up at the Dôme. But also there he encounters nothing new, either, besides that Lisbet tells him that she has experienced many things since he saw her the last time. Amongst other topics, it is adventures with women she is eager to tell him about:


Lisbet’s queer features are depicted as an affectation, a masquerade rather than reality. These are the same features that apply to Madame Spindel – both try, according to the I-narrator, to get into the focus of attention with rumours about their way of life. Lisbet’s character resembles certain figures of French decadent literature – exotic, young and beautiful, but also depraved. Here, homosexuality is not something that is a part of the human nature, an alternative amongst others, but it is a rather perverse feature in the view of the protagonist. Waltari even uses the same words in his depiction of both Lisbet and Madame Spindel: the adjective cold is a feature of both. Decadence, decay and fast downgrade are the characteristics of the time and especially Paris. Lisbet, who has been on a visit in her native country Finland, returned to Paris, since there she can be who she really is. France and Finland, Paris and Helsinki, are set in contrast to each other in the character of Lisbet. With her free spirit and her attitude that anything goes, she embodies the typical young woman of the cities in the 1920s. She is sympathetic, but becomes corrupt, drinks too much and laughs at normalcy. She has become masculine in her behaviour, a mixture between the bachelorette who still wants to please men, and the bachelorette who is independent. The same applies to Caritas in Suuri illusioni, who can be taken as the model for the character of Lisbet. Moreover,

544 Waltari 1929, 269–270. “Over there is a table with some acquaintances around. Also Lisbet is there. Of course, – I could have guessed that she won’t stay long in Finland. She is still beautiful; – she has light, cold skin and the longest eyelashes in the world. She has of course drunk again; – it has certainly been half a year since she has danced the last time. I like Lisbet, we have been good companions. [...] And she begins to tell. God, how much she has managed to live within two months, – more than ever before. Lisbet loves women, – or at least she coquets with it. In these circles this is totally natural, – you will find nothing here than decadence, decay, fast downgrade. Normalcy is something comical here.”
neither for Lisbet nor for Caritas motherhood is a topic, and neither it is for Madame Spindel. Waltari does not bring up the topic at all, at least not directly, since his characters are, in their “modernity”, far away from becoming mothers.

The attitude towards the figure of the New Woman – homosexual or not – expressed in both novels, is complex. With the exception of the young nameless girl in *Suuri illusioni*, the New Woman in Waltari’s novels does not receive many positive features. As stated earlier, a negative attitude towards this type of woman was rather common in the end of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s, and the bachelorette was perceived as the biggest threat. The fact that this figure was neither in reality nor in literature appreciated shows a deep concern that went beyond a dislike of a fashionable phase. Bachelorettes like Lisbet, Caritas and also Madame Spindel, the older version of the same phenomenon who even manages to get rich without a husband and lives totally independent, refuse what the nation is built on: motherhood, family and a sexuality that is controlled by ruling values. Therefore they are, in their almost masculine behaviour, experienced as a threat.

The character of Caritas in *Suuri illusioni* embodies exactly the kind of New Woman described earlier, a boyish creature namely that demands freedom for herself in whatever she does: “She was a child of the flexible era with big strokes, she had something piquant boyish.” There is even a discussion about the New Woman held in some dialogues between, for example, Caritas and Hart, when Caritas states that it should be possible for women and men to talk about whatever they like to, and Hart answers that “[... toile] it still remains a fact that they are Man and Woman”. Hart emphasises here the assumedly natural gender differences and makes clear that for him there will remain also a difference in what is possible for which part of the sexes.

Still, like Caritas, the New Woman with the boyish features was certainly queer, but not necessarily homosexual: she rather could be everything. Lesbianism is only one minor possible mode of her appearance. Also Caritas sees herself as the prototype of this modern New Woman:


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545 Hapuli 1995, 163.
Caritas lists here all the “stereotypes” that are connected with the new generation of, especially, women. She leaves all behind what might bring her into the context of the life women led or had to lead before the war. She also feels herself on a par with men, and thus threatens men’s position, also by her disrespect for the grand old men like Goethe and Kant. But at the same time, she makes herself a ridiculous and naïve character that cannot be taken seriously. It is obvious here that Waltari made the type of the modern woman into a satiric and farcical creature. He follows the Zeitgeist consequently. For example, Magnus Hirschfeld’s Sittengeschichte der Nachkriegszeit (1931) that maps the changes in morals and values after World War I, argued that one of the consequences of the war had been the breakage of those moral values that had been valid before; the foundation of this breakage was the decline of the meaning of family. It was a problem for both sexes that the satisfaction of sexuality was not possible any more within the frames of accepted moral values so that the consequence was a negation of them – the best example for this change was seen in the change of women and fashion, a topic, which Waltari takes up here before Hirschfeld’s book had been published.549 The discussion that arose around the figure of the garçonne (who has been the most extreme version of masculinisation, both externally and mentally) show the uncertainty that generated imbalances between the sexes. It was sex/gender issues that worked as discursive strategies to fabricate cultural fears between the wars. These types were also those that worked independently and chose their partner themselves.550 The character of Caritas as cited above symbolises all this, while Lisbet in Yksinäisen miehen juna goes even further and also symbolises the impossibility of the satisfaction of sexuality within the frames of accepted values – she falls in love with women. Ritva Hapuli, then, sees the contradictions that the modern women brought together summed up in one sentence in Suuri illusioni when Waltari describes Caritas: “She was a young girl, she was an old woman, she was innocent and experienced, she was cold and hot, passionate and refusing.”551

Tapioharju again makes an interesting observation in the context of the New Woman when she writes that the New Woman in Waltari’s Suuri illusioni

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548 Waltari 1928, 14. “‘I at least regard myself as modern’, Caritas exclaimed. ‘I have painted my lips to show that I dare, despite all prejudices. I am as free-minded as any man when it comes to my own convenience. I have studied sociology, use my vote to right and adore modern poetry. Goethe was an old bourgeois donkey and Kant a hepatopathic commercial traveller. I analyse my dreams psychoanalytically and talk myself into being healthy and beautiful […].’”

549 Hirschfeld 1931, 392–403. Hirschfeld elaborates here on female fashion and, for example, the length of skirts that the war had shortened (“Je länger der Krieg, umso kürzer die Röcke!”, 396), or the decolleté. He furthermore writes that women had gotten to know their objectless sexual instinct that was directed at any man, not a certain one any more. (404)

550 Hirschfeld 1931, 422–423. Hirschfeld sees the reason for the rise of the garçonne in the disillusionment of the war.

is not discussed as a phenomenon that is, for example, compared to images of/ by women before. Rather, the phenomenon is seen in Caritas’ activities. The novel, thus, does not reflect on the phenomenon, but it shows it from different perspectives with the help of different characters. Waltari’s depiction of the queer, supposedly lesbian character, together with his ideas of women then mirrored and reinforced prevailing ideas of morality and the role ascribed to women. The words normality and abnormality play a crucial role in this context when Waltari contrasts “dirty” and “unpleasant” same-sex desire with “normal” heterosexuality. Also Hellas refers to exactly these words in the context of sexuality and his sickness (which is, however, not yet known to the reader in this passage), and he at the same time brings it together with the corrupt and demoralised times they live in: “‘That damned sexual life’, Hellas said. ‘We are more decadent and sicker in the soul than anyone could really imagine. Every one of us is abnormal. And if anyone would dare to speak about this, he would be marked as an indecent bigot.’” Sexuality itself – around which the whole novel circles without naming it more explicitly besides here – is being cursed, since it lures everyone into destruction, as the male characters in Suuri illusioni have experienced it. Thus, when already heterosexuality is equated with decay, it seems to be the logical consequence of this world to ascribe features like dirty and abnormal to any other form of sexuality that is a threat to heterosexuality that is already threatened by itself.

While sexuality as the main topic is not explicitly named in the novel, silence with regard to homosexuality is not an issue in Waltari’s novel, and comparable to Pennanen’s play (that, of course, has a different attitude). However, the reviews as well as the research on Waltari have been silent on the queer characters until only recently, with the exception of Paavolainen. Albeit not with regard to Madame Spindel/ queerness, the issue of silence, or rather censorship, was nevertheless also topical in the case of Waltari’s novel and tells about the practices of the time with regard to publishing policies. The original manuscript of the novel included a passage about a black woman with whom the protagonist spends some time in a hotel room. This scene was regarded impossible to be published. Waltari himself was completely aware of the nature of his book, i.e. of the fact that “in there could be some daring subjects that would maybe not quite fit to the Christian and honorable publishing house it was in those days. But after I had written it, I nevertheless felt some secret confidence that it would of course come out.” Which features exactly he meant he does not say, but one can assume that it is Madame Spindel, Caritas and the young girl, and the black woman. As explained earlier, the rules of the literary field were never static nor linear.

552 Tapioharju 2010, 88–89; 98.
553 Waltari 1928, 94. “‘Tuo kirottu seksuaalielämä’, sanoi Hellas. ‘Me olemme turmueltuneempia ja sairaalloisempia sielultamme kuin kukaan saattaisi todella kuvitella. Jokainen meistä on epänormaali. Ja jos joku uskaltaisi ruveta puhumaan siitä, leimattaisiin hänet siveettömäksi kiihkoilijaksi.’”
554 Haavikko 1980, 206.
Here, the taboo of homosexuality (as long as it is not depicted as a positive feature) is not valid any more, but it is exchanged with the taboo of sex between races. Thus, the field is still structured by a series of unspoken/unspeakable rules for what can legitimately be said. It is also striking that all the more daring points – one can add also Hellas’ woman (a prostitute?) who had transmitted the disease – are connected to the female characters of the novel. The changing role of women in the 1920s, it seems, was a topic that needed to be addressed in literature; having quoted Ritva Hapuli earlier, it is by writing and discussing about gender that changes in morals, ideas and power in society are dealt and tried to be coped with.

The queer aspects of *Yksinäisen miehen juna* are not mentioned in the reviews, either; the novel received one very long critique in *Ylioppilaslehti* where the reviewer praises Waltari’s ability to make an interesting book out of a travel experience; a central motive in the book is, according to the reviewer, a longing for romance. What the reviewer mentions is the openness with which Waltari dealt with his own naivety and how much he was willing to tell – and what the reactions might have been: “Many descriptions also in this work might raise moral indignation in older readers: why does one have to tell about these things... He dares to do it and does it in a fine way, which should not insult anyone.”

The reviewer here points to the many adventures of the protagonist in the novel, presumably also to the scene with Lisbet. Still, silence on queerness prevails, and one has to read between the lines of the reviews to guess what is meant. Here, the pertinence principle again comes to work, since it was not in the interest of the reviewer to recognize the feature as something worth writing about. The power of recognizing here the (yet unpleasant) queerness lies in the hands of the reviewer who does not address the topic, as obvious at it might be.

The ideal of the time – one that has its origin in the antique Greece – in terms of the body images that I already discussed in the context of Soini’s novel *Uni* is also present in *Suuri illusioni* when Hellas – also a direct reference to Greek culture and its homophilia, mostly related to a relationship between an older man and a younger one – watches a soccer game with Hart and his little brother, and remarks: “‘Look, what beautiful bodies they have. Roasted brown in the sun, toughened and strengthened by the water. Don’t you also think that a beautiful body of a young man is more beautiful than any woman’s body?’”

While bodily ideals are in the focus of the time, these ideals, however, need to be pure ones; it is, again, pure, healthy and innocent bodies that are admired and set in contrast to dirty – that means immoral in the context of the novel –, represented by Madame Spindel, and sick ones, represented by Hellas.

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Hellas, moreover, might also be read as queer character. There are hints on his possible own homosexual behaviour, when Hart, for example finally befriends Hellas and states that “[...] now I felt that I loved Hellas, as a man can love another man. I admired and honoured him, and I was glad that he liked my company.”

Like Uni in Soini’s novel, Hart has to make his own position clear by adding “as a man can love another man” – he emphasises that it is deep, but pure friendship that connects him to Hellas. Here again, we find a reversed triangle situation of Hellas, his supposed homosexuality and Lisbet.

Interestingly, the idea of the body is in the end of Suuri illusioni widened and transferred to the image of Europe: “At the moment, the whole of Europe is an old and dying country. But from its centre a new generation will rise that once again is full of belief, full of vitality, full of the collective fascination of cooperation. This is the strong reaction of life against ourselves.” And Waltari goes even one step further in his idealisation of the future youth that builds a contrast to his generation as well as the one of his protagonist Hart who says that “I felt myself wondering when the flag, the ideology, around which the youth would gather, would appear. It had to come, I felt it, – and it was only a question of time. It had to erupt from the common yearning, the common groping away of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions from all that is sick, deprived and weak.”

Sickness and depravity lurk everywhere, as the characters see it, especially in Europe where nothing positive comes from (cf. Waltari’s quote on foreign literature in Chapter 2); but the hope for a better future still remains.

Quite illuminating in this context of morals in connection to Europe is also Waltari’s idea about motherhood as women’s duty when he writes in Yksinäisen miehen juna that in the earth mother he sees a human being, “[...] a woman, in her all what man has loved in women through all times merges to divinity – she is a mother, but still a virgin, – she is a virgin, and nevertheless around her is the spell of infertile, sinful love.” In Waltari’s world, women needed to be pure mothers, the (misogynist) ideal were virgins that were surrounded by sinful love and infertility. Anything contrary to that is depicted as depraved and “dirty”. Waltari’s writing can thus be seen as the attempt to exert power by directing his accusation of depravity of the “abnormal” characters at the change within society with regard to gender norms. Given literature’s role as an educator of the nation, Waltari’s novels mirror the prevailing values with regard to queerness and purity, despite the partly clear language he uses: Waltari’s idea about women as virgin mothers and their role

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558 Waltari 1928, 169. “[...] mutta nyt tunsin rakastavani Hellasta, niinkuin mies voi toista rakastaa. Ihailin ja kunnioitin häntä, ja iloisin siiltä, että hän pitäisi minun seurastani.”


560 Waltari 1929, 7–8. “[...] hän on nainen, hänessä yhdistyy jumalauudeksi kaikki se, mitä mies on aikojen alusta asti rakastunut naisessa, – hän on äiti ja kuitenkin neitsyt, – hän on neitsyt ja hänen ympärillään on kuitenkin hedelmättömäät, syntisen rakkauden hurma.”
in society, together with the negative depiction of queer characters, in contrast, fit well into the general ideas about motherhood and women’s role.

The idea about the Finnish homeland with its clear social order and clear roles for men and women, as also Soini’s novel Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit partly implies, was in the core of the decisions within a publishing market that had not yet diverged from the state machinery and its ideology. Waltari’s novels, moreover, are an example for the definition I introduced in Chapter 1: a text is always a discourse that brings to public what has been kept silent before. As Foucault with his term “speaker’s benefit” states, those who are able to express their sexual awareness are at the same time, within the speech act, able to free themselves from being subordinated. Especially with his debut novel that was new and modern in many ways, Waltari – also because he was a male author – succeeded in introducing the taboos of his time, its discussions and fears, into literature. Both novels can be seen as an attempt to resist the changing values while at the same time admiring the modern times. The texts were successful, then, since they reflected the cultural and social presuppositions of their readers. What Waltari did not succeed in – maybe due to his own points of views on morals, maybe due to his being trapped in the discussions himself without any time lag – was an objective analysis of these fears and discussions. What he wrote was what he experienced. And what he experienced got published, since it reflected prevailing ideas to a large degree: gender norms and heteronormative standards are never questioned in the novels, but simply repeated.

3.5 Queerness in between the Lines – and How it Translates into Finnish

As an example of queerness within translations, Dusty Answer, the first novel by the British writer Rosamond Lehmann (1901–1990) that was originally published in 1927 by Chatto & Windus, will be discussed in this chapter. It was translated into Finnish in 1928 and published by Karisto with the title Elämänhurman häipyessä (“The fading thrill of life”). Rosamond Lehmann was born in Buckinghamshire into a bourgeois family, her father having been a liberal Member of Parliament. Together with her three siblings, Lehmann was educated privately at home. In 1919, she went to Girton College and got married in 1924, but got already three years later divorced from the unhappy marriage. It was during the time of this marriage that she wrote Dusty Answer. The novel first was received quite varyingly, but quickly became a best-seller. This success presumably was a decisive reason for its translation into Finnish. Lehmann published nine novels and some other works.561

In an interview with the writer and musician Shusha Guppy, Lehmann told that she had written Dusty Answer in a trance-like state of mind within a few months. She then had identified herself with the heroine Judith, who is lonely

561 Guppy 1991, 144.
and lives in a dream, but whom she later found rather stupid and over-romanticised. Being asked of the autobiographical references in the novel, Lehmann answered that her novels usually took place at real places, but that the events were imaginary.562 In the interview, Lehmann also told about the beginnings of the novel as well as about the queer contents of the book. She had first given the manuscript to a friend to read it who then sent it to Chatto & Windus. The publisher had replied that they would like to publish it, although they would not expect much money – i.e. success – from it. According to Lehmann, the first reviews were rather critical: “they said it was full of sex and insinuating remarks on lesbian love – you remember the two girls?” However, after an article in the Sunday Times by Alfred Noyes who praised the novel and wrote that it could have been written by Keats, the book became a success.563

The Finnish translation of Dusty Answer by Alpo Kupiaisen was published one year after it had been published in English. Within translation studies, the basic questions with which to approach a translation, are the following: what, from which language and how is a work translated? The next question is: why, followed by how the translation has influenced its surroundings, if at all. The essential question in the case of the translation of Dusty Answer into Finnish might be how much it has influenced Finnish authors or readers; this, however, is rather difficult to answer, since it was not or only rarely reviewed. The question why it was translated cannot be definitely answered, either, since there is no archival material related to it. One can, however, assume that it was the novel’s success in the original that encouraged Karisto to publish it.

The publishing house Karisto belonged to the big four in Finland at the time, publishing less than WSOY and Otava, but having a steady position behind them, together with Gummerus. When compared to the other big publishers in the 1920s, Karisto published many more books written or translated by women. Also the amount of translations was rather high, since Karisto’s director Hämeen-Anttila emphasised the importance of translated literature and the knowledge of world literature. Dusty Answer was published in the series called “New novels” that was aimed at introducing interesting foreign literature to the Finnish readership from the end of the 1920s onwards; among the authors of the series were Paul Morand (who influenced Mika Waltari), Berta Ruck (translated by Elsa Soini, as well as by Alpo Kupiaisen) and Rosamond Lehmann. Karisto, in this sense, also exerted a big influence on literature originally written in Finnish, since they provided much of what was relevant within foreign literature. In 1928, Karisto published all in all about 120 works; without mentioning Dusty Answer, Arvi Simojoki in the history of the publisher wrote that it was a year when Karisto published books

563 Guppy 1992, 154. It has also been compared to the French novel Le Grand Meaulnes by Henri Alain-Fournier, written in 1913, that tells about a young man’s love for a woman that ends unhappily. Lehmann sees this comparison as one reason for the success of her novel. It was translated several times into English, with very different titles.
of great diversity, many of them valuable. The result of my research is that Aukosti Simojoki’s archive, who was the head of the Karisto at that time, is nowhere stored. The same applies to the archive of Alpo Kupiainen who translated the novel, so that the decisive reasons for publishing the book remain in the dark.

As shown, Hämeen-Anttila had complained about the fact that, since Karisto is situated in Hämeenlinna, all offers from foreign publishers first went to the publishers in Helsinki. When Karisto received the remains, one might wonder whether also Dusty Answer was a novel that other publishers had rejected, since although the novel was a success in Britain, its topic is nonetheless in parts delicate, which might have led to a rejection, if WSOY or Otava had considered it for their programme at all. In this context, one of the reasons for the novel’s success according to Nicole Humble in The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, supports at the same time the hypothesis of a possible rejection by conservative publishers. While trying to perform the task of educating the readers in the sense of national literature, Dusty Answer can be seen as the opposite of what was regarded as welcome reading, since, as it was the case in Britain, “anything with a daring or racy atmosphere – such as Rosamond Lehmann’s Dusty Answer, with its lesbian content, […] – offered the reader the reassurance of being up-to-the-minute.” The same argument applies to Finland, as the quotes from the different literary magazines at that time show, which I have introduced earlier. Much of modern foreign literature was regarded as poisonous, bad or full of sexuality, so that there was no need to translate them. Still, most of the translated literature into Finnish in the 1920s was from English. The greater part of these books was light fiction. In the beginning of the 1920s, as Urpo Kovala states, the big demand for literature or books to read led to the result that publishing a book happened sometimes randomly, it was published for it was just at hand. There was not necessarily any logic in what was published; the most books were translated after having been suggested by translators. This practice ended with the Berne Convention, but also meant that the contact to contemporary high-brow literature in English was lost until the 1950s. Karisto’s percentage of translations from the English language was 42 between the wars (WSOY 34 %, they translated mostly Nordic literature, while Otava and Gummerus had the same percentage of English language literature as Karisto). Yet, the ability to read English literature within Finnish publishing houses in the 1920s was not as common as nowadays, as discussed above, Hämeen-Anttila seems to have been one of the few who knew to read it, or at least to know how to use his sources in form of translators and scouts, since he published quite many translations from the English language. These translations, of course, were only possible because he had talented translators. The Finnish translator of Dusty Answer, Alpo Kupiainen (1888-1937), was specialised into translating

565 Simojoki 1950, 118.
from the English language and translated for example many works by Edgar Wallace, Berta Ruck or Edgar Rice Burroughs; he also worked mainly for Karisto.

Partly autobiographical, Dusty Answer is a story of initiation that tells about a young woman called Judith who spends her rather lonely childhood and teenage years in a big house in the English countryside, being educated by private teachers. The few other young people about her age she meets are a circle of cousins who during summers live next door with her grandmother: Julian, Roddy, Charlie, Martin and Mariella. Judith is very fond of two of the boys, Charlie and Roddy, while Martin, in turn, is fond of her. In the course of the novel, Charlie gets married to Mariella; they are both still very young, but want to marry before he is drafted into the First World War. He gets killed in France and leaves Mariella with a baby boy behind. After the death of her father, Judith is finally allowed to go to a girls’ college. Shortly after having arrived there, she gets to know her fellow-student Jennifer, a character that can clearly be interpreted as queer: Jennifer and Judith become very close and seem to fall in love with each other; Jennifer even directly expresses her love for Judith. Their mutual love, however, is not a happy one; Jennifer meets another woman called Geraldine – another love triangle – with whom she starts spending her time while neglecting Judith. Geraldine wants to take Jennifer away with her, but Jennifer in the end does not follow her, but rejects Geraldine as well. At the same time, she leaves the college shortly before the final exams as a sick and sad young woman, regretting what she has done to Judith. However, in the end of the novel, several years later, she writes a letter to Judith in which she explains why she had acted the way she did. They agree to meet, but this also ends sadly, since Jennifer never appears.

Judith herself, after having finished college, goes back to live in the house where she has spent her childhood. There she meets the cousins next door again and lets Roddy finally know about her feelings for him that have come back. He tells her that he loves her, too, but then rejects her. Roddy again – yet another love triangle – is very close to an openly gay male character called Tony with whom he possibly has an intimate relationship. Judith never recovers from this disappointment. After this incident, she promises Martin, Roddy’s cousin, to marry him; rather soon, she nevertheless realises that she would do him only harm and withdraws the promise. Martin is disappointed, leaves, and in the end drowns in an accident while sailing. In the meanwhile, Judith travels to France with her mother, where finally Julian, the third one of the cousins, turns up. They slowly become closer, until Julian proposes her to start a relationship. Judith rejects him and goes back to England; later, Julian gets to take care of Mariella’s child Peter, since Mariella cannot cope with him. Only in the end of the novel, after having seen Roddy again through a window in Cambridge and after Jennifer has not turned up to their agreed appointment, Judith realises that she needs to start anew, without the cousins. No relationship, neither hetero- nor homosexual, has brought her happiness so far.
Besides having been translated into Finnish immediately after being published in English, *Dusty Answer* is in at least two more respects significant within the context of this study: it has queerness as a topic with respect to several characters, both male and female, and it contains an unconventional perspective on motherhood and family. Several characters represent queerness as defined in the introduction, i.e. they question the conventional equation between heterosexuality, reproductive sexuality and female identity. In fact, none of the central characters conforms to traditional gender roles. Before I come to analyse the queer content concerning the two female characters Judith and Jennifer, I will analyse the novel’s comments on motherhood and the nuclear family. None of the novel’s characters, namely, is even part of a stereotypical nuclear family: Judith’s family is the mother-father-child type, but her father is always working elsewhere, while her mother at first travels with him, and then, after his death, travels alone, leaving Judith usually on her own with her governess. As James Haule observes, “motherhood is a troubled condition in all of Lehmann’s novels. Moral obligation and social responsibility find their centre there and it is there that they are continually betrayed.” The mothers in *Dusty Answer* know about the duties expected from them, both morally and socially, but cannot fulfil them; neither Judith’s mother who is mostly absent, nor the mothers of the cousins, or Mariella. Also Jennifer’s mother is difficult, but in a contrary way: she does not give the space Jennifer would need, but is always present. Motherhood in the family of the cousins is not present, they are even more split and they are taken care of by their joint grandmother (a substitute for their mothers) during summers. Yet, although it stands in contrast to the development of the family structure in society, this depiction of non-normative families was rather common in British fiction of the 1920s, as Humble notes:

One key feature of the sprawling, dysfunctional middlebrow family is its dramatic unlikeness to the conventional nuclear family that was becoming increasingly normative in post-war Britain. Surprisingly early – by the mid-1920s – the statistically average middle-class family had reduced in size from the typical six children of the Victorian period to just over two. [...] The fact that the family in much fiction after 1918 is so at odds with its real-world counterpart has remained unnoted by most literary critics.

One part of this depiction of the dysfunctional family is then the topic of motherhood in *Dusty Answer*. Mariella is too young to become a mother and thus unable to cope with her role. She did not want a child and cannot understand that she suddenly is the mother of one: “I didn’t feel much. I was awfully ill and – there seemed so many bothers going on. I didn’t see him for quite a long time and then – Oh, I don’t know! He was such an ugly miserable baby and I simply couldn’t believe he was mine. It didn’t seem as if it could

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568 Haule 1985, 195.
possibly be true that I had a baby.’ [...] ‘I don’t really understand children.”

It is Julian who takes care of the boy most of the time, as well as it is him to whom, in the end of the novel, Mariella leaves her child for good; not because she does not love the boy, as she writes to Julian, but because she loves Julian and wants him to be happy. Mariella is from the beginning depicted as an odd character. She is not as caring and loving as Judith or the boys; but she is not unsympathetic, either. Rather, she realises that she had made a mistake when she married Charlie whom she did not love and felt punished for this mistake by the reception of her son, who always reminded her of the mistake she had made.

The most essential part of Dusty Answer in the context of this study is Judith’s time at the college where she meets Jennifer, a fellow student. The place, a female-only women’s college is worth mentioning since it was part of a wider discussion within society about educated women’s economic independence and the fact that education and the experience of the college life made women more “unfit” to motherhood and marriage than those who had no possibility to attend higher education. It is this phase in Judith’s life that Lehmann explores and by which she shows the formation of the protagonist’s sexual identity. Higher education for women, at this time only possible in institutions for women only, also fuelled the fear of women becoming too independent: “Same-sex friendships between women flourished and as women gained a greater sense of alternatives to marriage, lesbianism became a target of the criticism levelled against women’s colleges.” Yet, since we do not know how the lives of these characters continue, here again Terry Castle’s interpretation of places for women only might be an alternative, as quoted already in the context of Pennanen. Also in Dusty answer, “female homosexual desire [might be] a finite phenomenon – a temporary phase in a larger pattern of heterosexual Bildung [...].

When Jennifer and Judith for the very first time talk with each other, it is the topic of marriage that is in focus. Jennifer, in the middle of their conversation on the corridor, leads to the topic, checking all the essential information when she asks Judith rather suddenly whether she is engaged and answers that neither she was. Moreover, she states that “I don’t suppose I shall ever marry. I’m too tall, – six foot in my stockings. It’s awful, because I’m sure I shall always be falling in love myself – and I’m terrified of getting repressions. Are you in love?’”

While Jennifer on the surface of the conversation keeps quiet about her own sexuality, she checks Judith’s possible preferences

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572 Lewis 1999, 363. A similar case is E.M Forster’s (1879–1970) novel Maurice that is set in Cambridge and follows the life of the homosexual Maurice. It was already written in 1913–14, but published only after Forster’s death in 1971. The novel was translated into Finnish in 1987, published by Gummerus. I thank H. K. Riikonen for this reference.
573 Castle 1993, 70–71; 85.

Lehmann 1928, 130.
between the lines. Then she goes on telling about herself and her own ideas about moralities; moreover, she tells that she has learned about sex from her cousins, consolidating her character as a modern woman who has read, seen and thought a lot: “I dare say you were brought up in blackest ignorance, – like me. But I’ve managed to overcome all obstacles in the way of enlightenment. Do you call innocence a virtue? I call it stupidity.”

It becomes clear that Jennifer has much more experience with boys (and girls?) than Judith has. The two young women immediately bond and decide to get through college together. Besides, Jennifer directly makes an impression on Judith: “The suddenness, thought Judith – the sureness, the excitement! ... glorious, glorious creature of warmth and colour! Her blue eyes had a wild brilliance between their thick lashes: they flew and paused, stared, flew again... Oh, Jennifer!”

Here, the Finnish translation is more temperate than the original, since it leaves out the last words, “Oh, Jennifer!” and replaces them with three dots: “Äkillisyys, mietti Judith – varmuus, innostus! ... loistava, loistava lämmön ja värrien olento! Hänen siniset silmänsä säähyivät huimasti paksujen luomien lomitse; ne liikkuvat vinhasti, pysähtyivät, tuijottivat, liikkuvat taaskin...”. It is these words, ended by an exclamation mark, that make the original more passionate and more clearly add a possible sexual connotation to them. The Finnish version therefore leaves the interpretation more open.

The two young women become close quite fast. While there is no reference to bodily intimacy in the novel, it is emotions that are in the focus of the depiction of their relationship, if not of all relationships in Dusty Answer. Rather quickly, Martin, one of the cousins who also studies in Cambridge and visits Judith from time to time, gets jealous of Jennifer. While Martin is in love with Judith, she seems to be in love with Roddy – or is it Jennifer? She realises her affection for Jennifer when Jennifer suspects her to love somebody after she has thought about Roddy. Judith denies that she would love somebody, since

Jennifer must never know, suspect, dream for a moment... ‘You mustn’t love anybody,’ said Jennifer. ‘I should want to kill him. I should be jealous.’ Her brooding eyes fell heavily on Judith’s lifted face. ‘I love you.’ And at those words, that look, Roddy faded again harmlessly: Jennifer blinded and enfolded her senses once more, and only Jennifer had power.

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577 Lehmann 1928, 146–147. Also the translation of this sequence follows the original and actually leaves nothing open: “Sinä et saa koskaan rakastaa ketään’, kiviasteli Jennifer. ‘Minä haluaisin tappaa hänet. Oliisin mustasuukkainen.’ Hänen haaveksivat silmänsä suuntautuivat kuumeisesti Judithin ylöspäin käännettyihin kasvoihin. ‘Minä rakastan sinua.’ Ja ne sanat ja se katse saivat taaskin Roddyn
Judith realises that after this conversation their relationship gets even closer, also since she herself admits it to. “Always Jennifer. It was impossible to drink up enough of her; and a day without her was a day with the light gone.” Judith is fascinated by Jennifer, she is smitten with her, as the following page of the novel shows where she describes her features in all sorts of situations, being loved by the people around her and nice to everyone, singing and chattering. But Judith realises Jennifer’s darker sides, too: “She had her evasions. No good to ask her: her eyes would fly off, hiding from you. She would not let herself be known entirely.” This feeling of insecurity with regard to Jennifer never totally stops. Judith fears to be too much absorbed by Jennifer, or to let herself absorb:

Meanwhile there was Jennifer to be loved with a bitter maternal love, because she was afraid. And because some day, she might be gone. For Jennifer said “I love you” and fled away. You cried “Come back!” and she heard and returned in anguish, clasping you close but dreading your dependence. One day, when you most needed her, she might run away out of earshot, and never come back.

Judith fears to be left behind, quite foreseeably, as the course of the novel reveals. She fears to be left by Jennifer as a mother fears that her children leave home one day, i.e. with a certainty that it will happen. Their relationship is not one that can last. Jennifer is a split character: she tells Judith that she loves her, she spends all her time with her, but then again Judith cannot grasp Jennifer completely, she slips away when she comes too close. Until Jennifer, little by little, leaves Judith.

It was a look, a turn of the head, a new trick of speech, a nothing in Jennifer which struck at her heart in a moment; and then all had started to fall to pieces. Jennifer was no longer the same. […] She remembered Jennifer saying once, suddenly: “There’s one thing certain in my life: that is, that I shall always love you.” And afterwards her eyes had shone as if with tears and laughter. She remembered the surprise and joy, the flooding confidence of that moment; for it had been said so quietly, as if the realization of that “always” held for something sorrowful, a sobering sense of fate.
After having read the whole novel, the reader might believe her: she probably has loved Judith all the time, but still: Jennifer cannot hold what she has promised and disappears from Judith’s life. As Humble observes, Jennifer’s callousness in part reflected the spirit of the time. She sees this feature of the novel which she calls the illusion of romance also as a reason for its success: “While in part the result of its daring treatment of sex, its reception also reflected the novel’s innovative tone and philosophy, its capturing of the self-conscious cynicism of the first post-war generation, for whom romance was just one of the many illusions destroyed by the Great Trauma.”

Why Jennifer neglects Judith for Geraldine and then, after a while, also leaves Geraldine and the college, the novel does not tell. Is it because she is, despite her openness, afraid of the consequences a same-sex relationship would have? Or does she want to protect Judith? Andrea Lewis refers in this context to the term of “lesbian panic” coined by Patricia Juliana Smith, i.e. to “the narrative moment when women in love with one another sense that their actions are morally out of line with expected behaviour and are neither able nor willing to confront or reveal their own lesbian desire.” Both Jennifer’s and Judith’s behaviour can be interpreted by this term: Judith, when she seems to not know what her relationship to Jennifer means, and Jennifer who withdraws from two relationships, Judith and Geraldine, gets depressed and leaves college. Lewis furthermore notes that lesbian panic in literature usually leads either to an interruption by a male lover, or to spinsterhood. In Dusty Answer, it is Geraldine who interrupts: a female lover, that is, which is atypical. What the interruption means in the end remains open, since also the ending of the novel remains open: neither do we know what will become of Judith, nor what has become of Jennifer. There is no heterosexual ending of the novel, but neither is it a queer utopia. Jennifer – the homosexual alternative – is gone, or rather has not appeared again, and so is (the queer) Roddy – and with him the possibility of motherhood for Judith – who remains a mere shadow in the window.

One of the climaxes within the unhappy relationship between Judith and Jennifer is an almost ten pages long conversation between Judith and Geraldine, the third part of the all-female triangle; they argue about their relationship to Jennifer, both being jealous of their counterpart. Geraldine has come to talk with Judith, who in the beginning feels to be no match for the much older and more mature Geraldine. By leaving only little hints on her characters, Lehmann succeeds to open up whole identities. In the case of Geraldine it is only one sentence that undermines her queer identity which has been the only one sentence that undermines her queer identity which has

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583 Humble 2001, 213.
585 Lewis 1999, 366.
been indicated already in her “friendship” with Jennifer. Now it is her behaviour when “[s]he smoked like a man.”\textsuperscript{586} It is again, like in most of the novels analysed in this study so far, the reference to the type of the New Woman, the independent one that allows herself freedom to choose and behaves the way she wants. Geraldine’s way of smoking, combined with her close friendship to Jennifer and the way she talks to Judith about her jealousy, clearly can be summed up to queerness as defined in the introduction, and are part of the typical representation of non-heterosexual characters in literature. It is these evasions and hints that characterise the whole text – and, as Humble rightly observes – that made it possible to get the novel published. As well as translated into Finnish, I would add, although in only a few cases the Finnish version differs from the original:

Such evasions belong not just to Judith but to the novel itself, which succeeds spectacularly in combining a revolutionary daring in the representation of sexuality with nimble sidesteps of any area that might attract the censor’s attention. This feat is the more remarkable if we consider that \textit{Dusty Answer} was published the year before Radclyffe Hall’s notorious and banned \textit{Well of Loneliness}, whose most overt representation of lesbian sex acts lies in the words “And that night they were not divided”. The reader of \textit{Dusty Answer} is offered the choice of maintaining her technical innocence, or fully understanding the sexual subtext.\textsuperscript{587}

It is, then, again the reader’s expectation of heteronormativity that let the novel pass without further notice of the queer subplot; for many readers, namely, the queerness of the text might partly remain meaningless. Moreover, Haule observes in Lehmann’s opinion on authorship that locates artistic inspiration and control in the unconscious; that for her, “[i]t is not what the author does that is to be judged, but what the author allows to happen.”\textsuperscript{588} Or the translator/ publisher, in that case. When for example the words “Oh, Jennifer!”, as shown above, are missing, then the translation definitely interferes with the text and its meaning which shows at the same time that the publisher/ translator had not misunderstood the queer subplot. How much responsibility, then, does the author in such a case have to carry? Here, I return again to Foucault’s statement that a (literary) text is always a discourse. It brings to public what exists, but what might have been kept silent. It is the discussions within society, the topics that need to be talked about, which Lehmann allows to let happen in her texts. And it is up to the reader what she reads into the evasions. Yet, when the translation leaves something out, the reader of only the translation is not able to totally estimate the work. The case of only two missing words, then, shows where the line between the speakable and the unspeakable lies. A too direct reference to eroticism would have made

\textsuperscript{586} Lehmann 1927, 184. The translation is close to the original: “Hän poltti tupakkaa miesten tapaan.” Lehmann 1928, 249.
\textsuperscript{587} Humble 2001, 232.
\textsuperscript{588} Haule 1985, 194.
the book more difficult to publish. Here, I refer back to the different ways of silence presented in the beginning: the certain “closetedness” of the Finnish translation both tells and conceals the violation of heteronormative norms. Normalcy is tried to stage here by leaving out some words and thus rendering the text more moderate.

While the queer characters of the novel are merely characterised by hints, it slowly becomes apparent that also Geraldine is not a confident character – Judith realises little by little how insecure Geraldine is, who obviously feels threatened by Judith’s existence. Jennifer had not told Geraldine anything about Judith, not even mentioned her, before Geraldine and Jennifer were accused by someone from the college to have hurt Judith. Still, or exactly because of that, Judith gets an insight into her own as well as into Jennifer’s feelings. While Geraldine tells her that she had never heard about Judith before, Judith feels hurt: “For a moment that dealt with a blinding blow, with its instantaneous implications of dishonesty and indifference. But she repeated: ‘I’ve known her well for two years. You can ask her. She might admit it.’ And as she spoke the last words she thought with sudden excitement: ‘Just as I never mentioned Roddy...’”589 Thus, both Judith and Jennifer are not able to talk about or express their real feelings; it is feelings they partly hide from themselves – the “lesbian panic” –, and upon which they cannot really act, Judith even less than Jennifer. Later, Judith dares to tell Roddy about her love for him, but also her heterosexual feelings get rejected – probably because of Roddy’s homosexuality that is hinted at several times in the novel. As Humble notes, *Dusty Answer* does not depict male same-sex relationships as unnatural, either; rather, it is heterosexual ones that are perceived as dangerous by the main characters.590 Dangerous, that is, in the way that Judith ruins her relationship to almost all of the male cousins by promising them her love, while she knows that she can only love the one who cannot love her.591 Here, the several queer triangles that appear in the novel become important: Judith loves Roddy, but Roddy loves Tony; Jennifer loves Judith, but she also loves Geraldine; and Judith loves Jennifer, but Geraldine comes into her way. Moreover, there are also (partly) heterosexual triangles in the novel: Martin loves Judith, but she either Jennifer or Roddy; and Julian maybe loves Mariella, but she marries his brother. Love, it seems, is doomed to end unhappy, be it hetero- or homosexual.

The novel results, as Humble calls it, in a curious mixture “of on the one hand familiarity with same-sex sexuality as a comfortable extension of friendship, and on the other a sense of a dawning culture of homosexuality that specifically excludes outsiders from its hidden mysteries and

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591 Haule 1985, 195.
fellowships.” With this description, the novel then communicates a detailed picture of the attitude towards homosexuality during the time span of this study: silences and possibilities, the latter cleverly conveyed. In this respect, *Dusty Answer* is an exemplary symbol of the whole of the study: it shows what was possible to get published in Finnish, and due to which criteria – rather little “needed” to be changed in the translation. Novels as Lehmann’s were thus legitimate after small “corrections”. In the case of *Dusty answer*, probably also the fact that the girls are not yet grown up, plays an essential role. In search of their identity, teenagers are allowed more than adults would be. Novels that used a more overt way to introduce queerness in a positive way in their plot, in contrast, were mostly doomed to be rejected, either in the original or in translation, and certainly by the critique.

The exclusion of potential outsiders is also reflected in the silences concerning the expression of feelings when Jennifer does not talk to Judith about her love for her as openly as would be necessary. Again, silence is here a conscious choice of the character for staging expectations of heterosexuality. Jennifer also behaves in the same way towards Geraldine as she did towards Judith: she is silent and does not tell everything she might want to. Judith suddenly understands Geraldine: “That was it then: the woman was afraid. She had given herself away at last: she knew the terrible insecurity of loving Jennifer. Judith felt a quiver of new emotion dart through her: it seemed like a faint pity.” The mutual jealousy, however, is not over, they continue in a crosstalk to find out who is closer to Jennifer. It seems to be Geraldine, with her experience from the world outside the college that makes her let interpret Jennifer’s needs: “She’s starting to find herself. It’s very interesting. Of course nobody’s understood her here.” Judith still does not give up: “Judith rose and stood before her, looking full at her for the last time. She thought suddenly: ‘But she’s not beautiful! She’s hideously ugly, repulsive.’ That broad heavy face and thick neck, those coarse and masculine features, that hothouse skin: What taste Jennifer must have to find her attractive! ...” It is the looks of the stereotypical butch, and Judith at the same time realises how fascinating Geraldine is, despite her looks: “You would never forget her face, her form. You would see it and dream of it with painful desire: as if she could satisfy something, some hunger, if she would. But she was not for you. The secret of her magnetism, her rareness must be for ever beyond reach; but not beyond

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592 Humble 2001, 236.
imagination.” Here, Judith is faced with the ambivalences of her own identity: she hates Geraldine and is fascinated by her at the same time, since she is, on the one hand, able to be with Jennifer, but she also knows who she is, where she stands within the game of gender roles. Judith is only able to imagine a life like this, a queer identity, but, assumed that she is fully aware of herself being somewhere in between hetero- and homosexual desire, she does not and cannot act it out. These relationships – Jennifer, Judith, Geraldine – are a very central and apparent triangle in the novel, since it is the place where feelings are spoken out. But the triangle cannot end happily, not even for two of the three. Judith is namely not the only one limited in her acting; Jennifer meets the same fate as many lesbian or queer characters have met in literature until the recent decades, however in a maybe milder version than often, when the queer character dies: Jennifer, after Geraldine has left, first gets sick, and then leaves the college before finishing her exams. It is only much later that we hear from her again, when she sends her regards via one of the cousins whom she has randomly met in Scotland. She seems to be well again, but there is no word of her either working, being married, or in any relationship, neither with a man nor a woman. She sends a letter to Judith some time later, and also agrees to meet Judith in Cambridge, but she never appears. In her letter about the meeting, she already pre-warns that she might not appear, or not be able to. It is only this incident that makes Judith finally see clearer and thus become ready and willing to start anew.

That the critics called the original “the outpourings of a sex-maniac” only showed, also according to Lehmann herself in her book *The Swan in the Evening. Fragments of an Inner Life* (1967) that the British critique: “had little to do with art and everything to do with gender. Quite simply, she had dared to violate the moral obligations of her sex.” Moreover, in many of Lehmann’s novels “[t]he battleground is sex, and the conflict has as much to do with unconscious dread as with conscious desires.” These characteristics apply very much to *Dusty Answer*, where at least Judith, Jennifer and Roddy are confronted with this conflict of both dread and desire with regard to their sexual identity to which they react on the one hand quite differently, but in the end the result is the same: all three of them deny their queerness either by rejecting the object of their love, or by rejecting themselves.

Andrea Lewis also asks the question why *Dusty Answer*, in contrast to *The Well of Loneliness*, was not banned by British authorities. It is, Lewis argues, the hidden features of the novel that make it very much possible to interpret the relationship between Judith and Jennifer, or between Jennifer and Geraldine, via a queer reading as a lesbian one, but within the frameworks of a heteronormative reading one can also completely read over these

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596 Haule 1985, 192.
relationships and dispose them as teenage friendships. Yet, the references, both in the original and in the translation, are nevertheless there and also have been in the 1920s, as for example in the discussion between Judith and Geraldine demonstrates. Lewis mentions in this context also the decision of the British Parliament a few years earlier, in 1921, when some members tried to outlaw female homosexuality. They did not succeed due to an interesting reason, which was the same that had been discussed in Sweden in the middle of the 19th century: it was argued that a ban on lesbianism would only encourage women who not even knew of its possibility. Thus, to ban a novel that only suggests female same-sex desire, Lewis argues, would have been contra-productive, since those who did not even know of its existence would also not have been able to read anything “abnormal” in it. The question arises here whether this thought was also a reason for the fact that there were seemingly no reviews of the Finnish translation. This argument by the politicians tells probably more about the view on female sexuality and the general under-estimation of women’s ability to think than of anything else. It is, moreover, intriguing that, as Lewis shows, also the research on Lehmann has very rarely addressed the topic.597 Lewis argues – and I agree with the latter part also for the Finnish context – that the depiction of lesbianism in the 1920s and 1930s still was conceived of only in terms of heterosexuality; that is, lesbian couples were seen to be compromised of a masculine woman and a feminine woman, the masculine woman taking on the desires and roles of a heterosexual man. […] The way in which readers identified a lesbian relationship was by recognizing a heterosexual dynamic in the relationship between the two women, by recognizing a masculine form of sexual desire exhibited by a woman for another, more feminine, woman.598

These features do not apply to the main queer characters in Dusty Answer. Both Judith and Jennifer are depicted as feminine women; it is only (the unsympathetic) Geraldine who has features that are associated with masculine behaviour, like smoking. In contrast to the relationship between the butch-figure of Geraldine and Jennifer, of which we however know only little and which is brought to the reader only via the narration of third parties, there is an absence of male desire within the relationship between Judith and Jennifer. This absence, then, made it not immediately apparent for readers to interpret it as a lesbian one, and thus it could pass censorship without further problems.599 Furthermore, the possibility to read the relationship between the two women as a mere friendship made it also pass Finnish criteria that made it acceptable to be translated. The novel contains no “indecent” incidents, but depicts its queerness in a way that enables the reader to “ignore” the passages

599 Lewis 1999, 359.
that are queer. Yet, the question whether the Finnish publisher had read the reviews of the original, remains unanswered, since there is no material available any more that might give an answer. One can, however, assume that the reviews were read before the novel was translated. The Swedish translation of Dusty Answer was published only in 1930, so that the idea to translate the book this time did not come from the Swedish edition. With regard to the question of women and their duty of national reproduction, Britain was quite similar to Finland at the time after the First World War. Lewis notes that novels dealing with lesbianism still usually followed the heterosexual model. Dusty Answer is thus an exception and a novelty insofar as it “subverts national and imperial ideologies, which depended desperately on reproduction, in ways that other lesbian novels of the period did not.”

And since the novel does not reflect traditional patterns of heterosexuality within its lesbian plot, “it suggests the extent to which lesbianism can challenge sexual and national protocols dependent on traditional gender patterns. To define lesbianism in its own terms [...] is to transgress the very national protocols into which traditional gender patterns fed.”

A last topic in my analysis of Dusty Answer is the use of words with regard to queer features. There is no word that would indicate homosexuality or lesbianism. Therefore, I also insist on the use of queer when describing the characters of the novels, since “lesbian”, as explicated in the introduction, would limit the characters to a certain identity, which is not the aim here. The restraint regarding the use of words indicating same-sex desire is implicitly mentioned in one of the very few articles on Lehmann in Finnish. The poet and literary scholar Lauri Viljanen, who was also a member of the group Tulenkantajat writes in his book Taisteleva humanismi (“Fighting humanism”) from 1936 that Lehmann’s books are characterised by being “more restrainedly referential than purely bravely told.” This sentence might also refer to her way of writing about queerness, at least from today’s perspective. Viljanen is rather thrilled by Lehmann’s writing; he also refers to the queer content in a very short reference when listing up the novel’s content and events: “Studies at Cambridge follow, and a passionate girlfriendship with the terrific Jennifer, dissonance and separation.” The word “girlfriendship” he uses is a rather uncommon word; “tyttöystävä” means a female partner within a relationship, although it might be also used as a female friend, if one wants to make a clear difference between male and female friends. Thus, Viljanen plays with the word and its two meanings, but does not have to define the relationship in more detail. It is a reception that can be described as “closeted”, i.e. Viljanen tells, but at the same time conceals the breaking of heteronormative rules.

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600 Lewis 1999, 360.
602 Viljanen 1936, 506. “[...] enemmän hillityn viittauksellisesti kuin paljaan rohkeasti kerrotut.”
603 Viljanen 1936, 507. “Seuraa opiskelu Cambridgessä ja kiihkeä tyttöystävyys hurjan Jenniferin kanssa, epäpitoistu ja ero.”

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In the original, the word “queer” is used quite often. Since it has had different significations, it is worth having a short look at the history of this word in the English language as well as at its translation into Finnish in the different contexts of the novels analysed. The English term “queer” that means on the one hand “odd” or “strange” was, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, used to describe homosexuals since the beginning of the 20th century and seems to have been in use since, although mostly in a negative way until the 1980s, when homosexual men started to use the term to define themselves.\textsuperscript{604} It is worth noticing that the way in which texts were translated and the question of a Finnish equivalent to the word queer also are influenced by the time the translation was made; it was, for example, translated with the adjectives “omituisen” or “kummallinen” (strange, odd, weird, peculiar).\textsuperscript{605} When the word “queer” is mentioned in the English original of *Dusty answer* for the first time – “[a]part from the thrill which her own queerness gave [...]” –, the word is translated into Finnish with “omituisuus”\textsuperscript{606}, which means strangeness, oddness. Already on the next page, Roddy is called queer – and here we can assume, after having read the whole novel, that it indeed might mean homosexual: “Queer Roddy must be twenty-one now [...].” This is again translated with “omituisen”: “Omituisen Roddyn täytyyy nyt olla yhdenkolmatta [...].”\textsuperscript{607} The term queer is mostly used for describing men, also Tony, who is throughout the novel characterised as gay:

Tony Baring sat opposite and stared with liquid expressive blue eyes. He had a sensitive face, changing all the time, a wide mouth with beautiful sensuous lips, thick black hair and a broad white forehead with the eyebrows meeting above the nose, strongly marked and noble. [...] He looked like a young poet. Suddenly she noticed his hands, – thin unmasculine hands, – queer hands – making nervous appealing ineffectual gestures that contradicted the nobility of his head.\textsuperscript{608}

In this context, in combination with words like “unmasculine”, it is rather obvious that the term indicates Tony’s sexual orientation. The same passage, describing Tony’s hands in Finnish goes as follows:

Äkkiä Judith pani merkille hänen kätensä – hennot, epämiesmäiset kädet – kummalliset kädet – jotka liikahetelivat hermostuneesti, vetoavasti, tehottomasti, mikä oli ristiriidassa hänen päänsä ylevän muodon kanssa.\textsuperscript{609}

It is the word “kummallinen” that is used in this context for “queer”, which means “strange”, “odd” or “weird”. It has no sexual connotation whatsoever. The Finnish language, one has to add here, did not have a word like queer at the time when the book was translated. Only much later, in the 1980s and

\textsuperscript{604} Soanes/ Stevenson 2008, 1177.  
\textsuperscript{605} Soanes/ Stevenson 2008, 1177.  
\textsuperscript{606} Lehmann 1927, 4/ Lehmann 1928, 8.  
\textsuperscript{607} Lehmann 1927, 5/ Lehmann 1928, 10.  
\textsuperscript{608} Lehmann 1927, 106.  
\textsuperscript{609} Lehmann 1928, 143–144.
1990s, words like “pervo” (perv, from “perverssi”, i.e. perverse) appeared on a more regular basis describing homosexual behaviour. Yet, the word “perverssi” was already used in the 19th century to describe “unnatural” traits. The translation, then, unavoidably misses some of the nuances of the original text that plays with ambiguity. The translation of the term “queer” with words that simply mean “strange”, the lack of any direct links on homosexuality and queerness as demonstrated above, and the quality of the book that only hints on same-sex desire, but needs its reader to interpret them, made it with no doubt possible to publish it in Finnish. Consequently, in the case of Elämänhurman häipyessä, publishing also to some degree can be read in the light of institutionalised heterosexuality since the translation was moderated in a few parts of the text.

The fact that the work was not as clearly in its depiction of queerness as the original is also confirmed by an article written by the Finnish author Mirkka Rekola who, born in 1931, had early realised that she was different from the other girls: “I became fond of girls, I was unhappily in love. I realized that I could not be the only one in the world. I read a lot, wondered why no one wrote about it. Until I realised that these feelings were forbidden. Rosamond Lehmann’s book Elämänhurman häipyessä referred to such feelings between girls, but it only referred to them.” Yet, as shown, a queer reading that catches the silences of the text, and not least what appears as deviant and odd and which breaches normative understandings about gender and sexuality, can open up the novel’s different, heteronormative-critical dimensions. Apparently, as stated, there were no reviews of the novel when it was published. Silence from the part of the critique, then, is a key word in the case of this translation, as it was with the Finnish novels analysed so far. As Pekka Kujamäki writes, it was quite common in the time between the wars that the magazines available like Aika, Valvoja, Argus or Suomalainen Suomi mostly reviewed translations of classics or works translated by a known author and did not take into account literature that was then contemporary; also the question why something was translated was not discussed much; groups like

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612 As the librarian Petri Kaihoja from the Finnish Literature Society stated, “suomalaisten lehtiartikkelien luettelointitiedot ovat 1900-luvun alkupuolen osalta puutteellisia. Kirjallisuusartikkelien osalta tämä pätee erityisesti päivänkohtaisiin kirjallisuuskritiikkeihin ja ulkomaisia kirjallijoiden koskeviin suomenkielisiin.” (E-mail from 21.5.2010) Later, in 2000, Elämänhurman häipyessä was mentioned in a work on the writer Martti Terho. Ritva Sievänen-Allen (1930–2009), professor for library studies who has saved her letters from Terho, writes that she had discussed the novel with him who had not liked it (although they also did not read it in the time span of this study, but in the 1950s). She describes the novel as follows: “Aiheena on, kuten Lehmannin useissa myöhemmissäin romaaneissa: nuori tyttö ja hänen kasvunsa naiseksi. Taustalla erottuu englantilainen luokkayhteiskunta sosiaalisine rajoineen, sovinnaiskuineen ja pinnallisine elämänarvoineen.” Sievänen-Allen 2000, 140.
Tulenkantajat (and their magazines) tried to function as an opposing force, but could not, of course, cover all that was published.613

Also the archive is silent in this case. A correspondence with Karisto in Hämeenlinna revealed that the archive, at least old material from the 1920s, was not necessarily saved when the publisher moved in the 1980s.614 This case brings up the question of power that can also exist between researcher and archive, not only between author and publisher. Archives do not only exert power by their being systematised according to certain ideas and values, but also by their mere accessibility and the willingness of those who are in charge to preserve them. It is not silence of the archive in this case, but oblivion.

614 Tiina Laaksonen/Karisto, E-mail from 17.11.2009. “The correspondence from such a distant time is not in any reasonable order; actually, I do not recall that I would have come across such an old correspondence. We moved into new premises in the year 1980 and it might be that such an old correspondence was destroyed.”
4 Silent in Finnish, Possible in Swedish

The works analysed so far were exemplary ones that were published and included queer characters and topics in either a negative, but confirming way with regard to prevailing moral values, like Waltari’s works, or in a subtle and positive way like Pennanen’s, Soini’s and Lehmann’s works. The outcome of Chapter 3 and the possibilities of queer topics can best be summed up in the word “subtle”: the queer reading of the works has shown that it was possible to introduce queer characters or topics into literature published in Finnish, yet dependent on the way this introduction was conducted. Introducing unwelcome topics into works in between the lines means to resist against set rules. But to be powerful, this resistance, as said, needs to be recognised. Mostly, it was up to the reader to read between the lines in so far as the depictions offered a positive alternative with their queer topics and in so far as the reader owned the ability to read beyond heteronormative expectations. Some of the reviewers recognised the topics; others either did not, or they did not mention them which also means that they are not recognised publicly. The so-called pertinence principle namely is based on the interest of the individual, also a reviewer, and defines the features that can be perceived as positively or negatively interesting. If certain characteristics are left out totally, they are not recognised at all. This observation of the possibility of a subtle introduction of queer topics is consolidated by a queer reading of the works in the following chapter.

The task of a queer reading, as stated in the introduction, is to show “how different cultural discourses and representations as well as general value-constellations and conceptions of the queer, or more correctly queernesses, on the one hand, and heterosexuality on the other hand are constructed, how it is represented and how its different representations of sexuality affect understandings of sexuality and especially the queer.”615 The works that will be analysed here were either not published in Finnish during the 1920s and 1930s, or they were published or available in Finland, but in Swedish. In this chapter, especially the relationship between the two literary fields in Finland, the Finnish and the Finland-Swedish, as well as their differences will be in focus.

As stated earlier, silences in literature most likely concern political meaning; especially they do so when touching the realms of sexuality and gender. Following Sanna Karkulehto, “the political that remains invisible usually follows the norms of society and culture, i.e. it is normative or even normalising, and society and culture [that] support the invisibility of the descriptions and contents that follow norms are normative and normalising.”616 Thus, silences can be manifold and be applied for very

615 Karkulehto 2012, 27.
616 Karkulehto 2012, 29.
different reasons, as shown. It may be a conscious choice by the author, or a silence imposed from outside. When talking about non-published books and silences, the word censorship immediately comes to mind. The censorship of books includes many factors and must be understood in a broader sense, it can be internal, i.e. something that keeps a writer (unconsciously) from writing about certain topics, or external. External censorship means a form of deliberate censorship due to predominant discourses that do not allow certain topics and make them unthinkable, i.e. self-censorship by publishers, translators or authors. As Ilkka Arminen states, the freedom of speech had become narrower by the 1920s. This development had its background in a certain self-censorship that had its origins in historically earlier conditions of censorship that tied those who expressed their opinion to the governmental power of censorship.\textsuperscript{617} A good example here is a comment by the author Helvi Hämäläinen on her novel \textit{Kaunis sielu} in 1972 that shows a deliberate censorship, a silencing of herself because she knew that the topic of same-sex desire that was central to her book could not be openly named. A consequence of her self-censorship is the denial of knowledge when she says that “this work must have developed intuitively, since I did not know that a person can erotically love her own sex.”\textsuperscript{618} Censorship cannot be seen as wantonly repression. Rather, censorship that is not understandable to a broader degree within a culture will not succeed: successful censorship is built upon the structures of the culture and fills them.\textsuperscript{619}

In this study, the question of direct, external censorship comes up mainly with regard to translations, while self-censorship by authors or publishers dominated within the works published in Finnish. Zola’s \textit{Nana} was translated twice, once in a complete and then in an abridged version, which can be interpreted in this case as censored by the publisher. Not only the elimination of text-passages can be called censorship, but “[a]s censorship can also be counted the unfaithful translation of the original text, in other words, changing it. Often this is not intentional censorship, but also in this case it does not do justice to the original work. In the beginnings of Finnish translation, this phenomenon was quite common.”\textsuperscript{620} In general, one can say that the transfer of works from one culture to another, like in the form of adaptations, is always

\textsuperscript{617} Arminen 1989, 68.
\textsuperscript{619} Arminen 1989, 69–70.
\textsuperscript{620} Kuisma 1996, 152. “Sensuroinniksi voidaan myös laskea alkuperäistekstin epäuskollinen käänäminen, ts. sen maantaminen. Usein tämä ei ole intentionaalista sensuuria, mutta sinäkään tapauksessa se ei tee oikeutta alkuperäistekoselle. Suomalaisen käänöstöiminnan alkutaipaleella tämä ilmkiö oli hyvin yleinen.” Kuisma names Shakespeare’s \textit{Macbeth} in the translation from 1834 as an example, which is a mere variation of the original (in Finnish \textit{Ruunulinna}, transl. by J.F. Lagervall) or Daniel Defoe’s \textit{Robinson Crusoe} whose first translation as \textit{Robinpoika Kruuse} in 1847 was published as a variation, as well as later translations were: the version from 1911, for example, called \textit{Risto Roopenpojan ihmeellinen elämä} is far away from the original, being set in the Finnish harbour city Kotka. All these need to be called adaptations, rather than translations.
also about the transfer of values. “Insofar as the value orientations of the interacting societies are far away from each other, an effort to limit the transfers or hinder them can manifest itself. Especially in the focus are the values that aim at socialising or transferring practises of sexuality and violence that come from cultural streams outside of the society.” As Kuisma states, in the history of translations into Finnish it has been the works that have threatened the monolithic culture by their depiction of sexuality that did not represent the prevailing ideas, like works that have insulted the holiness of marriage, or (homo)sexuality.\(^6^2^1\) It is such works that are in the focus of this study, the term queer being understood as everything that undermines heteronormative values, that is marriage, the demand of heterosexuality, or motherhood.

The factors within society that have influenced the production of literature in whichever country are religion, politics and – closely connected to them – discourses about gender and sexuality. While it has long been religion that was the main reason for censorship (the Catholic Church’s list of forbidden books is probably the best example), in 20\(^{th}\) century-Europe it has often also been politics that were a reason for censorship, as for example the Hitler- and Stalin-regimes in Europe showed. When censorship is about morals, the problem is often the question what morals are and who is authorised to define them.\(^6^2^2\) In terms of censorship in the context of non-heteronormativity and literature in Finland, it is especially the relationship between the representatives of the book market and the church as well as the mostly conservative-minded intellectual elites that needs to be examined. Religion and politics then become part of the moral censorship, as well. Although Finnish publishers were not officially tied to political parties or the church, some of them nevertheless kept close and loyal connections to those institutions, especially so in the time between the two world wars. The big publishers functioned not only as doormen watching over the literary standard, but also as moral doormen, controlling the entry of authors and topics into the public.\(^6^2^3\) Also here, then, the question to which extent publishing represents institutionalised heterosexuality, is central. Yet, publishers were also flexible and of course, publishing novels that dealt with relationships between women or merely with the problematisation of the ideal of motherhood was not a topic that went without discussion in any other Western country. And neither was it an easy topic for authors, regardless of their political or sexual orientation.

In the following, I will analyse five works and their relation to the topic of queerness and analyse why they were not published in Finnish. These works are Alma Söderhjelm’s *Kärlekens väninna*, published in Swedish at Söderströms in Helsinki in 1922, Helvi Hämäläinen’s *Kaunis sielu*, written in 1928 and published only after her death in 2001 by WSOY, and Hagar Olsson’s

\(^{6^2^1}\) Kuisma 1996, 154.
\(^{6^2^2}\) Niemi 1991, 79.
\(^{6^2^3}\) Sevänen 1994, 161.
På Kanaanexpressen, published by Holger Schildt who in 1929, when the book came out, had already moved to Sweden. The last examples in this chapter are also connected to Sweden: Margareta Suber’s Charlie (1932), (one of) the first “lesbian” novel in Swedish language, and Radclyffe Hall’s The Well of Loneliness, which was translated into Finnish as late as 2010, but available in Swedish already in 1932. These two works will serve as examples to demonstrate what kind of books were available in Swedish language, Finland’s second official language, and in which way they were recognised in Finland. Sweden was also the most important book market when it came to buying books for the translation into Finnish. The last example will be Émile Zola’s novel Nana which is special in many respects, and in this context because it was translated twice into Finnish within a rather short time period of only 22 years. First, it came out in Finnish in 1930 in a complete version, including the same-sex relationship between the protagonist and her best friend. When it was re-translated in 1952, those passages were missing. It is a non-linearity within the publishing of queer topics the case of Nana emphasises, even more than all the other works.

In this chapter about silences of the Finnish book market, I will, following Foucault, again ask in which way the system of differentiations (status, economy etc.) interfered within publishing: were authors and publishers on the same level of power when it came to their texts, and which were the aims that stood behind possible interferences of (usually) publishers? Also important is the question of the modalities of this power: in which way was power exerted within the literary field concerning the censorship of queer topics, and how effective was it? While in the cases of the novels analysed in Chapter 3 the ways of undermining power were writing styles or literary techniques that enabled to subtly write queer topics into the works, the works of this chapter demonstrate the limits of the possibilities of writing: it is neither quality nor sale numbers or status that counted, but also morals set the limit. The examples, moreover, show that power is not static, but that it changes with the circumstances. Both the examples of the Finland-Swedish literary field and the political development show that the more we reach into the 1930s in the Finnish-speaking literary field, the stronger also the exertion of power due to moral values gets.

4.1 Finland-Swedish Novels: Scandalous Sensationalism versus a Pan-European Utopia

This chapter focusses on two novels that were published in Finland in Swedish, yet never translated into Finnish: Alma Söderhjelm’s (1870–1949) Kärlekens väninna (1922), and Hagar Olsson’s (1893–1978) På Kanaanexpressen (1929). Söderhjelm’s novel was the author’s first fictional work. At the time the novel was published, Söderhjelm was already a person of public interest, since she worked as a senior lecturer in history at Helsinki University, being the first
female teacher in such a position; five years later, in 1927, she became a professor of history at Åbo Akademi. During her career as a historian, she wrote about 15 works about French history, in which she had specialised. Such a career was not at all self-evident for a woman at this time. When Söderhjelm went to school, there was no education yet for girls that would have led to university. She was the 19th woman in Finland to receive the baccalaureate, and in 1900 the 3rd one to receive a PhD. When she applied for a special dispensation in 1911 to become a professor, which was not possible by law, she got rejected due to her being a woman. This rejection was one of the reasons for her to become a writer and journalist.\textsuperscript{624} From the beginnings of the 1920s, she lived in Stockholm. Maybe because of her move to Sweden, Söderhjelm has never really become a part of Finland-Swedish literary history. As Merete Mazzarella in an article on the novel remarks, she is not even named in the literary history Åttio år finlandssvensk litteratur by Thomas Warburton from 1984, which is still one of the standard works. During her life-time, however, she was mentioned in a similar work, Modern finlandssvensk litteratur by John Landqvist in 1929, who praised her talent in writing.\textsuperscript{625}

*Kärlekens väninna* is set in Finland and Sweden in the times around the Finnish Civil War. It was published by Söderströms and combines different “scandalous” plots. In the first part, its main character, a young, unmarried woman called Elsa who works as a journalist, has an affair with Ragnar, a married man (again, a triangle situation, yet a purely heterosexual one). Several times, their relationship ends and starts again. It ends for good after he becomes a father, gets sick and loses his eyesight. In the second part of the novel, Elsa lives in Stockholm to get some distance from Ragnar and her life in Finland. While her “sexual instinct seems impossible to still”\textsuperscript{626}, as the newspaper *Wiborgs Nyheter* writes, she meets the Swede Erik on a vacation with her friend Judith (who, after their recreation, dies). Erik struggles with his sexual identity. Elsa and Erik first live together in a platonic friendship until they finally get married after Erik has proposed to her and promised her to be a loyal partner and a good friend. There are public rumours about Erik being gay, but the rumours finally end when Elsa gets pregnant. However, she loses the child and stays childless until the end of the novel. The rumours about Erik seem to be right, as Elsa finds out; still, they probably also derive from the fact that many of Erik’s friends are more or less openly gay – conclusions are made rather easily within the small circles they live in. Within Erik’s circle of friends there is also Sonja, an openly lesbian character. When meeting her first, the rather naïve Elsa fears that Erik and Sonja have an affair, but then she gets to know about Sonja’s preference for women.

Söderhjelm wrote the novel within a short period of time; the ostensible motivation for it was that the inflation at the beginning of the 1920s forced her

\textsuperscript{624} Engman 2005, 122–128.

\textsuperscript{625} Mazzarella 1995, 148.

to find ways to survive in the rather expensive city of Stockholm, where she
spent time made possible by a travel grant. While the novel received some
thankful reviews, she was mostly criticised and entitled “priestess of
perversity” in the yellow press due to the topic of homosexuality that she
openly names. As the author Arvid Mörne wrote in the very first line of his
review in Hufvudstadsbladet, the central Finland-Swedish newspaper, he felt
that it was virtually aimed at sensation.\textsuperscript{627} The book sold well and Söderhjelm
earned even money with it. Söderhjelm’s celebrity as a historian, as well as her
age (she was 52) were reasons for the many reviews her début novel received.
As Söderhjelm herself wrote in her memoirs with the title \textit{Mina sju magra år}
(My seven meagre years) in 1932, the novel was born out of an “accident”, it
was the pure lack of money after a trip to Paris that had made her come up
with the idea of writing fiction and wrote it down quickly.\textsuperscript{628} According to
archival materials, Söderhjelm had offered the novel to Holger Schildt, at that
time still very active in Finland, but in the end the rights were bought by
Söderströms. Bertel Appelberg, the head of Söderströms, was not pleased
about Söderhjelm’s offer to Schildt’s, since Schildt’s had published
Söderhjelm’s earlier works – a collection of poems, for example – that had not
sold very well. However, Schildt’s then offered the manuscript to Söderströms
who finally published it; the two Finland-Swedish publishers presumably tried
to sustain their good relationship, despite being competitors.\textsuperscript{629} Another
interesting detail with regard to the production of the novel is the fact that the
press who printed the novel managed to destroy the new edition that should
have come out before Christmas. As for example the Swedish boulevard
magazine \textit{Gnistan} rumoured, this was due to the fact that the head of the press,
a man called A.V. Nylander, was supposed to be the model for one of the
novel’s protagonists.\textsuperscript{630} However, a letter between Tor Bonnier, who had
actually published it in Sweden, and Söderhjelm, does not mention this. They
only write about the fact that Schildt’s, who had printed it, had stopped the
production without order from Bonniers. Although Bonniers was the main
publisher, the book was printed in Finland for Finnish bookshops and
published there by Söderströms so that it could be sold for a reasonable

\textsuperscript{627} Mörne, Arvid: "Alma Söderhjelms nya bok", \textit{Hufvudstadsbladet} 12.12.1922. Mörne, however,

admitted that the book has many positive sides, especially aesthetically and stylistically.

\textsuperscript{628} Söderhjelm 1932, 68–69.

\textsuperscript{629} Engman 1996, 410. See: Åbo Akademis bibliotek: Alma Söderhjelms samling, Bertel Appelberg
till Alma Söderhjelm 31.10.1922: “Jag blev verkligen mycket ledsen, då jag fick det [brevet], ty jag hade
ju ändå Edert uttryckliga löfte att i första hand bli erbjudan förlagsrätten för Finland till Eder roman.”

“Så snart Schildt fick reda på, hur saken förhöll sig, ansåg han det korrekt att överlåta arbetet åt oss, ty
vi söka trots konkurrens upprätthålla goda förbindelser mellan oss.”

\textsuperscript{630} Engman 1996, 238. Söderhjelm wrote to Tor Bonnier (2.10.1922, Bonniers’ archive) that she
would be willing to change some of the most daring parts if that would be necessary (Söderhjelm: 1932,
72). \textit{Gnistan} wrote about the fact that the book was sold out, but not only due to its indecency, but also
due to the fact that it was printed in Finland and the pressman had found himself as a model for the
book, so that he rejected to print more. See: Åbo Akademis bibliotek: Alma Söderhjelms arkiv, Mapp 21
A.S. Recensioner av AS’s romaner, dramer o. essäsamlingar, N.N.: “En malör för Alma Söderhjelm”,
\textit{Gnistan}, 9/1/23.
The topics and characters of the novel had their roots in Söderhjelm’s own experiences within her circle of friends and acquaintances to which a rather big amount of homo- or bisexual people belonged. Yet, in her memoirs, Söderhjelm wrote that after having finished the novel she said, according to her own memory of the moment: “Now I know at least one thing: that I wrote from my own fantasy, and not about any living human being.” Nevertheless, she immediately continues and writes: “but our ‘subconsciousness’ is inscrutable and plays us many evil tricks.”

In contrast to an abundance of reviews, there is not much research on Söderhjelm’s novel. Yet, her importance as a central figure of the literary field in the first half of the 20th century is nevertheless indicated by a thorough analysis of her work by Bo Lönnqvist from 2013. Lönnqvist, in a literary-anthropological point of view, has a look also at Kärlekens väninna and shows the reception of the novel as well as the reactions from those who thought to be in it. Lönnqvist’s analysis of the novel is largely based on Marja Engman’s dissertation on Söderhjelm and her life and work which takes Söderhjelm also as a fiction writer into account, as well as it is based on archival material that I have used as well.

Kärlekens väninna addresses the topic of homosexuality – both male and female – in an extraordinary way for its time: it seeks for understanding and empathy. This attitude, however, is the reason why many of the coeval critics disapproved and made it into a scandal. Many regarded the novel as indecent and thus not worth to be published. It is not only Erik and his friend to whom homosexuality is directly and openly attributed in Kärlekens väninna. A possible queerness is also attributed to Elsa herself, when Erik in the beginning of their friendship wonders whether Elsa and her friend Judith, with whom she had travelled to Italy, had an intimate relationship. The female protagonist, that is, gets included into the queer discourse of the novel. This rather short episode is also mentioned in Mörne’s review, who disliked the character of Erik and his un-masculine features, and is in favour of “the in all his brutality rather sound Ragnar [...]”, the married man, that is, with whom Elsa has an affair. Mörne, thus, accepts the brutal adulterer, since he is “healthy” in terms of his sexuality. He sets Erik and his “sickness” in contrast to Ragnar, when he writes that “[a]mong the brooms of the Riviera he reasoned about philosophy, friendship and love with the heroine [...]."

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631 Åbo Akademis bibliotek: Alma Söderhjelm's brevsamling 7, Bonniers bok- och tidskriftsförlag, Tor Bonnier till Alma Söderhjelm, Stockholm, 27.12.1922. “[...] det är riktigt att vi de sista 4 dagarna före jul stodo utan exemplar av er bok. [...] efterfrågan på er bok var så pass stor att en upplaga om 500 exemplar säkerligen hade sälts, kanske ytterligare något däröver. Det misstag, som ha begåtts av Schildts i Helsingfors, att de lagt av satsen utan order från vår sida, fingo vi först klart för oss alldeles för sent. [...] Det är Schildts och i viss mån Söderströms som ha för oss försvårat tillhandahållet av exemplar. Det var kanske en dumhet att boken överhuvud taget trycktes i Finland, men detta skedde för att kunna åstadkomma en finländsk upplaga till rimligt pris.”

632 Engman 1996, 236.

633 Söderhjelm 1932, 71. “Nu vet jag åtminstone en sak: och det är att detta är skrivet ur min egen fantasi, och inte är skrivet om någon levande människa.” “... [m]en vårt ’undermedvetande’ är utgivetsamt för oss själva och spela oss mången elakt spratt.”

634 Lönnqvist, 2013.
something more in her relationship to the tuberculous Judith than it actually contained.”

This discussion Mörne refers to is, despite its shortness, quite central. What Erik and Elsa talk about, namely the tiny differences between love and friendship and the possibility of same-sex love, will become important in the very end of the novel, since it implicates much more: Erik and Elsa call into question the idea of the difference between heterosexual love and “mere” friendship per se. And thus they (in this passage only Erik, but later on also Elsa), at the same time question the whole idea of the difference between the sexes and the types of permitted love attributed to them:


Elsa does not admit any desire or love for Judith, but Erik insists on the discussion and thus queerness is attributed to Else, whether she wants to think about it or not. Also Wiborgs Nyheter criticises the novel for discussions like this. In the opinion of the reviewer, it is built merely on erotic sensation, so that scarcely other life values come up and are discussed. “It is love, only love through and through, and a love that is not always according to the usual or the conventionally ‘allowed’ practice.”

Here we get introduced to yet another dimension: decency and the law, that banned homosexuality and that included the earlier explained “encouragement section”. It could have been problematic, as said, to even publish a book with a rather positive


636 Söderhjelm 1922, 97–98. “But isn’t it true: your friendship with your girlfriend – it is nevertheless not ordinary at all?” Elsa laughed. “No, it may be not so ordinary. That means, it happens not so often that women are so cordially fixed to each other as Judith and I am.” – “But you must certainly admit that there is a friendship between women that is very similar to love, or at least touches it?” Elsa thought of Ragnar. “No”, she said seriously. “I at least know nothing about such a feeling.” – “But when your friend would, for example, die?” – “I could not live without her”, Elsa said shortly. – “Well, isn’t this love”, he replied. Elsa had to smile, although the conversation did not invite to that. He always asked such intrusive questions. “Have you ever loved – really loved?” he asked. “Yes.” – “Is this feeling then so different from friendship?” – “Yes, it is. Altogether different.” – “Can’t you describe the difference for me?”


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understanding attitude towards homosexuality. The way in which *Kärlekens väninna* is written could easily have been counted as encouraging – all kinds of love and sexuality, it seems, are allowed in the world of the novel, while heterosexuality, is amongst others connected to adultery and not depicted positively or without struggles in any of the relationships. Yet, as stated earlier, there was no author on trial for writing about homosexuality during that time. Moreover, the more critical parts of the novel are set in Stockholm, which was then known for a less strict attitude towards non-heteronormative ways of life. It is not by accident that homosexuals were also called “Stockholmians”, as the following quote shows where Elsa finally realises that Erik might be gay. While she had not quite understood the hints at first, the scales suddenly fall from her eyes:


Also Sonja's preference for women comes up in the same dialogue between Elsa and her friend Lisa, who tells her that Sonja had been in love with her. For Lisa, this is scandalous:


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638 Söderhjelm 1922, 294. “Suddenly Elsa understood. A cloud of wrath went through her head. For a moment she thought she would faint. Then she got herself together again. "How dare you say anything like that about another person", she said unfriendly. Like a revelation, a memory came over her like a revelation: consul Jönsson’s laugh and whispers, when they saw Erik and Martin at the express trailer at the carnival. And when he said: those are two Stockholmiand. And how he had promised his little wife to tell her at home in the intimacy of the bedroom what they had laughed at. And it was this – this they had laughed at – – “You seem to become terribly sad.” – Yes, I do. I don’t know anything more detestable than to slander someone.” – “It is no slander, I suppose, when the whole world knows it.”

639 Söderhjelm 1922, 293–294. “She [...] wrote letters to me [...] and was so insistent so that my husband had to drive her out.” – “You don’t mean that”, Elsa said. – “Yes, you understand. He wrote to her, friendly but determined. She was in love with me, do you understand”, Lisa replied and lowered her
Via the narrator, i.e. Elsa, the novel supports non-heteronormativity all the way through. In the end of the novel, Elsa begins to understand her husband and his fight against his own desires as well as against the prejudices he is confronted with. And she does not leave him – in contrast: she realises that she loves him more than she has ever loved anyone else.

The deep understanding which Elsa develops for her husband is one part of the novel that many reviews saw as scandalous. She loves him despite his homosexuality. Or even just because of it. With the introduction of the character of his friend Martin, there is again a triangle situation around queer characters: this time, it is two men and a woman, a classic situation, that is, but it is not the men fighting about the woman, but rather the woman fighting about her man. But since he is gay, Elsa cannot win this fight. Yet, she knows how to cope with the situation.

This passage shows the core of the understanding Elsa has suddenly gained. She knows the pains and struggles Erik must have gone through, and that she never can reach the same level of these pains she has due to his homosexuality. She compares his pain to her own when she had the affair with Ragnar that had no future, as Erik’s longing does not have one. And Elsa goes even further. She is hard on those who convict people like Erik, those who “stamped themselves as stains on Earth, as bad, sinful people.” Actually, Söderhjelm here took action on the reviewers as well, before they even had written their scathing reviews. Yet, Elsa fears that she is not better than them: “But was she different than one of those short-sighted, blown-up, proud people, who only took care of what they themselves thought was good and

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voice secretively. Elsa had to laugh. Lisa’s world seemed so unproportionally small compared to the big words she used. “This is not so terrible”, Elsa said. “Oh yes, it was just that: terrible. That’s what Axel said to me. I myself maybe would not have understood it. She is – she is? – ‘She is what? Tell me’, Elsa said amused. “No, I can’t say that to you. You are so – stupid. So innocent, you wouldn’t comprehend.”

640 Söderhjelm 1922, 325. “She thought of Erik. How little warmth had there been around in their home? Ever since she had begun to understand the problem of his life, she had merely thought of herself. There was no other response than coldness and distrust, wherever he went. Why hadn’t he said anything? Why had he accepted all the bitter and silent reproaches from her without saying a word? She had not understood. But now she did. None of these accusations could have been bitterer, more painful than those he accused himself of: from morning till night, from night till morning. Under the long, long silent hours of the night – None of her fears or horrors, nor her despair had been so enormous that he had not gone through them himself.”
believed that one could reject everything else with a shrug? She was so small! [...] Why had she then only taken distrust into her hands, when she went to him? Never love.”

With all these statements the novel makes, it is intriguing that the novel got published both in Sweden and in Finland. Moreover, Bertel Appelberg, Söderströms’ head of publishing, was impressed by the book, as he wrote in a letter to Söderhjelm:


Appelberg, thus, seems to have found the topic not only interesting and important, but also dealt with in the best way possible. Here, the earlier discussed question of power is equally distributed between the publisher and the author. Yet, it is astonishing that those parts of the novel that address the queerness of the characters were mentioned and discussed by many reviews more or less extensively. The rather large number of reviews and their length means also that the book was widely recognised, probably especially due to the fact that Söderhjelm was known in her profession as a historian. And the book sold well; it was sold out before Christmas, after having come out only in the autumn. However, it may on the other hand not surprise that the reviews were mostly negative in the way that they did not understand why Söderhjelm, who had been an acknowledged academic, wrote a novel about a topic like “free

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642 Åbo Akademis bibliotek: Alma Söderhjelm’s samling, brevsamling 2, Bertel Appelberg till Alma Söderhjelm 18.12.1922. “What I very much like about your book is the real feeling that it draws. It is the same feeling I valued in your poems, and which never had something disgraceful about it, since everything is so direct, so intensively felt and experienced. And its style is fluent and secure; the book is well-narrated. The book is, of course, very concentrically composed and the whole milieu seen only through the lens of the heroine, but this is a condition for getting a stronger and warmer atmosphere. The topic itself is dealt with as discretely and considerate as it was possible.”

643 Åbo Akademis bibliotek: Alma Söderhjelm’s samling, brevsamling 2, Bertel Appelberg till Alma Söderhjelm 18.12.1922 and Åbo Akademis bibliotek: Alma Söderhjelm’s samling, brevsamling 2, Bertel Appelberg till Alma Söderhjelm 23.01.1923. The book sold in several thousand copies before Christmas. In January, Appelberg sent another letter to Söderhjelm and told her about the even better sale numbers, all in all 4500 copies in two editions within only a few months.

Most of the archival materials, however, are minutes and letters between publisher and author which mostly contain rather practical things, especially discussions about payments. Often there is not much discussion about content in these documents; these, one can assume, were led rather in personal meetings. This is also an assumption the archivist Martin Ellfolk at Åbo Akademi made concerning Alma Söderhjelm’s archive and the little material it includes with regard to the correspondence between her and her publisher Söderströms. (8.1.2014, during my visit at Åbo Akademi).
Mörne, accordingly, wonders, after having described all the relationships within the book in detail, whether Söderhjelm might have overstated her case.

Mörne admits on the one hand that everything that is outside the norms needs to be dealt with, but he thinks that it should not be discussed in fiction, for it is a topic that needs medical assistance, not mental. With his listings of Hirschfeld and other sexologists, it also becomes clear that the works of the most important sexologists were known to Mörne. With the reviews of the works discussed so far in mind, which usually did not mention the queer plots or characters despite their existence in the texts, it is striking that actually all reviews of Söderhjelm’s novel discuss the characters’ sexuality. It is exactly these features where the critique hits at, mostly accusing the book/author of taking a too affirmative position on the topic. These reviews, as well as the novel itself, imply that addressing queerness in the Finland-Swedish literary field was more probable and easier than in the Finnish. Of course, also the novel dealt far more directly with the tabooed topic. It was not silenced in the reviews, but taken up and discussed thoroughly. Even the feminists were critical. In the magazine Astra, the mouthpiece of the Swedish women’s association in Finland, the critic Ingrid af Schultén states that Söderhjelm would try to describe “a perversity that can evoke only aversion in a healthy person” in a sympathetic way that made these persons “unhappy victims of a

644 Arvid Mörne: “Alma Söderhjelms nya bok”, Hufvudstadsbladet 12.12.1922. “Has not the whole description of the Venus Urania-devotee’s life as a painful fight against the unnatural failed? Can one speak in general about a fight? The “unhappy” finds himself mostly with a certain resigned pleasure in his destiny. But he obviously pays a heavy price and with reason, when he is so insane that he wants to marry. His case needs no defence. He does not need the pleadings of a literary advocate, but the advice and rules of conduct of an incorruptible physician. For further information see von Krafft–Ebing, Hirschfeld, Forel o.s. sexualpatologer. Det synes, med förlov sagt, som om ämnet lämpligare låte behandla sig i specialundersökningar än i en för den stora läsande allmänheten avsedd roman.644

645 Hirschfeld was translated into Swedish only in 1952, but there were two works by Krafft–Ebing available already in the 1880s: Om friska och sjuka nerver (1885) and En studie om hypnotismens område (1888). Also Auguste Forel’s works, like Den sexuella frågan (1905) or Sexuell etik (1906) were translated immediately after they had been published in German in the beginnings of the 20th century. In 1911, one of Forel’s articles was translated into Finnish.
harsh destiny". She furthermore writes that the book does not succeed in evoking positive feelings towards these people. Her review ends scathingly: she concedes that it is a pity that Söderhjelm has taken up the topic, since, she writes, to make such a topic enjoyable, it would need the hand of a superior artist. Af Schultén agrees with Mörne:

Åtminstone låter hon sin hjältinna komma till den uppfattningen att män och kvinnor med sådana perversa böjelser äro olyckliga offer för ett hårt öde och följaktligen förtjänsta av det varmaste deltagande och största överseende. Riktigheten av detta uppfattningssätt förefaller synnerligen tvivelaktig och det är utan beklagande man konstaterar, att Kärlekens väninna knappast är ägnad att i detta avseende omstämma någon.

Af Schultén is not necessarily judging in her attitude towards homosexuality, but rather the way it is dealt with in the novel. In the end she draws the conclusion that the novel bears the mark of journalism in the way that it is "hasty, superficially effervescent in the treatment of the topic, incisive and versed style." I, however, would disagree with this opinion, since the novel is rather detailed in its treatment of the topic, given the time it was written in and with the background-knowledge Söderhjelm could have from probably having read the sexologists Mörne cited. There is also one review in the magazine Nya Tidningen that contradicts the reviews of Astra and Hufvudstadsbladet. After being bewildered at first, the newspaper’s editor-in-chief Hjalmar Dahl understands that the book is written with "seriousness in its intent that demands respect, bravely grasping this problem at the borders of the erotic, and it makes a big impression with this." Yet, according to Dahl, it is "not a Christmas book one wants to see laid out on the counters of the bookshops." It is an important book, for Dahl, but not suitable for a broader readership. The Swedish Svenska Pressen, in turn, misses the author’s responsibility that would be able to mark the border between Söderhjelm’s novel and ordinary sensational literature. Interestingly, it is again Arvid

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648 Ingrid af Schultén: “Från böckernas värld. Alma Söderhjelm: Kärlekens väninna”, Astra 1/1923. “At least she lets her heroine come to the understanding that men and women with such perverse tendencies are unhappy victims of a hard destiny and consequently deserve the warmest compassion and greatest forgiveness. The validity of this way of understanding appears to be extremely questionable and it is without regret that one can state that Kärlekens väninna in this respect is hardly suited to change anyone’s mind.”


Mörne who wrote the review. The review is different from the one in *Hufvudstadsbladet*, but communicates the same opinion. That Mörne wrote both for Finnish and Swedish newspapers shows, moreover, how interwoven the Swedish and Finland-Swedish literary field were.

All reviews of *Kärlekens väninna*, moreover, point to the fact that Söderhjelm was very well known for her academic and journalistic work and mostly disappointed the reviewers with her first novel, as for example *Wasabladet* reveals within the first sentences: “That the senior lecturer in history at Helsinki University should publish a novel came as a surprise for most of the people. The astonishment did not decrease when the book came out.”

The reactions to the novel in Finland were in general much weaker than those in Sweden where the reviewers were even more ready to name the topic. While nevertheless most of the reviewers, although they did not appreciate the topic, remained factual in their writings and analyses, there were some, especially from the yellow press, who rather went over the top. That the novel was in addition to its topics written by a woman made the case not easier. *Gnistan*, for example, expresses misogyny and sexism in its review:


As already stated in the analyses of Pennanen’s or Soini’s works, the attitude towards female authors who took up difficult topics was often misogynist, critical and condescending; it was not seen as suitable for women to aspire to write like men did. It is slightly astonishing that this was the case also with Söderhjelm, since she already had taken up a “male” position with being successful in academia. Söderhjelm herself wrote about these misogynist reactions in her memoirs stating that she received many letters, but also experienced direct response of all sorts. Some came to her house to see what the author of such a book looked like; others wondered where she had gotten the idea from. It was especially the character of Erik that provoked responses: some knew similar people and were glad that someone had written about

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653 Åbo Akademis bibliotek: Alma Söderhjelms arkiv, Mapp 21 A.S. Recensioner av AS:s romaner, dramer o. essäsamlingsar, “Caballero”: “Författarinnan som övergår till pornografin. Fenomenet Alma Söderhjelms senaste bravad”, *Gnistan* 31.12.1922. “If *Kärlekens väninna*, as the rubbish is called, would have been written by a young and beautiful woman at the age of about 25, there would come an odour of musk piquancy with it. But this case is far from it, and so it gets a totally different look. Her book, with its roots in erotic abnormalities, remains now entirely a disgusting statement of some sort of climatic hysteria which a healthy woman hides instead of announcing it and making cash out of its print. Dr. Söderhjelm’s book gossips about a vitality of quite remarkable dimensions for her age.”
them. That most of the reviews were not gracious, as Söderhjelm herself wrote, surprised here; mostly, however, she was surprised by the fact that people called the novel immoral, since “[f]or me, this seemed a totally and to a high degree moral book. Also women regarded it as musty, unhealthy and immoral. And still, it should have been a book women could understand.”

However, when Söderhjelm wrote about the novel not being about living examples and immediately afterwards confining her writing, she also here admits that there must have been something in the novel that was not necessarily suitable for everyone: “The only ones I was worried about were the children of my siblings, whom I did not want to give the wrong picture of myself or the phenomena of life in general, which is why I still in the last moment hesitated to let send the book home to my publisher.”

*Kärlekens väninna* also depicts the topic of motherhood, combined with the open references to the homosexuality of some of the characters in an unusual, if not scandalous way for its time. Elsa namely is not the ideal fictional character concerning prevailing ideas about motherhood. She had never dreamed of becoming a mother, but rather wanted to marry without thinking about motherhood: “She had never had any sentimental feeling of motherhood. Earlier, when she had once thought about marrying, it was not with the thought of a child. For her, all that was on another level. She detested everything that proved fruitless.” These thoughts appear when Elsa thinks about her pregnancy. It was mostly Erik who wanted to have a child. By the time she thinks about her pregnancy and her future child, she doubts the relationship with Erik whom she knows by then to be gay. She accuses herself of not having thought about it more. After a night when Erik had been visited by his best friend Martin – or his lover, as Elsa assumes – she finally decides that having a child with Erik makes no sense and that she has to leave him; she feels betrayed and hopeless, although she has at the same time a bad conscience: “No, in this home a child could not grow up. No character could be formed here, no sense open up to the beauty of life. […] He didn’t love her. Perhaps he could not love her: neither her, nor their child. He was fond of

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654 Söderhjelm 1932, 73–75. “För mig tedde den sig som en fullständig och i högsta grad moralisk bok. T.o.m. kvinnor ansågo den unken, osund och omoralisk. Och ändå borde den ha varit en bok, som kvinnor kunde förstå.”

655 Söderhjelm 1932, 72. “De enda som jag var orolig för voro mina syskonbarn, som jag inte ville ge något slags felbild av varken mig själv eller livsföreteelserna överhuvud, och detta gjorde, att jag ännu i sista ögonblicket tvekade att hembjuda boken till förläggare.” Bo Lönnqvist cites a telling anecdote of the discussions about sexuality in the beginning of the 1920s. A friend of Söderhjelm, Axel Klinckowström had written a long letter to Söderhjelm in which he criticised not only that she should have taken up the topic of a mother’s right to abortion, but also her way to write about homosexuality: “To discuss the question of homosexuality in the year 1922 and to be totally ignorant […] of the science about the composite hormone secretion, about the double sexual drifts (and partly indirect gender-characters) generated of this with the typical homosexual – some sort of physiological hermaphrodisism – is simply unforgivable!” Söderhjelm should have introduced, as Lönnqvist concludes, a surgeon who had operated Erik and made a man out of him. Lönnqvist 2013, 197. The source is not named in detail, the letter can be found in Söderhjelm’s archive at Åbo Akademi.

Martin – –. The entire air shone around him when Martin arrived.” If she has to raise a child, this needs to happen with love, and she doubts that her husband is able to provide this love, although she does not accuses him directly; but already at this point she knows that Erik cannot change. However, it is a child Erik wants to have most in his life.

In the context of motherhood and women’s rights, Söderhjelm herself also expressed her opinions on the status of feminism in Finland. In a review on the Swedish feminist Elin Wägner’s book *Helga Wisbeck* (1913), Söderhjelm stated that such a book would have no chances in Finland. Feminism in Finland and Sweden in her opinion was different, since the Swedish women had fought for their rights, while Finnish women had gained their right to vote during a time when the form of society needed to be renewed in Finland and the people had demanded equal rights for both men and women. Söderhjelm also had an opinion about Ellen Key, especially her book *Kvinnorörelsen*, when she criticised Key for having focused too much on earlier representatives of the women’s movements and not having taken into account new generations of women who felt themselves more freed; she also criticised Key’s focus on working ethics and duty, since these would not lead to individual happiness. Moreover, work for Söderhjelm did not only mean, as Key had stated, independence and the mere right to it for unmarried women, but also joy, as she herself also experienced it. Söderhjelm also did not agree with Key’s critique of the women’s movement having led to less maternal feelings among women; in contrast, she regarded it as positive that young women had the possibility to think also of other things as children. Söderhjelm’s thoughts, to summarise Engman’s perspective, contrasted Key’s in the latter’s emphasis of motherhood; for her, an unmarried woman could live a life as nicely as one who had children – thanks to the women’s movement. This point of view on independent women and motherhood is also expressed in her novel.

While Elsa is still pregnant, she reads about the death of her former lover Ragnar who had been shot in the Civil War. He had died alone after having been taken out of his house by executioners of whom he had shot two before he himself was shot. Elsa gets deeply shocked by these news, and one day later her child is stillborn. The most disturbing part here, however, is both her own reaction towards it and the reaction by other people: “There was no need for a new home for the little child. It was born one day after Elsa had received the information about Ragnar’s death. And it was dead. But they were just really lucky, everyone thought. For the child would have been deformed if it had


lived.” Elsa and Erik, it seems, are not allowed to have a child; they deserve the loss of it according to others; also, because it would not have been a healthy child, either, but disabled. Here comes one more dimension into the novel, namely the question of which kind of life is worth living, and which is not. It is good health and “normalcy” that is the standard in the world around Elsa and with which she has to deal and before which she has to defend her own decisions. It is, then, the loss of their unborn child that brings Elsa and Erik finally together. Although she had been jealous of Martin, Erik’s friend, she nevertheless learns that Erik loves her in his own way. When she comes home from the hospital after her miscarriage, Erik cries; not only for himself, but also for his lost child, the only wish he had had in his life: “I would have so much wanted a child’, he said slowly. ‘You see, we, who are so – marked – we have an inextinguishable yearning for the normal life, for the normal life values: home and family and children... For others this is so natural that they don’t even think about it. For us, it is a happiness that is out of reach.”

Erik’s lines are also more than 90 years later rather up-to-date, when politicians still quarrel about the right for adoption for same-sex couples. All the more scandalous these sentences were in 1922: the man who is labelled gay only wishes to have a family and a home – values that were not ascribed to homosexuals at that time, and not even thinkable for them or allowed, when being gay was not allowed, either. The dead-born child, then, becomes a symbol for the two of them and their relationship. Elsa realises that her love for Erik is of the purest sort, it is like the love for a child, maternal love. “She felt that now that he had come to her, she would be able to love him more than she ever knew she could love someone. More than herself. More than anything. With a kind of love that did not demand or claim anything, a love that lived from itself. But was this love anything else but motherly love?” Here again, as in Dusty Answer, it is maternal love that is felt for the queer character. Elsa forgives Erik everything – like she would forgive a child – and finally knows that she wants to share her life with him and take care of him.

In this context of the death of the child and Ragnar’s death, it is, moreover, essential to return to the topic of Judith, Elsa’s best friend who died from her sickness. Interestingly, while Elsa reads about Ragnar’s death, she at the same time returns with her thoughts to Judith. The thoughts of Judith virtually parallel the memories of Ragnar, she continuously names them in the same breadth: they are the two loves of her life. Whether her love to Judith was more than “mere” friendship (unconsciously or not), as Erik assumed, remains
open. The passages that tell about the relationship between Elsa and Judith can be interpreted the way Erik does it, as quoted above — and thus resemble the so-called “Victorian female friendship” that can mean both deep friendship and intimate relationship, as explained earlier —, but it can also be seen as a simply deep and caring friendship. Yet, Judith is at the same time characterised as a woman with no interest in men. When Elsa is for example suffering from her relationship with Ragnar, Judith is always there for her: she spends Christmas with Elsa when Ragnar is with his wife, and she more or less forces Elsa to join her to Italy, where Judith has to go due to her weak health and her lung problems. Their relationship, in Elsa’s opinion, would not allow her to let Judith go alone, since then she would let her friend down: “In Judith’s hands she became a child again. She protested, cried and protested again. But she knew that everything was already decided and could not be changed. Besides, she was forced to travel for Judith’s sake. For it was dangerous how Judith coughed.”

But still, it is no intimate relationship, as Elsa makes the reader believe. That they are very fond of and need each other is obvious, but Judith, as Elsa states “did not understand love. For her, friendship was enough. Her dimensions of love were given her by the suffering mankind.” Judith recovers in Italy, but has a relapse back home in Finland and finally dies. Elsa stays on her bedside until the end. Whether it is friendship or love, the relationship between Judith and Elsa is another triangle in the novel where Ragnar stands between Judith and Elsa. Yet, it is not a real one, since Judith does not even understand love, i.e. she is unable to perform a relationship. Even if Elsa was attracted to her, their relationship would probably never have changed. But Judith’s death is one more reason, after Ragnar has also left her, to go to Sweden where Erik awaits her. Here, Marja Engman makes an interesting point here when she stated that the first part of the novel emphasises the difference between unmarried women who, like Elsa, participate actively in society and also influence their (married) partners politically, whose wives again are at home and care for the children. In the second part, also Elsa gives up her professional life for a life as a married woman. Elsa’s first life as the lover of a married man — with how much political influence whatsoever — did not make her happy, and neither could she live her love openly. When she then decides to live a life as a married woman, she fails there, too, as many of her contemporaries would have seen it. Mazzarella makes the point here how pioneering Söderhjelm was: she anticipated the topics in Finland-Swedish literature about which many, like Solveig von Schoultz or Yrsa Stenius, later wrote: the seemingly free woman’s (the New Woman’s) dependence who is in a relationship with a married man, is expressed here in Elsa’s waiting for a phone call from him that might never

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665 Engman 1996, 236.
come. She is, thus, not more dependent in the end in her relationship with Erik – maybe even on the contrary, since Elsa finally decides for herself how she wants to live with Erik.

In the very end of the novel, Elsa’s own decisions make her think about humankind in general and the way people are made to get along with their life. She wonders what it is that makes some people weak, while others are strong and have it easy throughout their life. It is, one can conclude from her considerations, the attitude of the outer world that is decisive: who decides who is a martyr, and who a hero?

Var det väl arten av de anlag, instinkter, drifter, vilka naturen nedlagt hos oss, som avgjorde, om man var god eller ond, stark eller svag? Var det inte fastmera måttet av den kraft, man satte in för att lösgöra sin ande från kroppen – djuret? [...] Var inte den också en martyr, som måste ödsla sin ungdoms- och mannakraft på denna strid mot mörket inom sig själv? Var det bara den som slog ihjäl sin fiende på slagfältet, som var hjälte? Var inte det ett större hjältemod, att tyst och osedd förblöda av egna sår, att besegra och tillintetgöra hydran inom sig själv?

These are the almost very last lines of the novel, and this is what remains as the final result of Elsa’s contemplations; she decides to stay with Erik, to take care of him and to love him. She is again hard on the world and on society who labels people according to their nature and who only accepts certain types, those namely, who are made heroes and martyrs. For Elsa, it is Erik who has silently suffered and fought with himself against an enemy that society has invented and it would be him who must be named a hero, maybe even more than the one who fights merely on the battlefield. Söderhjelm here uses the vocabulary of war in her description of the fight that those without a place in society lead. This seems to be a daring choice only a few years after the Civil War, which is a side issue in the novel, too.

Also in the case of Kärlekens väninna, the analysis of the question of power according to Foucault, as explained earlier, proves fruitful. First, Söderhjelm succeeded in getting her novel published despite the queer topic, and second, it sold very well, despite the partly scathing reviews. As Appelberg’s quote above shows, there was no interference at all by the publisher, in contrast; he supported her and liked the book. The highest symbolic power, represented by the publisher, regarded this novel then as legitimate, while the scathing reviews tell about the media’s attempt to exercise power by destroying the author’s reputation, although without success. Söderhjelm’s case, I argue, is different from the ones analysed so far, inasmuch as she was a person of public

666 Mazzarella 1995, 141.
667 Söderhjelm 1922, 330–331. “Was it perhaps this kind of predisposition, urge, instinct, which nature has imposed on us and which decided whether one is good or bad, strong or weak? Was it not rather the measure of the force one put in to detach one’s spirit from the body – the animal? [...] Was not also he a martyr who had to waste his strength of youth and manhood for this fight against the darkness within himself? Was only he who killed his enemy on the battlefield a hero? Was it not greater heroism to silently and unseen bleed to death of one’s own wounds, to beat and annihilate the hydra within oneself?”
interest when the novel came out and was established as a historian and academic. She was, in short, already a part of the elite in contrast to authors like Soini or Pennanen at the time when their novels with queer topics were published. Moreover, she wrote in Swedish and belonged to the Finland-Swedish cultural elite, i.e. her so-called symbolic capital most probably was decisive when she succeeded in getting her debut novel published and reviewed. As indicated in Chapter 1, it was symbolic struggles about the question of taste that were fought in the case of Kärlekens vännen; the reviews mainly dissected the passages that dealt with morality and their appropriateness for a novel. The big number of reviews was also a result of the fact that Söderhjelm lived in Sweden when the novel got published and had both a Swedish and a Finland-Swedish publisher, i.e. she was part of both literary fields, as well as a person that was known in the respective circles of the elites; the attention the novel received was thus much higher due to all these aspects. When all in publishing is about legitimacy, i.e. the tacit acceptance of something, this legitimacy is equivalent to power. The monopoly of legitimacy says who has the power to say who and what gets published. Söderhjelm’s case is then rather complicated. While she has the symbolic power to get published and the publisher accepts the novel, the press challenges Söderhjelm’s talent and legitimacy as an author per se, but also as one to write about such a sensitive topic as homosexuality, if they do not impute sensationalism to her. Kärlekens vännen, therefore, exemplarily demonstrates a fight about legitimacy within the Finland-Swedish literary field and its system of moral values. The different opinions and the questioning of the published author’s right to write about the topic, as well as her success, make legitimacy visible which is thus not any more dominated by the reviewers or the author/publisher. Also the question of the author’s gender and her right to take up the topic of homosexuality comes up in this struggle and is part of the justification that Söderhjelm can be criticised for the topics of her novel. As quoted earlier, Beverley Skeggs states that gender is not a capital as such, but it “provide[s] the relations in which capitals come to be organized and valued.”\footnote{Skeggs 1997, 9.} A review in the Swedish social-democratic newspaper Ny Tid joins in into the voices that emphasise Söderhjelm’s gender and at the same time also names her academic degree that for the reviewer does not work as an excuse – he thus subsumes the above mentioned fight about legitimacy and power:

Man frågar sig naturligtvis först: var är motiven till denna bok? [...] Vad kan det vara annat än sensationen? Något pedagogiskt syfte tror väl ingen vettig människa på. [...] Denna äckliga bok är dubbelt äcklig, därför att den är skriven av en kvinna. Fr. Söderhjelm skall inte inbilla sig, att hennes doktortitel är henne något certifikat i detta fall. Smutslitteratur är smutslitteratur, också om dess auktor är

\footnote{Skeggs 1997, 9.}
aldrig så “förfinad”, så länge förfiningen bara sitter i förmågan att ge en fin form åt ett smutsigt innehåll.669

Yet, Söderhjelm “won” this struggle, as the selling numbers show as well as the fact that she continued as an author with books of literary quality. Also her following novel Den flygande holländaren (The flying Dutchman, 1923) includes a queer topic with one of the female characters loving both men and women, but the book did not provoke the same sort of scandal any more as the first one did.670 The main focus of this second novel lies on the protagonist Irma who lives with her husband on a secluded island and then goes to study art in Stockholm where she meets a poet – a school friend of her husband whom she has always admired – and begins an affair with him. As a side plot the reader gets introduced to an artist called Eva Lyth who lives together with another woman. Irma does not quite understand how a woman can be in love with another woman and the two characters discuss on several pages the nature of different kinds of love and whether it is possible to love a person from the same sex or not. Shortly later, Irma discusses the same question with her lover. He is open-minded and does not understand Irma’s doubts about same-sex desire. Nonetheless, the novel as a whole focuses rather on art, as well as on Irma’s adultery and thus probably did not raise a scandal the way Kärlekens väninna did that has its focus on human relations.

A second Finland-Swedish novel by an also established author that deals with queerness and that questions set values in the 1920s, yet in a different way, is Hagar Olsson’s På Kanaanexpressen (“On the Express train to Canaan”). It was published in 1929 by Schildts, who published at that time, however, in Stockholm. Hagar Olsson (1893–1978) grew up on the Åland Islands and in Karelia. She worked as a bank assistant in Helsinki and studied philology, but left university before graduating to work as a critic from 1918 onwards for the newspaper Dagens Press and had by the middle of the 1920s become a well-known critic. Her début novel Lars Thorman och döden (“Lars Thorman and death”) came out in 1916. Besides writing novels and plays, she was mostly known as a journalist: she was one of the members of the group behind the magazine Ultra and Quosego. From the beginning of the 1930s, Olsson also worked for the Swedish feminist newspaper Tidevarvet. She never got married, but lived in different relationships, of which the most famous are those with the male Finnish artist Wäinö Aaltonen, and a relationship with a woman, Toya Dahlgren, who in 1932 died of tuberculosis. She was also a close

669 Arnold Sölvén: “Homosexualiteten i skönlitteraturen”, Ny tid 12.12.1922. “[...] Of course, one wonders at first: where is the motive for this book? [...] What else can it be than sensation? No sensible person probably thinks it would be a pedagogical aim. [...] This disgusting book is doubly disgusting since it is written by a woman. Miss Söderhjelm should not imagine that her doctor’s degree works as a certificate in this case. Filthy literature is filthy literature, also if its writer is all so “sophisticated”, as long as the sophistication only lies in the ability to give a fine form to a filthy content.”

friend of the Finland-Swedish modernist poet Edith Södergran (1892–1923).\textsuperscript{671}

\textit{På Kanaanexpressen} belongs to Olsson’s earlier works and has symbolist and expressionist influences.\textsuperscript{672} Olsson’s relationship to modernism, as Eva Kuhlefelt notes, was rather ambivalent. For her, modern did not merely mean the art of style, but a modernist work had to express either a new feeling of life, or a new philosophy. This is why Olsson’s works are quite bound to their time, as it becomes obvious also in \textit{På Kanaanexpressen}. Yet, her texts are a great example of the time when they were written in: they demonstrate the rootlessness of the modern human being, the conflicts between fiction and reality, life and art, and, very present also in \textit{På Kanaanexpressen}, between subjectivity and collectivity.\textsuperscript{673}

\textit{På Kanaanexpressen} tells about a group of young people in Helsinki who are all connected with each other. In the centre of the novel are four characters: Peter, Christian, Tessy and Florrie. The latter two are sisters. Peter and Florrie meet in the beginning of the novel on a train between Turku and Helsinki. Peter is on his way to his wife Amalia, an actress whom he, however, sees with another man on the street – it is Christian, his friend. Tessy, in turn, had been in love with Peter earlier, but then fell in love with Christian. Also \textit{På Kanaanexpressen} consists thus of different triangle love stories, mostly classic heterosexual ones with one woman and two men. Tessy wants to marry Christian, but slowly realises that he does not love her and will maybe never marry her. Christian, indeed, is not in love with Tessy, and neither is he with Amalia, but with Florrie who suffers from tuberculosis. Christian is chronically in debt and also not able to tell Florrie about his love until one day he has to take her home, since she is sick. In the same night, Tessy draws the consequences of her unrequited love to Christian and commits suicide. Christian, who had visited her shortly before, drives there by intuition, but cannot do anything any more. He brings her to the hospital and acts rather dubiously: he hopes to get freed from his debts by asking Peter to help him by going to Tessy’s boss to tell him that she had stolen for him before he gets to know of her death. Thus, the boss would act out of humanity and forgive Tessy. Peter helps Christian by telling everybody that he himself would be responsible for everything, both the debts and the suicide, while Christian at the same time flees from the city and never returns. Florrie is left at Amalia’s apartment – and here begins the queer side-plot. Amalia lets the young woman stay at her house and gets both used to and attracted to her. Florrie, however, rather sees a mother figure in Amalia than a potential lover. Tessy’s death is getting

\textsuperscript{671} See Holmström 1988, 164–166. Olsson deals with these relationships also in her novel \textit{Kinesisk utflykt} (1949, transl. into Finnish by Eeva-Liisa Manner under the title \textit{Silkkimaalaus} (WSOY 1954)), which also includes queerness, or “the telling of a love and sexuality that transcends the heterosexual default”, as Pauliina Haasjoki (2012, 88) writes. Haasjoki has analysed the novel under the question of “ambivalence”, a concept situated ‘in-between’ homo- and heterosexuality and concludes that it is about the really lived life which is endlessly manifold, instead of developing identity categories. Haasjoki 2012, 100.

\textsuperscript{672} Svanberg 2012b.

\textsuperscript{673} Kuhlefelt 2007, 242. See also Holmström 1993, 146.
scrutinised and it is Peter who takes the responsibility for it: suicide, in his opinion, is always a murder. His friends admire him as being the symbol of the new generation that thinks not as individuals but of the collectivity and who wants to take responsibility for the community and help the oppressed and poor.

An important part of the book is the political and cultural engagement of especially Peter and Florrie in the movement of the new time, “Facklan” (The Torch). This, of course, is a direct reference to the group Tulenkantajat. Also Facklan publishes a magazine and its members want to renew the cultural circles and lead them into a European direction. Modernity and urbanism are characteristic topics for Facklan. It is also in the context of Facklan where the eponymous Canaan comes into play: Canaan is – symbolically – where they want to go, the only possibility to continue living. In the Bible, Canaan symbolises the land for the oppressed and those who want or need to start anew. Accordingly, this circle of people is a new generation who thinks that they have nothing in common any more with the generation before them, be it politically, culturally, or mentally. International thinking and pan-Europeism is what they represent: they want to leave their corner in society, maybe even Finland and start anew somewhere else. The express train from Turku to Helsinki where Peter and Florrie meet in the beginning is too provincial for them: they wish for a train to Canaan in order to build a new society. A review in Nya Argus summarised the idea of the novel quite aptly: “But what [Olsson] recommends us warmly with this tendency novel about the social responsibility is the duty of the individual to self-deepening and self-sacrifice, to responsible action according to the order of the heart and consciousness: it is there where we find the way to the renaissance of humankind, to the promised land of happiness [...].”

The novel is stylistically as well as graphically expressionist; it contains pictures and drawings, quotations in, for example, French, or quotations of newspaper articles or a door sign with a name that all become part of the text. The cover of the book, a collage, was made by Olavi Paavolainen. A review in the magazine Finsk tidsskrift by the renowned Finland-Swedish critic Agnes Langenskjöld called it a successful novel, maybe the first successful one Olsson had written, since it was “something one has to describe with the title living literature. [...] Literary style and graphic description work together all the time and one has to acknowledge that they coalesce in an effective way to an artistic

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674 Moreover, Die Fackel was also an Austrian satiric magazine founded in 1899 by the expressionist writer Karl Kraus, one of the most influential Austrian dramatists of the 20th century. Kraus also wrote most of the articles. The magazine existed until 1936.


676 Holmström 1993, 153.
whole. [...] What we encounter are real people, fighting, suffering, and very modern ones."

Other works by Olsson and their relation to queer issues has earlier been studied by, for example, Pauliina Haasjoki. The queer topic in På Kanaanexpressen is concentrated on a few pages and on one, respectively two, characters: the actress Amalia, and Florrie. It sets in when Amalia finds Florrie in her apartment and decides to let her stay. She feels betrayed by her lover Christian, what makes her at the same time suffer from getting older, since he was much younger than she is. And Florrie is only a young woman. Amalia feels worse and worse, as if her life had come to an end in some way:


Amalia is nostalgic and wishes to have her youth back. She suffers from her age that feels like a sickness. But the feeling of being sick might as well stem from her sudden feelings for Florrie. It is namely her in whom she finds what she feels to have lost: youth and beauty, and the feeling of being sexually attractive. She is bewildered by the feelings Florrie releases in her. She takes the role of a mother for her, but is at the same time erotically attracted to the young woman. This attraction is not only mental, but also physical. It is, amongst others, the young, boyish looking body that calls her attention.


677 Agnes Langenskjöld: “Ny inhemsak novelistik”, Finskt Tidskrift 1930/2, 200–201. "[...] något man måste beteckna med namnet levande litteratur. [...] Litterär stil och grafisk framställning samarbetar hela tiden, och man måste erkänna, att det på ett effektfullt sätt sammansmälts till ett konstnärligt helt. [...] Vad vi möta där är verkliga människor, kämpande och lidande och mycket moderna.”

678 Olsson 1929, 198–199. "She felt unpleasant and agonized, as if she carried an illness that had not yet broken out. This serious illness she had in her body, was it not the most hopeless of all – the creeping fever of death, ageing? It was as if Eros had left her alone on a lonely island. What should she do without him? [...] Wasn’t there anything more than this short, hot blooming and the bitter relapse into chaos? Not even the still lingering smell of the pleasure of the flower... She felt a hidden attraction to the sick girl, whom destiny had so unexpectedly brought to her. She did not know herself whether she was looking for shelter – or wanted to shelter.”
sådana moderliga väninnor. Förhållandet gav henne också något annat, ännu mera obestämbart – en mystär. Där var inte bara ömhet i hennes smekning, också en hemlighetstfull rysning, en ängslan och retelse, liksom hade hon äntligen kommit den förbjudna frukten på spåren... Dess smak var underligt fadd och tom, liksom dödens, olk allting annat.679

Once more a character within a queer plot, here it is Florrie, is described with the features of the New Woman. She has a boyish body, is young and – as the novel as a whole shows – is some sort of prototype of the New Woman in her opinions and political engagement. She wants to change the world, she is looking for her place in a society that is too narrow and old-fashioned for her, and she is, as the scene above shows, also open for new engagements in terms of eroticism. Like in almost all the novels analysed so far, it is another triangle here with one male and two female characters – Christian, Florrie and Amalia – that is connected with the queer plot. However, Florrie is as uncertain about her feelings and about what they might mean as Amalia is. Her attraction to Amalia, the way in which she enjoys her caressing, for example, is the forbidden fruit she seems not to even have known of before; a mystery that needs to be revealed, but that at the same time has a negative connotation with its smell of death. Her attraction to Amalia, or Amalia’s to her, is depicted as something unknown. And, if one develops the idea further, there is no return from it once she has tried the forbidden fruit, since it leads to “death”, be it socially or physically.680 Moreover, this death-motive can also be interpreted as the impossibility of having children as a non-heterosexual. Namely, as both in Dusty Answer and Kärlekens väninna, the queerness of a character also raises motherly feelings within one of the women involved in the plot around same-sex desire. The motherly feelings, thus, have to be directed at someone else, in these cases either the queer character, or as in Olsson’s, at one’s own object of same-sex desire.

Already earlier in the novel, Florrie is described as an exemplary representative of the New Woman: “Florrie, yes, she had always been up to date, in all respect. The modern young woman: knows much, believes nothing. She was young... belonged to another generation. Nurses a condescending disdain for everything that stemmed from the time before jazz, radio, theory of relativity and la garçonne. A whole generation’s disdain for – corset

Olsson 1929, 199–201. “It was her type that fascinated her, the characteristically modern mixture of seriousness and levity, of hypersensitivity and defiance. But she was not untouched by the charm of the tender, boyish body, either. Florrie liked to caress her, and she experienced a certain physical pleasure from it, a relief, a delightful peace, as if a child had caressed her. The touch of the swallow, young limbs calmed down her irritated nerves, like cool, abstract music calms down a cut up mind. For Florrie, the relationship had another appeal. It gave her a mother, one she had dreamt of in certain hours [...]. Such a mother did not exist [...] – but there are such motherly female friends. The relationship gave her also something else, something more undefinable – a mystery. It was not only the affection in her caressing, but also a secretive shiver, an anxiety and temptation, as if she finally had traced the forbidden fruit... its taste oddly vapid and hollow, like the taste of death, unlike anything else.”

Lee Edelman in his study on queer theory and the death drive states that “[...] the death drive names what the queer, in the order of the social, is called forth to figure: the negativity opposed to every form of social viability.” Edelman 2004, 9.
romance.” Florrie and Amalia also talk about Florrie’s idealism of a new society. Amalia, the older woman, is very sceptical and tries to explain that also private happiness is important, in contrast to what many of her friends and she herself seem to think.


Two worlds collide here in the characters of Amalia and Florrie. While Amalia has lived her life in search for happiness in the form of love and relationships, Florrie represents the new generation that leaves all personal happiness behind in favour of society’s well-being. However, she is not, as Judith Meurer rightly notes, the “one that programmatically wears the future, the new human the name indicates.” Florrie’s nickname, Örnungen (Young Eagle) symbolises freedom and possibilities; but the novel also shows that the future does not only consist of freedom, but also of fragility and insecurity, as indicated for example in the scene with Amalia. In the very last lines of the novel, Florrie has nevertheless won over her personal feelings: “I feel the fever. It is life that burns within me. [...] My heart is a predator; it shall devour all my anxiety, my tears and my loneliness. It shall devour the last remains of my love, and my last hope, nothing shall bind my hands in the dawn of the day.”

På Kanaanexpressen is, as Roger Holmström writes, in several respects a key novel in Olsson’s work. It shows her personal engagement in politics and society, as well as her world views and hopes for the new generation to which she also belonged. The aspect of the novel’s queer content is presumably taken from an example in real life, namely from the relationship Olsson had with Toya Dahlgren. Holmström draws a parallel between their relationship and the one between Florrie and Amalia. “In the description of the relationship between Florrie and Amalia Vinge, it is not difficult to recognise the author’s own relationship to Toya, as it appears in letters and diary notes.” For Olsson, as Eva Kuhlefelt writes, it is typical both in her texts and in her

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681 Olsson 1929, 80. “Florrie, ja, hon hade alltid varit up to date, i alla avseenden. Den modärna unga kvinnan: vet mycket, tror intet. Hon var ung... tillhörde en annan generation. Hyste ett medlåtande förakt för allt som härstammade från tiden före jazzen, radion, relativitetsteorien och la garçonne. En hel generations förakt för – korsettromantiken.”

682 Olsson 1929, 208. “‘Society’ cannot cure your consumption, ‘society’ cannot give me my youth back, ‘society’ could not have offered Tessy a possibility to become happy when the one she loved deceived her. All this is unavoidable. [...] That was all she had to say. She loved Florrie, she wanted all the best for her, would have liked to shelter her and help her – but she had nothing else to give.”


684 Olsson 1929, 231. “Jag känner febern. Det är livet som brinner i mig. [...] Mitt hjärta är ett rovdjur, det skall förtära all min ångslan, min gråt och min ensamhet. Det skall förtära den sista resten av min kärlek och min sista förhopningen, ingenting skall binda mina händer i morgongrynningen.”

685 Holmström 1993, 150. “I skildringen av förhållandet mellan Florrie och Amalia Vinge är det ingen svårighet att känna igen författarens egen relation till Toya, sådan den framstår i brev och dagboksanteckningar.”
personal life that she distanced herself from the traditional heterosexual relationship. There is also another, very marginal character with queer features in the novel: Katja, one member of the group Facklan, who in a discussion about their aims proposes Pan-Europeism and a pan-European libido. Christian is not very fond of her enthusiasm and tells that it derives from her having studied Freud. “Pansexualist, you know. With such persons one should not play.” As Helen Svensson writes, it was characteristic for the whole of Olsson’s work to bring the reality of the present and its ideas into literature, especially in the 1930s. Therefore, it is all the more important to also analyse the female characters’ queerness.

Accordingly, when introducing female queer characters into a novel, this must have also been topical. It was the emergence of the New Woman on the one hand that certainly was a reason for Olsson to introduce the characters of Florrie and Amalia, but queerness was also, I argue, a symbol for the difference between the generations and their different ideas of what is important in life. Moreover, Olsson shows the different possibilities and alternatives of relationships, as well as she demonstrates, like Söderhjelm does, that all kinds of feelings are legitimate and natural. With regard to the question of symbolic capital and power, the case of Olsson’s novel is quite similar to Söderhjelm’s. Olsson had been an established figure in the literary field in 1929, and the publisher did not seem to have wanted to interfere with the queer topic in the novel. Moreover, the press was more positive towards the novel, both due to the much less scandalous treatment of the topic, and probably also due to the fact that the novel was published seven years later.

Not surprisingly, a review by the literary scholar Erik Kihlman in *Nya Argus* compares *På Kanaanexpressen* with Waltari’s *Suuri illusioni*, since both address the new generation and a changing world. But they do so in very different ways. Some of the characters are, of course, similar: they belong to the cultural field, try to make a living out of writing, and are afraid of the future. But Olsson’s characters are much more interested in everything foreign, like Europe, and they feel restricted by their surroundings in Finland. They see international contacts as possibilities, while Waltari’s Hart is rather

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686 Olsson 1929, 140. “Pansexualist, förstå du. Sådana personer är inte att leka med.”
687 Svensson 1974, 302. “Pacifism, women’s liberation, progressive pedagogies, functionalism, new social ideology, pan-Europe and internationalism belong to the questions that are dealt with in the works in one form or the other. […] Her whole authorship has an intimate link to time […] – this concerns the expressionism and the atmosphere of departure of the 20s, as well as the activism and cultural radicalism of the 30s, or the mysticism and karelianism of the 40s.”
sceptical about the decadent life in Paris. While Kihlman criticises På Kanaanexpressen for being episodic and rhapsodic and thus sometimes hard to follow, he acknowledges Olsson’s way of describing (and ironising) the modernist characters in their bitterness and pitifulness, as well as her slight critic of the Tulenkantajat-group.688

Also when comparing these two novels and authors in their ways of dealing with queer topics, they are quite distant from each other. While Waltari emphasises the abnormality of everything queer and highlights the values of the nuclear family, Olsson’s world of the novel is far away from traditional family values – none of the characters lives a traditional family life –, but rather stresses internationalism and non-individuality. Olsson’s whole ideology is very different from Waltari’s, who represented the more conservative orientation within his generation.

Also the title of the novel is a symbol of its time. As Meurer writes, “Kanaanexpressen” can be interpreted as a symbol for Olsson’s ideal of art. “Kanaan symbolises a dark protest against the apparent meaninglessness, confusion and the chaos both within the different characters and around them, a protest, that is, against the modern disunity.”689 Olsson’s internationalist interest, as well as the socialist attitude that was directed at Finland’s rising nationalism, is not surprising if we consider her career as one of the Finland-Swedish modernists who renewed the literary tradition on the one hand, and the decreasing power of the Finland-Swedish cultural elite that oriented itself more and more towards Sweden and other European countries, on the other hand. På Kanaanexpressen is also a rejection of the project of a national literature that is directed inwards. As Olsson herself in Quosego wrote, “[o]ur Swedish literature can be of interest for Sweden only to the degree where its inner content can compete with their literature. The artistic, cultural and generally human values are decisive, and not Swedishness. [...] As nationalists we Finns have little or nothing to win, as internationalists – everything.”690

When comparing the reviews of På Kanaanexpressen in the Finland-Swedish press, one can observe a common feature in almost all of them: it is an admiration of the way Olsson succeeds in describing the youth of its time. Several reviews mention that the novel captures the spirit of the time, as for example Borgåbladet: “It gives a good picture of the spirit of the time, of our pitiable youth who drives around without hold in life, without goal, without moral principles, who blindly believes in all new slogans, all -isms.”691 This is

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689 Meurer 2009, 126. “Kanaan symboliserar en mörk protest mot den skenbara meningslösheten, förvirringen och det kaos som finns både i de olika personerna och runt omkring dem, alltså en protest mot den moderna kluvenheten.”
the almost only review that also mentions morals to at least some degree. Another feature in common with all the reviews is their concentration on the description of the new generation, on the novel’s new style and on Olsson’s talent to address contemporary topics and at the same time bringing Finland-Swedish modernism to new dimensions. *Wiborgs Nyheter* is intrigued by its style:


**Wasabladet** serves as another example for the description of the novel’s ambitious and admirable style: “The novel has flaws with regard to composition and intensity of the course of events, if one keeps to ordinary criteria of judgement. But it would obviously be not right to lay an old-fashioned magnifier over a writing of an author for whom Nietzsche’s word is a dreadful truth: ‘Schreibe mit Blut und Du wirst erfahren. Dass Blut Geist ist.’”

The novel’s style and its essential contribution to modernism in Finland-Swedish literature is also the topic in another review: “Without Hagar Olsson, our domestic modernism would be negative and regretful; with her as the born leader it has all prerequisites to become a direction of positive and lasting value.”

_På Kanaanexpressen_ represented also a form of European modernism directed against bourgeois family values. With this approach, the novel is (as well as Olsson’s other works) also an example for the reasons why Finland-Swedish literature was accused in the 1920s of having nothing to give to Finnish literature; it was said to estrange itself from the national and social development. The Finland-Swedish authors had indeed developed rather fast. While modernism was not yet understood in 1916, when Olsson’s debut work was published, it had established itself already at the end of the 1920s; the need for a magazine like *Quosego* is only one example, the reviews that were

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Olsson’s novel *Chitambo* (1930) is another example of her description of the spirit of the time and its phenomena. In the novel, the female protagonist falls in love with a young man who does not want to marry and identifies himself as a feminist. The novel also discusses Ellen Key’s ideas.

692 H–ström: “Hagar Olssons senaste bok”, *Wiborgs Nyheter* 5.12.1929. “På Kanaanexpressen can certainly be said to be quite loosely composed. Seen as a novel. But one should not see it as a novel. It is a contemporary document, and it has undeniably to be acknowledged that the youth of our days with all its credits, but also with all its flaws and scarcities, has never been depicted so fascinatingly and truthful as it is done in _På Kanaanexpressen_.”


695 Holmström 1988, 226.
mostly positive and interested in the development, another. Nonetheless, a critical attitude towards the modernists had not vanished totally; some academics, for example, saw the modernists’ egocentricity and nihilism towards values as an irresponsible escape from a reality that was concerned with the fight about the language-question and the need of solidarity.696

That both Kärlekens väninna and På Kanaanexpressen depict queer topics so openly may then be seen as one example of this estrangement of the Finland-Swedish literary field during the 1920s. As explained above, Finland-Swedish publishing was despite its minority status within Finland, not dependent on the Finnish book market. Its authors and publishers rather had at least the possibilities of selling their books also in Sweden. They oriented themselves towards the literary field in Sweden, where also more foreign literature in translation was available than in Finland. Since Söderhjelm and Olsson were also published in Sweden, I will show with the examples of the Margareta Suber and the Swedish translation of Radclyffe Hall that the Swedish book market saw some years of openness in the beginning of the 1930s towards queer topics. Being so closely connected to Sweden, it is then not surprising that also the Finland-Swedish literary field had a tendency to be more open for new, not necessarily easy, topics. That the reviews were nevertheless not always positive, shows that the moral conflicts that ruled within the literary field were, however, not limited to Finnish-language publications. The gap between tendencies to renew society and literature and those that wanted to restore the order was an issue in the whole of the Finnish society. The Finland-Swedish press, one can conclude, was still more conservative than many of the representatives of the publishing houses, as for example the above quoted letter from Bertel Appelberg to Alma Söderhjelm demonstrates. The archive of Hagar Olsson, on the other hand, is unfortunately less substantial regarding the publisher’s reaction towards På Kanaanexpressen. The archive that is stored at the Manuscript and Picture Unit of Åbo Akademi does not contain the letters between Schildts and Olsson during the years decisive for the novel. To what extent there might have been attempts by Schildts to interfere with Olsson’s texts, is therefore not clear.

4.2 Aestheticism, Murder, Queerness: Rejection or Censorship?

In contrast to the works analysed above that were published in Finland, the example of the novel Kaunis sielu by Helvi Hämäläinen (1907–1998) is one that addresses the topic of censorship by publishers. During her lifetime, Helvi Hämäläinen became one of the best-known and respected Finnish female authors of the 20th century. She debuted with a novel called Hyvän tekijä (“The Benefactor”) in 1930 and was part of the Tulenkantajat-group, as well as close

696 Holmström 1988, 240–241. The academics were for example Gunnar Castrén, professor of literature, and Axel Wallensköld, philologist and professor of Romance philology.
to many of the authors of her time, like Olavi Paavolainen, with whom she had a relationship. Her probably best-known novel is *Säädyllinen murhenäytelmä* (“Respectable tragedy”, 1941) which caused a scandal, since many of the cultural elite of the time saw themselves depicted in it. It was partly censored due to a male homosexual character and due to its opinions against Nazism, and fully published only in 1995.697 The history of this novel also tells about the attitude of the rather few decisive persons of the literary elite towards Hämäläinen’s writings via a confidential letter by the poet and professor of literature V.A. Koskenniemi which he wrote to WSOY’s managing director Jalmari Jäntti in 1940. He was asked to evaluate Helvi Hämäläinen’s manuscript of her novel *Säädyllinen murhenäytelmä* that was, despite Koskenniemi’s scathing critique, published by WSOY in 1941 and became a great success. It depicts the literary circles of its time and was therefore harshly criticised, since some of the people described in the novel recognised themselves and did not like what they read. However, the novel became a classic of Finnish literature of the 20th century:

> En ole lukenut tältä kirjailijattarelta ennen riviäkään, mutta täynnä ihmetystä kysyn itseltäni, miten tämä täysin tyylikkään ja yksinkertaistakin taiteellista vaistoa vailla oleva sinisukka on voinut saada suorastaan, jollen erehdy, kiittäviä arvostelujä ja tulla käännetyksi vielä vieraille kielille. En muista koskaan millään kielellä lukeneeni mitään niin inhottavaa kuin homoseksualistisen Arturin “keltaisen orkidean” piinallisen ihaileva kuvaus.698

As many of the female authors analysed before, also Hämäläinen is not taken seriously and is confronted with misogyny by the male critic who calls her a bluestocking and criticises her for indecent writing. He even, untypical for his time, names homosexuality openly. Yet, the letter was not meant to be for the public, but was confidential and thus the direct words could be used more easily. In the first edition that WSOY published, too direct references to sexuality and especially everything related to homosexuality were due to Koskenniemi’s and also Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio’s critiques censored away.699 But already in the beginning of her career, Hämäläinen became known to the readers as an author who defended “vitalist gender morals”. In the novel *Lumous* (“Spell”, 1934), marital cohabitation without love feels disgusting for the female protagonist who sees on the other hand physicality as a vital part of

697 The novel was written in 1939 and refers to actual political events in 1938, like the Munich contract. Finland went into the so-called Winter War in 1939, exactly at the times when the book should have been published. See Vaittinen 1980, 145–6.

698 Päiväläden museo, WSOY:n arkisto: Helvi Hämäläinen, 1924–65, ark. no. 149, kirjailijoiden kirjeet WSOY, yrityshistoria, kirjearkisto. V.A. Koskenniemi, Turussa 19 pnä 1940 (luottamuksellisesti J. Jäntille). “I have never before read a line written by this writer, but full of surprise I ask myself how this totally tasteless bluestocking who lacks even the simplest artistic sense can have gained, if I am not mistaken, absolutely laudatory reviews and is moreover translated into other languages. I do not remember to have read in any language anything as obnoxious as the embarrassingly admiring portrayal of the homosexual Artur’s “yellow orchid”. “

being in love. Hämäläinen assigned women an active role in her books, and also connected motherhood to well-balanced eroticism.\footnote{Juutila 1989, 421–422.}

Hämäläinen’s personal archive, preserved at the archive of the Finnish Literature Society, contains material that tells about the rejection of Hämäläinen’s debut novel Kaunis sielu (“Beautiful soul”) in 1928 because of its partly queer plot. It is mostly interviews with Hämäläinen that were made in the 1970s and 1980s that support the assumption that the rejection of a book that dealt with queer topics was nothing that needed to be talked about. Kaunis sielu was not published until 2001, three years after Hämäläinen’s death. But at the time when the novel was published, it was not any longer especially interesting as “lesbian literature” in Finland, as Katri Kivilaakso in one of the few articles on the topic writes. Had it been published at the time it was written, in the same year as Hall’s Well of Loneliness and Virginia Woolf’s Orlando (in Finnish 1984) that is, it would have made literary history as the first Finnish novel openly dealing with the topic of female same-sex desire.\footnote{Kivilaakso 2012, 151.}

The narrative style of Kaunis sielu is highly aesthetic in its choice of words and in the atmosphere it creates. The novel is told from the perspective of a nameless female protagonist. She is obsessed with the thought of killing her male lover who is married and the father of a child. Her motives are injured pride, grief, hate and passion. She fears she will become insane if she does not kill him and believes to free herself through the act of killing. The way the protagonist describes her way of thinking – there are, for example, small devils in her mind who help her pass her time – places her at the border of what is regarded as “normal” throughout the novel. While she denies any sort of deeper feelings, it seems that she has loved the man and got destroyed by the way he had treated her. Moreover, she realises that she is also attracted to women, possibly even more than to men. However, she cannot cope with her erotic attraction towards women and cannot imagine living these feelings other than by watching art that depicts naked women, or by watching women on the streets. During a date on the graveyard, she finally kills her lover and gets imprisoned. But nothing within her has changed after the murder. After having been released from prison due to her general condition, she feels remorse towards her dead lover’s family. She lives secluded and meets only very few people, quarrels with God and confronts herself with the search for the real reason that has made her a murderer. She talks to God about her reasons for murdering, discusses guilt with him and the question why he has made her the way she is. And yet, or just because of all this, she states that she does neither believe in him nor in anything else. In the end, however, while having already partly passed out, she sees Christ come to her bed and begs him for shelter.

The whole story is told as one long inner monologue from the protagonist’s perspective: from the thoughts about the murder to its realisation and the mixed feelings of guilt, remorse and numbness afterwards. Also the novel’s
style is rather unconventional for its time. It is divided into seven chapters and those are again divided into 106 numbered smaller chapters, some of them several pages long, some only half a page or less.

For the probably first time, Hämäläinen mentioned the unpublished novel in an interview she gave in 1972. Her statement proofs the difficulties of queer in public as well as within the literary field in the 1920’s when she says that:

In the last sentence, Hämäläinen provides a strong picture of the situation that is full of contrasts: several big men versus a small, young and childlike looking woman who does not even know what she expects; and, as she states, what kind of provoking manuscript she might have delivered. Here, the term “queer leakage” is worth introducing, which means the “leaking” of queer topics into a seemingly homogeneous heterosexual culture – both culture and its products namely “leak” queerness due to the tensions between homophobia and homo-eroticism that permeates Western culture, as Tiina Rosenberg states. As introduced earlier, the whole premise of using the method of queer reading is the assumption that the queer is already and has always been there within culture, in the same way as has the non-queer, but under different preconditions. Thus, it can be the source of different, either parallel, or competing ways of thinking. When Hämäläinen states that she is surprised by the queer content of her novel, this needs to be seen as queer leakage; the queer finds its way through the heterosexual plot, probably precisely due to the (author’s) attempt to suppress it. This attempt to suppress is rather obvious, as the following pages will show, since in Hämäläinen’s case the queer not only leaks into the heterosexual plot, but the author also plays with the archival material and suggests interpretations. The author, thus, seems to have

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702 SKS/KIA: Helvi Hämäläisen arkisto, Kl. 26693, AB 3279, kirjailija-haastattelu 1972, haastattelija: Mirjam Polkunen (litterointi: Tuula Pennanen 1991, 148 s.), 28–29. “This work surprises me nowadays, since I cannot understand how [...] such a topic could originate in my mind. [...] The manuscript went to Otava and Kansanvalta, but I don’t think that I sent it to Söderström. At this time, I could not think that the topic would be in one way or another unusual, and when I was asked to come to Kansanvalta to get the manuscript, I went there briskly. There were four or five men and the director of the publishing house, and I remember that a confusing feeling arose in me, since the men saw at me quite strangely. I began to understand that something was askew. I was a very small girl, and looked very naïvely.”

703 Rosenberg 2002, 118. See also Doty 1993, 3: “My uses of the terms ‘queer readings’, ‘queer discourses’, and ‘queer positions’, then, are attempts to account for the existence and expression of a wide range of positions within culture that are ‘queer’ or non-, and-, or contra-straight.”

704 Rosenberg 2002, 125–126

been caught in a dilemma – wittingly or not – of introducing queerness into
the novel while trying, or being of the opinion of, not to.\footnote{A similar case
within Finnish art history was Magnus Enckell: while painting his own (homo-
erotic) desire at the end of the 19th century in his work “Fauni” (1895), he
evertheless often stated to not “being able to explain” or “not wanting to
describe precisely” when asked about it. Harri Kalha explains this
reaction with the criminalization of homosexuality at about the same
time when “Fauni” was painted. See Kalha 2005, 132.}

As said earlier, an archive must not necessarily be seen as having
an objective view on history. Also Hämäläinen’s archive shows that it is bound
to interpretation, selection, in- and exclusion and systematisation, both by
archivists, researchers and the authors herself. The archive of Kansanvalta, a
leftist publisher founded in 1919 to which Hämäläinen had reportedly offered
the manuscript, does not offer any valuable clue to the case. In the minutes
and other documents from the time in question, there is nothing about the
rejection of Hämäläinen’s book mentioned.\footnote{Työväenliikkeen arkisto:
Kustannusosakeyhtiö Kansanvallan arkisto, Kustannusosakeyhtiö
29” Kansanvalta.} Also Otava’s archive is not fruitful in this case. There is only
one undated short note in which she inquires a manuscript she had sent there,
but there is nothing in the minutes at Otava concerning Hämäläinen. Yet, there
is one letter that concerns a manuscript called “Ennen avioliittoa” (“Before
marriage”). It was rejected due to its general weaknesses: “Reading it has
been hard and slow due to wrong keystrokes and faulty sentences, which
also complicates evaluation. Since we did not have any possibility at all to
get it published in the autumn, we hereby return it so that you might use it
elsewhere, not denying its credits which are nonetheless disturbed by many
of its weaknesses.”\footnote{Otava’s archive: letter from Otava to Helvi
Hämäläinen, 28.10.1932. “Sen lukeminen on ollut
työlästä ja hidasta virhelyöntien ja puutteellisten lauseiden vuoksi, mikä vaikeuttaa
myös arviointia. Kun syyskaudella ei kuitenkaan ole missään tapauksessa meille
mahdollista saada teosta julkisuuteen, palautamme sen täten Teille ehkä
muualle käytettäväksi kielitammätä silti sen epäämättömiä ansiota, joita
kuikainen monet heikkoudet häiritsevät.”} Not the topic is here in
the focus, but the stylistic weaknesses; the plot or topic of the novel remains
unclear, since a book with this title by Hämäläinen was not published.
Hämäläinen’s first novel \textit{Hyväntekijä} had been published in 1930 by
WSOY, her next novel \textit{Lumoous} (“The Spell”) in 1934 by Gummerus, as also

When listening to the interviews in Hämäläinen’s archive, they seem to be
symptomatic of queer leakage with regard to what Hämäläinen told about
writing the novel:

\begin{quote}
H.H.: Teoksen on täytynyt syntyä vaistonvaraisesti, sillä minulla ei ollut tietoa
siitä, että ihminen voi rakastaa erotillisesti omaa sukupuoltaan. - M.P.: Ette siis
ollut lukenut mitään sellaista, mistä olisitte saanut virikkeen...
H.H.: I have
neither read nor experienced or known about such a reality.
\end{quote}

\footnote{SKS/KIA: Helvi Hämäläisen arkisto, Kl. 26693, AB 3279, kirjailijahaastattelu 1972, haastattelija:
Mirjam Polkunen (litterointi: Tuula Pennanen 1991, 148 s.). “H.H.: The work must have been born
instinctively, since I didn’t even know that a person can erotically love someone of the same sex... – M.P.: You had, then, not read anything from where you might have gotten the impetus... – H.H.: I have
neither read nor experienced or known about such a reality.”}
However, the novel deals so openly with the protagonist’s homosexual feelings that this statement is implausible. The protagonist does not necessarily accept her homosexual feelings, but thinks and argues about them, i.e. she is on all accounts conscious about it. Thus, although Hämäläinen both in the interviews and in her biography repeats that she did not know about anything called same-sex desire, it is hardly possible to believe these arguments after having read the novel (which at the time of the interviews, of course, had not been possible and thus the interviewer could not dig deeper or doubt what Hämäläinen had said). This covert transmission of queer topics also leads to the issue of trauma. Ann Cvetkovich has examined trauma from a queer point of view and aims to show in her work *An Archive of Feelings* that by taking trauma into account, “the common understanding of what constitutes an archive”\(^\text{710}\) can be challenged. Trauma, however, is hard to trace, since “it can be unspeakable and unrepresentable and because it is marked by forgetting and dissociation [...]. Trauma’s archive incorporates personal memories, which can be recorded in oral and video testimonies, memoirs, letters, and journals.”\(^\text{711}\) A queer reading between the lines becomes then all the more important, since one needs to read and listen carefully to understand possible hints in private materials that might have been produced due to their unspeakableness. The interviews with Hämäläinen can be interpreted as one example of such a trauma.\(^\text{712}\) When she asserts (and maybe believes herself) that she had not known that such a topic existed, or that she had written about it, then she clearly dissociates herself from it. Moreover, as also shown above, remembering and speaking about what one remembers is always connected to prevailing values at the moment of speaking. If society does not accept certain values (as Finnish society did not really accept homosexuality in 1972), they are not easily remembered and spoken out. In such a case it is, as cited earlier, “likely that our subjects have edited the record or were prone, in any event, to practise certain forms of subterfuge – conscious or unconscious – in what they committed to paper (and in what they chose to keep).”\(^\text{713}\)

Hämäläinen’s inconsistency with regard to her own view on her work was already addressed in 1988 in an article by Markku Ihonen who had interviewed Hämäläinen; in her interviews, as well as in other sources, she was, according to Ihonen, directly influencing the image one gets of her – as everyone does, one might assume. According to Ihonen, Hämäläinen belonged to the group of writers who see art as disconnected from society. Thus, he concludes, the reader has to be critical towards their comments given in retrospect on the background of their works or on the social circumstances that had influenced the birth of these works.\(^\text{714}\) However, concerning the (also legally) delicate topic of homosexuality, the interference by the author gets yet another dimension. It is a strange mixture of silence and talkativeness about

\(^{710}\) Cvetkovich 2003, 7.  
\(^{711}\) Cvetkovich 2003, 7.  
\(^{712}\) Cvetkovich 2003, 7.  
\(^{714}\) Ihonen 1988, 219.
her writings on the topic that turn Hämäläinen into a very interesting case. When the interviews and the biography were made, the manuscript had not yet been published and Hämäläinen herself had the power to tell what she liked to and what felt safe for her. Hämäläinen’s silence concerning the topic and her excuses must be seen in the broader context of the historical constraint to keep silent about homosexuality. As noted, there are different reasons for silence. It might be a conscious choice, but also the lack of courage, since the author’s private life might have become suspicious and she herself open to attack. The silence of the publishers – to not publish the work – means in this case, however, rather that it was a combination of different things: the gender of the author, her young age and the fact that she had not published anything before, but also the topic of the novel. This reaction to the novel clearly can be read in the light of institutionalised institutionalized heterosexuality. Yet, the way the novel deals with queerness, as the analysis of the text will show, does not encourage to homosexuality. But it does not shed a positive light on heterosexuality, marriage and men, either. When considering that mainly conservative and religiously influenced men, or, like at Kansanvalta, socialist-orientated ones, were making decisions within Finnish-language publishing, then it seems obvious that the radical way in which the novel deals with heteronormativity and religion could not be accepted from a young, female writer.

Concerning the interviews from the archive, in which Hämäläinen’s whole career with all its difficulties is the topic, also the choice of the person who does the interview is important. The interviewer in 1972, Mirjam Polkunen (1926–2012), was a very well-known person in the Finnish cultural and especially literary life. She worked for the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE for many decades as the editor-in-chief of the literary programmes and worked also as a literary critic, scholar and translator. She was the life companion of Mirkka Rekola, one of the most important Finnish modern poets of the 20th century. The topic of female homosexuality, about which Polkunen asks Hämäläinen rather openly, was thus not foreign to her at all. One could even assume, as Kivilaakso states, that the interview and its topics happened by some sort of mutual agreement, albeit this assumption is hard to prove by the interview itself. What becomes clear from it, however, is that the interviewer herself does not sound surprised when the topic comes up. It can be assumed, then, that the interview was in some way “staged” for the listeners.

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715 Kivilaakso 2012, 152. Kivilaakso refers here to Luisa Passerini: “Memories between Silences and Oblivion”, in: Katharine Hodgkins & Susannah Radstone (eds.), Contested pasts. The Politics of Memory, London: Routledge 2013, 200/249. Hämäläinen’s diaries from the time when she wrote the novel are not open to research until January 2023. The access to the material will certainly shed more light on her writing process, since it also contains for example Hämäläinen’s diaries from the time when Kaunis sielu was written.

716 Kivilaakso 2012, 152–153. The interview was part of a series of long interviews with Finnish authors, all in all 85, conducted in the years 1971–1977 and financed by the Finnish Academy. The other interview with Hämäläinen from 1982 was of the same kind, made for later research. See Kivilaakso 2012, 171.
Kivilaakso also assigns another part of the interview by Polkunen to the manuscript of *Kaunis sielu*, where, however, the title of the novel discussed is not mentioned. It is an essential part with regard to publishing policies, and, judging by the whole course of the interview, the topics discussed, and by knowing Hämäläinen’s other unpublished manuscripts, Kivilaakso’s conclusion is plausible. The topic of the part in question is a statement by Hämäläinen from the 1950s where she had said that she had not gotten all her books published. Polkunen asks her which books she means and why the publishers decided the way they did. Hämäläinen tells that she had gotten back six manuscripts, some of them also in her opinion rather bad ones, but of which one was still safe that was not bad. Its topic, though, had not been acceptable:


Again, within this dialogue prevails self-chosen silence that includes hidden messages only comprehensible for those who (might) know what topic she is talking about. Hämäläinen’s inconsistency with regard to the manuscript – at the beginning of the interview she states that it has disappeared, while in the end it is still safe – is intriguing. Following Kivilaakso, this shows that Hämäläinen on the one hand wants to document the existence of the manuscript with a so-called lesbian topic, but on the other hand she wants to keep control over it so that she can herself decide what she wants to tell about it.\(^{718}\) This is also a case of doing silence via closetedness, as explicated in Chapter 1, i.e. the author tells, but at the same time conceals the violation of heteronormative norms.

Also in her biography *Ketunkivellä* (“On the fox-stone”), published in 1993, Hämäläinen mentions the manuscript; here again, she claims that it was lost.\(^{719}\) However, although this biography was aimed at a greater public, Hämäläinen wrote openly about the manuscript and the novel’s references to homosexuality. She repeats partly what she has told in interviews, and partly she goes into more details. In the rather short passage with the length of one page, she tells about her assumption that she must have written it intuitively – a fact that is highly doubtable, as said, since the topic is clearly present in the novel, and also was obvious in the late 1920s.

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\(^{717}\) SKS/KIA: Helvi Hämäläisen arkisto, Kl. 26693, AB 3279, kirjailijahaastattelu 1972, haastattelija: Mirjam Polkunen (litterointi: Tuula Pennanen 1991, 148 s.). “M.P.: But now the times have changed in terms of difficult topics. Would this be a reason for you to come back to it? – H.H.: It would still not be possible to publish it – M.P.: Are you really sure, the times are at least very different... – H.H.: It conceals something I cannot talk about here. If the book is worth to be published, it will be published at some point.”

\(^{718}\) Kivilaakso 2012, 153.

\(^{719}\) Haavikko 1993, 92.
It is again the denial of any knowledge about homosexuality that Hämäläinen emphasises here; it is rather contradictory that she does not want to talk about the topic or at least about her knowledge of it, but then nevertheless willingly and repeatedly touches on the subject, though on her own conditions. Also the silence about her knowledge of the existence of same-sex desire can be understood in the context of the historical restraint to speak about it. In her biography she would not have necessarily had to write about the topic in such width, since at the time it came out there was little public knowledge about the possible existence of the manuscript. By telling that it was lost, she gains power over what she says and what she hides. What is new here is the reference to her friend Sirkka, whom she did not mention in the interviews. She continues with how she was received by the publishers with almost the same choice of words as in the interview of 1972. Kivilaakso makes a good point in her discussion of Ketunkivellä and takes up the cudgels on behalf of archive research when she writes that the first article on the novel and lesbian literature in Finland was based only on the biography, not on archival material. The article from 1996, written by Johanna Pakkanen, declares the manuscript as forgotten, and thus calls it a lost work when it is for the first time mentioned in literary history.

In another interview (time and place unknown), Hämäläinen again openly names the plot of her book and the way it was received by publishers. Here, in contrast to the interview with Polkunen, it seems that she knew that it was the topic of homosexuality that was the reason for its rejection: “I ran with it [the manuscript] from one publisher to the next, and no one took it, and that was namely because its topic was such an odd one as lesbianism. You understand, of course, that at this time such a topic was not published.” It remains,

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720 Haavikko 1993, 93. “I offered Kaunis sielu to Otava and a publisher called Kansanvalta. Both did not accept it, probably because it was conceived as lesbian. The work must have been born instinctively, since I did not know that it is possible to erotically and sexually love one’s own sex at that time. I had not noticed anything sexual in the relationship between the girlfriends, but in the novel apparently a too big devotion appeared between the young women – maybe the friendship between me and Sirkka Koskenranta was mirrored in it, which never had any sexual form, but which was intensive and singularly important for the both of us in this stage of development.”

721 Kivilaakso 2012, 152, 154–155. See Pakkanen, 1996. Kivilaakso also notes that the manuscript of Kaunis sielu had already come to the publisher WSOY in 1996, and Hämäläinen had given her approval that it gets published.

however, unclear whether she knew the reason for being rejected already then, or whether she realised it only later. One can nevertheless say that the reactions to the book were quite distinct and characteristic. Hämäläinen does for example not mention that the men at Kansanvalta would have named the topic – and thus the reason for rejection – directly. Silence again is the key word, but here in the form of an unuttered, yet common understanding of certain values.

In the archived interviews, Hämäläinen thus gives the impression that she herself had forgotten about her novel, as well, or at least that she was not interested in it any more. Moreover, one also gets the impression that she was only reminded of it when she thought about the questions the interviewers asked her. Also in an interview in 1982 Hämäläinen talked about the unpublished manuscript. By then, ten years later, her attitude has changed and she is of the opinion that although it was rejected due to its topic of lesbian love, it still was a good novel that deserved to be published. The reaction of the interviewer Toini Havu, a well-known cultural journalist, interestingly is quite different from Mirjam Polkunen’s.

This interview is interesting in several ways. It not only tells about the rules of the time when the novel was written and rejected, but also about the attitude of the early 1980s when the interview was done; only one year, that is, after homosexuality was erased from the list of sicknesses in Finland. Hämäläinen utters the word lesbianism, but at the same time, like in 1972, excuses herself when naming it. Yet, she calls it a very beautiful novel – despite its topic. Both agree that there was nothing to be done about the destiny the book had, since the times just were not right, and people conventional. Interestingly, Havu and


723 SKS/KIA: Helvi Hämäläisen arkisto, AB 2643. Kirjailijahaastattelu 17.5./19.5./24.5./31.5.1982. Haastattelija: Toini Havu (T.H.), litteroija: Anneli Tiilikainen, 1982. "H.H.: It was not published and I have searched for the manuscript in vain. Amazingly, it was not bad. In those days it was probably not published also because of its topic of – funnily enough, I was a young and unexperienced person – lesbian love. – T.H.: Ugh. – H.H.: Uugh, it was not dealt with in an ugly way, it was a very beautiful story, it was a very beautiful soul, and it was also stylistically beautiful. I wonder where it might have ended up, it has disappeared. – T.H.: At this time, all those things were like that. – H.H.: Yes, it was horrible – T.H.: We were so conventional, and also Mika Waltari’s fantasies of evil were a sensation. – H.H.: Mika Waltari played bad, but never was."
Hämäläinen also shortly discuss Mika Waltari and his attempts to shock. At least in the two works that I have analysed earlier, the shock of his contemporaries remained quite small. Hämäläinen is of the same opinion, when she says that he only played with being bad. As explicated before, Waltari in the end agreed to a large degree with the prevailing values. The evil he demonstrated with the character of Madame Spindel merged in her unsympathetic, queer character with the world view that was expected from decent literature.

In terms of the way Hämäläinen built up her image, also other topics Hämäläinen was interviewed about are revealing. Ihonen has shown that also with regard to politics she reacted in the same way. He notes that Hämäläinen in all interviews emphasises her political non-alignment as well as her social naivety, especially in the 1930s. In the interview by Polkunen, she tells about the political background of her novel *Katuojan vettä* (1935) that “I have to say that politically I was – if you can use this word, this expression – uncivilised, I was totally unaware of things.”

Hämäläinen’s answers to delicate topics follow then a certain pattern: unawareness and being unconscious about things is characteristic for her answers. The way she writes thus is, according to her, intuitive. In contrast to being political or aware of social questions, Hämäläinen emphasises her awareness of beauty, the importance of beauty for her writing – which is definitely part of her writing style – and calls herself a servant of beauty. It is aesthetics rather than politics or society that she herself wanted to be connected with. This means an interesting friction: while she wrote about topics like homosexuality, abortion and women’s position, she nevertheless wanted herself to be seen as a mere aestheticist. That her works mirror certain social realities of the time they were written in, can be stated totally independent of what she herself emphasised in her interviews.

But not only these interviews – which are moreover not always reliable as telling facts, since archival material, as it has become obvious in this case, can also be fictitious – give an insight into the decision of the publishers to reject the novel, but also, and at least as much, the analysis of the novel itself. I will now at first have a closer look at the central story of the murder of the protagonist’s male lover and on her motives for doing it. All the three topics that I have named above – murder, religion and same-sex attraction – namely are connected to each other in the novel. The protagonist quarrels with God about both her sexuality and the necessity she feels to conduct the murder. Both topics are, moreover, connected to her thoughts about mental sickness versus health, and good versus bad.

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724 Ihonen 1988, 221. Ihonen cites the interview by Mirjam Polkunen quoted above. Ihonen also writes later in the article (p. 224) about her work belonging to the so-called “matristic literature” (matristinen) that dealt with women’s issues and new gender/sex morals and a new position towards religion in the 1930s in Finland. “[…] minun täytyy sanoa, että minä olin poliittisesti – jos voisi käyttää sanaa, sanonta – sivistymätön, niin minä olin täysin tietämätön asioista.”

725 Ihonen 1988, 221.
Ei kuitenkaan ole niin, että murha-ajatus nyt olisi poistunut mielestäni ja tuntisin, että sellainen ajatus tästä ihmisestä on mahdoton, mieletön, kauhistava. Sillä minulle se ajatus ei ole mahdoton eikä hirvittävää; siksi hökkää että olen sairas? Mutta senkin uhalla, että tekoni johtuisi vain sairaudesta en halua sitä jättää tekemättä, sillä se on sittenkin leimuava, rohkea, minulle se merkitsee sitä, että vapaudun entisestä. [...] Vapaudun siten myöskin inhosta, jota en kestä, inhosta, joka valtaa minut, kun näen höinen vaimonsa puhuvan, pukeutuvan, kuljettelevan lasta. Joka hetki tunnen, että olemme inhottavalla tavalla toisiimme liittyneet.726

Here, her motive for the murder is unrequited love. The feelings she has for him, however, do not prevent her from the wish to kill him. This is when she thinks she might not be sane or healthy. The protagonist’s feelings contrast her own explanations later in the novel, when she says that she does not feel anything, and that for her adultery does not mean much, since she does not understand marriage and its value. Thus, she gets more and more absorbed by her own thoughts about the necessity to murder her lover that she loses the – albeit maybe few – feelings she has towards his wife. In the end of the novel, after having murdered him, she feels, however, still respect for the family, especially for the child, and cannot visit the grave of the man she has murdered, even though she had planned to do it.

Later, after having analysed herself more deeply, she comes to the conclusion that she has murdered first and foremost for her own sake: “I am not bad or malicious as such, I just can’t respect anything, and now I also know why I murdered: because of artistry, gloom and the beauty of sadness, to grace myself with features I don’t have: with braveness, determination, with blazing, enthusiastic virtue. I did it out of pride and hate, but also out of light-minded artistry.”727 While braveness and determination do not alleviate her gloom and sadness, since the murder leads her to the wish to end her life, the lack of both applies to her relationship concerning her sexuality. Namely, although the main topic is the murder of the male lover and the female protagonist’s preoccupation with it, the topic of female same-sex desire is also central in the novel: its reasons, her own mental state, and her past. In contrast to Waltari’s works, the protagonist’s erotic attraction towards women is not depicted as abnormal or indecent, although it at some points scares the protagonist, as well as those she encounters. When she, for example, tells about a girlfriend at school whom she once kissed, she cannot understand why her friend had

726 Hämäläinen 2001, 35–36. “However, it is not the case that the thought of murder would have disappeared from my mind and that I would feel that such a thought about this person is impossible, absurd, shocking. Since for me this thought is neither impossible nor ghastly; maybe because I am sick? But also at the risk that my deed would only be a result of a sickness, I don’t want to leave it undone, since it is anyway blazing and brave, it means for me that I am released from everything before. [...] I am released then also from the disgust that I can’t bear, the disgust that descends to me when I see his wife talking, dressing, carrying the child. In every moment I feel that we are related to each other in a disgusting way.”

It is her surroundings that do not accept who she is or what she does. She is, in Bourdieu’s sense, stigmatised by the girl she has kissed, who thinks that she has done something wrong. And she seems to not understand why or what it might be what she has done wrong, but rather emphasises her innocence by the praise of the greenness of the grass – i.e. nature in its purest way. In this scene, moreover, the protagonist herself stages/ expects here heteronormativity, yet acts out differently. It is again (a staged?) queer leakage what we witness: the protagonist assumes to act “normally”, but does not, yet she knows not why. Also the earlier introduced term “lesbian panic” can be applied here, i.e. “the narrative moment when women in love with one another sense that their actions are morally out of line with expected behaviour and are neither able nor willing to confront or reveal their own lesbian desire.”

Later, when the protagonist meets a young woman she finally realises that, in comparison to her feelings for men, she feels totally different towards women. But she also realises that this disposition will not bring her luck. When she meets a certain Miss L. by whom she is fascinated, she does not feel comfortable with herself, but calls the feelings that Miss L. awake in her “a development into a wrong, unnatural direction.”

Katselin häntä ja ajattelin äkkiä, että tuota tukkaa, noita käsiä ja siroa ja surumielistä pikku suuta ja kasvoja suudellessani tuntisin hekumaa, hellyyttä, riemuoa ja kiihkoaa, jota en koskaan ole tuntenut esimerkiksi hänet ääntä suudellessani. Sanoin hyvästi voimattomana ja äärettömästä surusta. Hänen minä antauduin, mutta tuntematta kiihkoaa tai riemuoa, ikään kuin asiallisesti, oudon asiallisesti.

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728 Hämäläinen 2001, 71. “I was collecting plants with a school friend. We stopped at a meadow. [...] A sudden feeling of infatuation and kindness came over me. [...] My friend felt unutterably dear to me, I tried to remember whether I had done her something wrong so that I could immediately correct it. When I remembered that there was no such thing I kissed her excitedly, merrily and lively. But the next day she avoided me, she avoided me until the day we left school. She did not respond to my conversations and did not want to look me in the eyes. She strangely avoided any touch, to give her hand... She thought that in my kiss was something disgraceful, but there was nothing more to it than the excitement of the green of the meadow and of the fact that I had not done her any wrong.”


730 Hämäläinen 2001, 38. “[...] kehitys väärrään, luonnottomaan suuntaan.”

The protagonist is conscious about her feelings which, however, scare her, since she is at the same time conscious about the dimensions of it for her life and her feelings, as well as of the consequences this “disposedness” has for her. Nevertheless, her feelings about her sexuality and her opinion about it oscillate throughout the novel. At one point in her inner monologue she thinks to have passed her desire for women: “Although I await death, my sensuality does not leave me. Certainly I feel that I have got rid of my love for women.” But at another, later point, she knows that she has not: “In my devil-thoughts I travel far, but at the same time I still watch women, I stop at horses, who have been left standing, cars wake a longing for theatre-evenings in me.”732 The safest way for her to live out her sexual attraction to women is art. She feels erotically attracted especially when looking at naked women on paintings, but she knows that she will not/cannot act these attractions out. She realises that in reality, there is nothing to be done about these feelings. In the beginning of the quotation, there is again also the comparison between natural and unnatural, good and bad. Her interest for women is wrong and unnatural in her opinion. Still, she cannot help it and then even succumbs to the temptation of the woman she met.

All in all, it is not a positive view on the possibility to love women for the protagonist. Yet, it is both homo- and heterosexuality that scare the protagonist. Thus, despite the doubts the protagonist has, this detailed explanation of the protagonist’s desire and her struggle with it was certainly daring for the time when Hämäläinen wrote the novel. Its directness leaves no doubt about what she is talking of, and it stands in contrast to Soini’s or

731 Hämäläinen 2001, 38–39. “I watched her and suddenly thought that, would I kiss this hair, these hands and this fragile, sad mouth and the face, I would feel voluptuousness, tenderness, delight and passion, which I had never felt when I for example kissed h i m. Powerless, I said goodbye to shame and boundless grief. To him I succumbed, but without feeling passion or joy, but rather matter-of-factly, and strangely so. [...] Intoxication, burning joy and voluptuous sensuality, trembling, fervent and euphoric desires I have only felt when I watched paintings with naked women [...]. I am never doing anything, the mere thought shocks me, but I know that I will always eat dry bread while others enjoy juicy, bright fruits. The joyful, lovely drink is taken away from me wrongly. My lips are dry. I feel bitterness. I have lost the luxuriant sunny landscapes without my own fault. I am falsely convicted. [...] My disposedness towards women, does it really exist or have I imagined it, I don’t know. It scared and disgusted me, it awoke absolute sadness in me. So I went to see S. You understand, do you?”

Lehmann’s novel. *Kaunis sielu* thus can be compared to Söderhjelm’s and Suber’s novels in their directness of addressing same-sex desire. That these were written in Swedish and thus published is symptomatic for the large differences between the literary fields during the 1920s and early 1930s, when especially the Finnish-speaking Finland aimed at building its nation and a literary canon. Returning to Foucault’s five points to analyse power within publishing, then, the case of Hämäläinen’s novel is a textbook-example: the unknown, young and female author was not in a position as an established author would have been to demand that her novel got published – the publishers thus were hierarchically higher within the system of differentiation. The aims behind the interference on the part of the publishers are clear – Hämäläinen’s novel openly resisted several moral standards (concerning sexuality, gender, institutionalised heterosexuality, law, church etc.) – and they performed their power with the means of censorship. How extremely effective they were shows the effect that even the author herself later denied to have written such a novel or to have known about a topic like homosexuality. Yet, *Kaunis sielu* with its direct references to same-sex desire makes this statement by the author hard to believe.

Within the queer context of the novel, there is also another dimension that stands against prevailing values in the 1920s: as in earlier discussed works, also here the disrespect towards family values, especially towards the institution of marriage and the rejection of heterosexuality, if not sexuality in general and with it the consequence of reproduction, is central. When the protagonist tells about the first meetings with her male lover, it becomes clear that heterosexual encounters seem to be rather unpleasant and feel even “unnatural”. “At this time I didn’t even have an idea about my love for women, but when we [she and him] hugged, a strange joylessness, sedateness, overcame me immediately. It felt as if all joyful sensuality had in this moment faded out, had dulled.” Heterosexuality is here opposed to same-sex desire, and it loses when the two kinds of desire are compared. Nothing, it seems, can impassion the protagonist: neither heterosexual, nor same-sex desire; apart from paintings, since the consequences might not be bearable.

A similar event occurs again after the protagonist has moved into a new flat. In one part of the house live some women, and it is one of them to whom the protagonist pays special attention; she looks poor and simple, so that she decides to invite her once to maybe help her. One day the woman knocks on her door, the protagonist lets her in and lets her make tea. Then the woman wants to fluff the bed. At this point, she remembers: “It comes to my mind that I have loved women, although I have never done anything, and I forbid her to touch my bed. I feel ashamed. She certainly does not stir any passion in me with her brown-spotted face.” The woman has to go at some point, but promises to come back later in the evening; the protagonist tells her that this
would not be necessary: “Suddenly she disgusts me. She has the brain of a prostitute; she looks totally satisfied when she leaves. I hope she doesn’t come any more.” When reading these lines, it is striking to see that also here – like in the interviews with Hämäläinen – the memory of homosexuality suddenly comes into the protagonist’s mind. These analogies concerning oblivion and remembrance are thus part of a strategy of the author, one can assume: a constant play of silence and memory, allusion and oblivion that began in the 1920s and lasted until her death.

In this phase of the novel, the protagonist is not able to engage in any personal relationship any more, be it friendship or an intimate relationship. Since her lover is dead and since she cannot/ does not want to act on her same-sex desire, there is nothing left. Not even religion. She rejects the visit of a deaconess who comes to her door. Even this scene includes an erotic dimension. While the protagonist does not want to talk to the deaconess who treats her like someone who has become crazy in her fever, she cannot help but to mention her attraction to the woman: “I try to say with a voice as tranquil as possible: go out from here, do you hear. I can’t bear you. Listen. [...] I gesture with my hand, and when she sees me getting excited, she leaves. I see her round hips and I immediately want to put my hands on them.” This is a scene to which the publishers probably also paid attention, since it combines religion in the embodiment of a deaconess with same-sex desire; a combination, thus, that was (and in some occasions still is) unprintable. Moreover, the protagonist denies here the concrete help of religion and, instead, comes in the same breath back to the topic of homosexuality that haunts her throughout the text.

Some pages later, she conducts a last dialogue with God. She quarrels with him and asks why he makes her die. She understands that she has to be punished, but at the same time she accuses him of never having had any understanding for her. Nothing she has done, neither the murder, nor the adultery, is really possible for her to understand in the end when she lies feverish on the floor in front of her bed. She comes to the conclusion – a very Christian one – that everything had been preordained. “Did I murder just because I wanted to clear the way from myself, to get selfishly freed? The wish to revolt and the passion were reasons, too, but only superficially. [...] There is some elementary fault within me, in the quality of my being. [...] I have felt pity and misery, but only generally taken; love and kindness have not existed in me. With me, God has made a mistake, unnaturalness.”


Her whole existence is summed up in the last word of this quotation, i.e. in her being unnatural: she is a murdereress and has committed adultery, and both acts feel as unnatural as being attracted to women. The wish to revolt and passion that she has in herself – the two features that make out the whole novel – can both be blamed, but it is God, one gets to understand, who has made a mistake. In the end of the logical line of her thought, it is not herself who is to blame for everything. It rather is the one who creates people with these faults; those that do not fit into society, who have very different values and modes of thinking and feeling. This conclusion can be compared to Elsa’s thoughts at the end of Kärlekens väninna when she blames society for Erik’s sufferings.

Within the topic of disrespect for family values and marriage, it is the protagonist’s attitude towards adultery that is also described extremely unconventionally. She sees neither the value nor the meaning of marriage, and the same applies to children; she does not understand why a woman should have children. These thoughts can again be connected to the quotation above when she states that she has never felt love and that she has always been indifferent with respect to most feelings “normal” people have.


With this statement, the protagonist opposes the ideal of the nuclear family that was generally seen as the core of society in the 1920s, needed for the building if the Finnish nation. Besides, womanhood for her is not identical with motherhood, either. The protagonist has no idea, or maybe does not want to have one, about family and its values at all. Love for her is mere passion that is the motive for people in everything they do, be it murder or relationships. This world view is radical, pessimist and against all the ideals the young Finnish nation tried to build up, also with the help of literature. It is thus not

737 Hämäläinen 2001, 110–11. “I had not in any way conceived adultery as something meaningful. First, because in my opinion a human being can never be fastened to another one to that dimension that the other could prevent him or her or that the feeling for him or her – pity or respect – could be an obstacle, despite in some rare cases, in the intent to satisfy a strong passion. Second, I – who was not born into a family and have never lived in one – have no idea about the relation between family members, husband and wife, and I have not regarded children as meaningful other than for woman’s feelings. A child might withhold a woman from satisfying a passion, but not a man. This is why I did not despise the man, and I did not want to marry because I did not see it as meaningful and because it would not, at least in this case, have satisfied me in a mental way.”
only the obvious discussion about the female protagonist’s homosexual feelings that can be named as a reason for the publishers’ rejection of Kaunis sielu, but also both family and marriage, society’s core, are totally meaningless to the protagonist. Moreover, the institution of marriage is revealed here as a mere construction. It is not possible in the protagonist’s opinion that anyone could be so committed to another person that this commitment wins over passion. Moreover, also adultery always implies a triangle love (or passion) story. In this case, it is, however, a classic heterosexual one.

As a result of this analysis, the statements against family and marriage along with the novel’s mentioning of homosexuality make it ethics in general – i.e. the alliance of unwelcome attitudes towards morality and sexuality – that seemingly led to the rejection of the book. A final true answer to why it was not published cannot be found, however, since there are no minutes, letters or reports on the case in the archives, as far as to what I have found and what is accessible. But by analysing the novel, reading the interviews and taking into consideration the historical background as well as the background of those who decided about the books that were published, it is quite impossible to draw other conclusions, since the book is stylistically interesting and well-written and was therefore also published in 2001.

The facts that the manuscript of Kaunis sielu was so long not available, that Hämäläinen sometimes contested to still own it and then again not, and that she also contested that she had not known anything about the mere possibility of same-sex desire, as well as that its publication demanded the death of its writer: all this is exemplary for the reception of literature with openly queer topics in Finnish publishing. Still in the 1990s, society was not yet ready, it seems, to allow a renowned author to write in her memoirs about queerness in a novel she wrote when she was 20 years old.

4.3 Queer Topics on the Swedish Book Market: a Comparison

When analysing Finnish publishing policies, a look at Sweden is worthwhile, since Sweden has for historical and linguistic reasons functioned as an important index for the Finnish book market. Many books came via the Swedish market to Finland by being translated or bought into libraries, since Swedish reviews were thoroughly read. Thus, when Radclyffe Hall’s The Well of Loneliness was first translated into Swedish in 1932 under the title Ensamhetens brunn (Tidens förlag), one may assume that this became known also in Finland. The novel tells about a mannish lesbian prototype called Stephen Gordon and her life with women. Although there were only few reviews in Sweden, and apparently none in Finland, the novel attracted interest, since it sold very well and had several reprints. Additionally, published in the same year as Hall’s was translated, Margareta Suber’s (1892–

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1984) novel Charlie (Albert Bonniers förlag) came out and is said to be the first Swedish novel with a lesbian main character. The book, presumably set in Hanko/Finland, has a positively euphoric ending when compared to Hall’s novel that ends rather desperate and was published in a small and discrete edition. Although well written, some reviewers adopted a negative position towards it because of its topic.\textsuperscript{739} Since Suber was also known in Finland, the novel was reviewed in the Finland-Swedish press, mostly with praise.

In the context of both Hall and Suber it is important to note that homosexuality was illegal in Sweden as well at the time the books were published. It was decriminalised in 1944. Between 1864 until 1944, the Swedish penalty law (Chapter 18, §10) stated that “[i]f one practices fornication that is against nature with another person, or if one practices fornication with an animal; will he/ she be doomed to punishment at a maximum of two years.” The law was originally, as Pia Lundahl notes, thought to be used against different forms of fornication that were outside the reproductive act. But in practice it was only used against male homosexuality and bestiality.\textsuperscript{740} From 1865 until the decriminalisation in 1944, the maximum penalty in Sweden had been two years. The penal provision had not been applied to women until the beginning of the 1940s, so that the one and only legal case took place one year before the decriminalisation. Moreover, while women received the right to vote in Sweden only in 1921, i.e. much later than in Finland, in Sweden married women were made major citizens in 1920 when the wife was from then on obliged to take care of the family, be it at home or by going to work.\textsuperscript{741} The reason that the Swedish novels were published can thus not be explained by a less strict legislation than in Finland until the 1940s. One explanation seems to be rather that the Swedish society differed enormously from the Finnish in the years at the beginning of the 1930s. Whereas in Finland, for example, the process of urbanisation in a greater dimension only started in the 1950s, it already culminated in Sweden in the 1930s. After World War I, Sweden developed quite rapidly towards modernisation within culture and politics; it was exactly in 1932 when the Social Democrats came into power and stayed there until 1976.\textsuperscript{742} Also the general discussions about homosexuality and its status were quite vivid in the 1930s, in contrast to Finland, where there was no public discussion about it at all, but rather one about the degrees of decency within literature, as the literary fight has shown. Sexual deviance in Sweden “was discussed within a criminal and medical framework, in which the most important question was whether to react to undesirable sexual activities with punishment or with psychiatric treatment. There were also difficult problems of demarcation. Which sexual

\textsuperscript{739} Stenberg 2005, 6.
\textsuperscript{740} Lundahl 1998, 237. The law text in the original: “Öwar någon med annan person otukt, som emot naturen är, eller öwar någon otukt med djur; warde dömd till straffarbete i högst två år.”
\textsuperscript{741} Fjelkestam 2002, 104–105; 131.
\textsuperscript{742} Rydström 2003, 159–160; Sorainen 2005, 72.
acts were in fact undesirable, which were harmful, and which were acceptable?"\textsuperscript{743}

During the time period of a few years, when Sweden was openly discussing homosexuality, queer motives and female same-sex desire as the topic of Swedish novels written by female authors were accordingly not unthinkable. As a result, Margareta Suber’s \textit{Charlie} (1932) is regarded as the first Swedish novel with female same-sex desire in the focus of the plot. The characters of books that followed it were often single, independent, gainfully employed women who were strong, attractive, determined and intelligent. It was the New Women who wanted to make themselves visible, and thus searched for a language that made it possible to express that women had erotic feelings and experiences, too, also outside the domains of men. Therefore, terms outside the traditional gender patterns were needed and found by either “borrowing” male features, or by creating a “third gender” that transcended the borders between male and female.\textsuperscript{744}

Besides the exemplary status of the novel, another reason for taking \textit{Charlie} into this study is Margareta Suber’s connection to Finland. Born in Linköping, Sweden, she got married to the Finland-Swede Georg Z. Topelius during the Finnish Civil War in 1918; her husband fought on the side of the Whites, and Suber followed him as a war reporter. She then also got to know his Finnish relatives and was in close contact to them in the 1920s, especially with her parents-in-law who lived outside Helsinki.\textsuperscript{745} She was also active within the Finland-Swedish literary circles and belonged to the group who founded the Finlands svenska författarföreningen (The Finland-Swedish Author Union) in 1919. In 1931, she got divorced from her husband. Nonetheless, her contacts to Finland were still strong after World War II and she was active in the cultural cooperation between Finland and Sweden.\textsuperscript{746} \textit{Charlie} is also partly autobiographical, as Suber’s son Christer Topelius, himself an author, stated. It is very close to Suber’s personal experiences in Hanko, where she visited often due to her husband and his family, and where she was once alone on holidays with her three children. During these holidays, Suber met a young woman who resembles Charlie. Sara, again, the young widow in the novel, resembles Suber herself. The setting of \textit{Charlie} resembles the Finnish seaside-town Hanko. Thus, although some reviews compared it with Hall’s novel, Suber contrasted the dismal fictional character of Hall’s Steven with her own, more positive experience after having met the woman that became the model for the fictional Charlie.\textsuperscript{747}

\textsuperscript{743} Rydström 2003, 160.
\textsuperscript{744} Svanberg 2012a, 1. Works with lesbian motives were for example also Karin Boye’s \textit{Kris} (1934) and Agnes von Krusenstjerna’s \textit{Av samma blod} (1935). Both are not translated into Finnish.
\textsuperscript{745} Topelius 1985, 82.
\textsuperscript{746} N.N.: “Författaren Margareta Suber har avlidi”, \textit{Hufvudstadsbladet} 12.4.1984.
\textsuperscript{747} Topelius 1989, 81–85. “My two sisters and I spent a summer in Hanko’s continental seaside resort milieu, together with out mother, and there Charlie with her charming, warm boyishness, her red sportscar, her little dog and her travel-grammophon with all the latest schlagers appeared – she was totally worshipped by us children.” Topelius 1989, 81.
The novel tells about Charlie who falls in love with Sara, a young widow with two children. The circumstances in which they meet are interesting in many respects: it is summer; the people who gather in Hanko are on holidays and out of their everyday life. It is an international setting, and all the visitors have a rich background. Sara has her two children with her, a boy and a girl, who immediately when they get to know Charlie (and her dog puppy), are enthralled by her and even want her to become a part of the family. Also Sara is pleased by the young, slightly odd woman with her red sports car, flat-combed hair and boyish clothing style and behaviour, but is more cautious with the expression of her feelings than her children are.

In the beginning of the novel, Charlie is not aware of anything “abnormal” about her sexuality, although she knows that she has no interest in men. She rather despises the mere thought of a man and a woman being together. Yet, she realises very soon how much she likes and needs the company of Sara and gets more and more enchanted by her and – inconspicuously and without arranging to meet each other – tries to see Sara every day. There is a turning point in the story when Charlie one morning finds a book in her beach chair: its title is not named in the novel, but its author is called Weininger, so that it very probably is the work *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) by the Austrian philosopher Otto Weininger (1880–1903). Kristina Fjelkestam in her study of literary characters between the World Wars calls it bad luck for Charlie that the example for the reflection on the ongoing debates and discourses on homosexuality and gender roles is exactly this work, since Weininger sees women as inferior to men, both concerning morals and intellect. Active sexual desire, in turn, especially when it was directed at women, he defined in terms of masculinity. This has to be seen in the broader context of the time, since emancipated women in the beginning of the 20th century were often portrayed as mannish, both in their looks and their behaviour. Contrasting Fjelkestam, Eva Kuhlefelt notes, and I agree, that Weininger’s book can also be understood as leading the way for an anti-heteronormative discussion of sex and gender. He not only despises women in his work, but at the same time honours lesbians, since they, through sapphism have succeeded in overstepping the Woman in themselves and have thus reached the level of men.

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748 Topelius describes the special atmosphere of Hanko: “In the 1920s and 30s, Hanko was a frequently visited, internationally orientated seaside resort with strong and old connections to Russia and was also much visited by Swedes. There was no similar seaside resort in Sweden where the jet-set played bridge in three or four languages and where casinos were the most natural place to meet in the evenings. Also after the Russian Revolution the old connections remained and the natural relationship to the continent was, especially before the revolution, always via Leningrad, down to Poland and Germany and France. The boat connections to Sweden were bad and remained so until decades after World War II.” Topelius 1985, 84.

749 Fjelkestam 2002, 121. Weininger’s book became some sort of a “bible” of male modernism, as Ebba Witt-Brattström calls it, influencing writers like Strindberg, Wittgenstein, Joyce or Kafka. Weininger dealt also with Jewishness in his book (he himself was a Jew) and was accused of being anti-Semitic. See Witt-Brattström 2004, 2, 8.

750 Kuhlefelt 2009, 76.
In the time between the two World Wars, homosexuality in Western-European discussions was seen from two different angles: it was either defined by sexologists as a congenital inversion of the sexual drive, or it was defined as socially and mentally acquired, like Sigmund Freud saw it. As Fjelkestam furthermore notes, there are generally two alternatives for women with an active social drive within texts of the time that try to define female sexuality. One alternative is to choose men’s heterosexual terms and act as the so-called garçonne or Flapper. The other alternative is to act as the so-called mannish lesbian of which Radclyffe Hall’s protagonist Stephen is an example. Both types can be subsumed under the term New Woman as explained earlier; what both also have in common are a similar outfit (short hair, for example) and similar manners. It is thus also difficult to draw a clear line between the two types. Charlie is a good example for this difficulty.

She is on the one hand the typical Flapper-girl, listening all the time to music on her little gramophone, driving a sports car and smoking. But she also wears male clothes and is not interested in men. She thus combines several stereotypes and revolts against being defined either way.

While reading the book she has found, Charlie gets more and more convinced that it was actually aimed at her. The novel itself does not tell anything about the content of Weininger’s work; rather, it assumes that the reader herself knows what Geschlecht und Charakter is about. While it is on the one hand misogynist and explains that women’s emancipation can never be successful, it also calls the criminalisation of homosexuality ridiculous. Besides, Weininger theorises bisexuality and states that everyone is born bisexual and then later finds the way into either homo- or heterosexuality.

Charlie at first gets confused and angry. Her reaction to the book is strong: “Finally, she vomited in her car and drove, simply drove, but the little red sports car had not been able to blast her and her fate out of this abhorrent...

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752 Weininger 2005, 58 (in the original: 1907, 80–81). Misogynist is Weininger’s viewpoint on the question of women’s rights, the “Frauenfrage”: “The problem that I wish to solve in my search for clarity in the Woman Question is that of a woman’s will to become internally equal to a man, to attain his intellectual and moral freedom, his interests and creative power. And what I will argue now is that W has no need and, accordingly, no capacity for this kind of emancipation, all those women who have some genuine claim to fame and intellectual eminence, always display many male properties, and the more perceptive observer will always recognize in them some anatomically male characteristics, an approximation to the physical appearance of a man.” Interestingly, Weininger takes Sappho as the example par excellence for his theory: “[...] [The application of the principle enabling us to establish unambiguously a person’s location between M and W that was found in the law of sexual attraction between men and women] to the problem of homosexuality led to the discovery that a woman attracted to another woman is half a man. This, in fact, is almost all the evidence that we need in order to prove [...] the thesis that the degree of a woman’s emancipation is identical to the degree of her masculinity.” On the abolishment of laws against homosexuality, and his opinion on homosexuality being as natural as heterosexuality, see Weininger 1907, 60.
753 Weininger 2005, 43 (in the original: 1907, 56). “From the outset all are bisexual, that is, capable of sexual intercourse with both men and women. It is possible that they later actively promote their own unidirectional development toward one sex, pushing themselves toward unisexuality, and finally causing heterosexuality or homosexuality to prevail in them, or allowing themselves to be influenced by external causes to move in one of those directions. However, this can never extinguish their bisexuality, which continues to reveal its temporarily suppressed existence again and again.”
society, in which she nonetheless had no legitimate place.” The choice of words makes the position of the novel clear: it accuses a society that excludes those who do not fit in, as does the character of Elsa in Kärlekens väninna. While words like “homosexual” or “lesbian”, are expressed not once in the whole text, they are not necessarily needed, either, due to all the hints given; it is a silence which nevertheless speaks. Even whether one knows about Weininger or not, it becomes clear that he writes about homosexuality. Charlie, with her strong character finally succeeds in turning Weininger’s writings into something positive for herself; she becomes content, since she realises that she at least got to know who she is:

Charlie, with her strong character finally succeeds in turning Weininger’s writings into something positive for herself; she becomes content, since she realises that she at least got to know who she is:

it is not only bad things that await her. Later that same day she tells Sara about the book and what she has read and concludes with the sentence: “‘So now I know in any case that I love you, Sara’, she whispered, ‘and you are a hundred times more worthy to be loved than anyone else.’”

A relationship between the two women that would go beyond friendship, however, is not possible. More broadly speaking, such a happy ending had not been possible yet in literature. In the end, Sara decides to leave and spend the rest of the summer at her sister’s place in Norway. Sara’s children want to take Charlie with them, but Sara denies them the wish to even ask her. Implicitly, there is a love triangle in Charlie. Sara has not only children, but was also married, although neither this marriage nor the death of her husband are taken up in the dialogues between her and Charlie. The dead husband is, however, always present in the background as a haunting figure from the past. Sara’s denial to take Charlie with them is based on the fear of what might happen, as Charlie interprets Sara’s reaction. Charlie confesses her love and longing for Sara, as well as her desperation when she realises that she will lose Sara:

‘När jag ser på dig, Sara, är det som skulle färgerna omkring dig leka och – sjunga. Jag kan se det, för du har blivit skapad för mig och min lycka, och jag för dig, jo,'

But although the relationship between the two of them ends with Sara’s departure – interestingly, Sara expresses the reason for not being able to stay in English, with the words “I am a man’s woman...”\(^758\) as a sign that she distances herself from what she says –, the novel itself does not conclude with an unhappy ending. Charlie decides to stay with her father for the time being: “[...] as long as she shared the home with him, he would be the best social protection she could get” – and she is ready for what lies ahead of her: “Her body was now ready to live the life for which Our Father chose to create her.”\(^759\)

Thus, although the novel does not end in desperation, its end is ambiguous. While having accepted her destiny, Charlie nonetheless knows that she needs the protection of her father, since others will not accept who she is.

It is striking that the very last sentence of the novel includes a reference to God in the context of homosexuality, i.e. within the framework that Charlie herself is coming to terms with her own sexuality; although she knows that others might not. This connection between religion and homosexuality is neither mentioned in any of the reviews, nor in articles on the novel. I suggest, however, that this association is rather important with regard to its reception and the whole idea/ ideology of the book, and even more so when it appears in the last and concluding sentence. Suber implies, then, that the origins of homosexuality nevertheless lie not, for example, in a childhood without affection, or in education as some sexologists at the time suggested, but rather that it is one natural mode of existence among others, as also Weininger wrote. It is the same thought that also comes up in Hämäläinen’s Kaunis sielu which also links religion and same-sex desire and comes to the conclusion that the latter is not the “vice” of the human being, but part of the greater nature given by God.

In the context of stereotypes of contemporary theories on homosexuality, also the hints on what from today’s perspective I would call stereotypes of the origin of homosexuality that Charlie addresses are worth having a look at. Taking into account the last sentence and the general attitude of the novel, these are not necessarily Suber’s own stereotypes, but rather those that prevailed at the time the book was written. For example, in one episode Charlie tells Sara in detail about her relationship to her late mother: the mother had

\(^757\) Suber 2005 (1932), 90. “’When I look at you, Sara, it is as if the colours around you play and – sing. I can see this, since you have been made for me and my happiness, and I have been made for you, yes, I for you as well. If you could understand this, you wouldn’t travel, you would long for me...’ – ’I will miss you much, Charlie, much. And I will often think of you...’ – ’Do you have to travel? Do you really have to? [...] Are you afraid, maybe?’”

\(^758\) Suber 2005 (1932), 91.

\(^759\) Suber 2005 (1932), 92, 98. “[...] så länge hon delade hemmet med honom, var han det bästa sociala skydd hon kunde få.” “Hennes kropp var nu mogen att börja leva det liv, för vilket vår Herre behagat skapa henne.”
long been sick; Charlie had accompanied her to many sanatoriums in different countries, spending years of her childhood with mostly sick and old people. She says that her mother had not loved her, and neither had she loved her mother. Thus, the reader can draw the conclusion that Charlie’s homosexuality has its origin in the lack of affection by her mother and in being jealous of her father who received this affection instead. These thoughts, of course, refer to the psychoanalytical ideas of the time, especially to Sigmund Freud’s who saw a homosexual tendency in all human beings, and who noted that it depends on the infantile development of each person whether he/ she becomes hetero- or homosexual.

Moreover, also male features are applied to Charlie. These I would call necessary in the context of the book and its time of origin, since they imply right from the beginning that Charlie is indeed different from the other characters, and these features give the direction in which way she is different; some of these characteristics were part of the idea of the New Woman, but could also hint at homosexuality. Already on the first two pages, with her first appearance Charlie is described as a rascal (“tjuvojke”), always carrying her gramophone with her. Sara, again, once even dreams about Charlie as a man: “Sara turned around restlessly when she went to bed. When she finally fell asleep, she dreamed that Charlie was a man who loved her.” Shortly after that episode, Charlie reads Weininger’s book and indeed tells Sara that she loves her. Sara might have assumed this, and she might also have feelings for Charlie, but in her own scheme of values there is only space for erotic desire and love between man and woman.

Charlie has lately been analysed in queer- and feminist-based academic articles and is mostly seen as both incorporating and rejecting the theories about lesbianism within sexology and psychoanalysis. Suber wrote her novel exactly within the critical period when the thoughts of the sexologists of the 19th century were on their way out of the medical sciences, and also replaced by Freudian psychoanalysis. The protagonist Charlie, however, frees herself from any limited naming and finds herself in the end somewhere in between the patterns. Charlie, then, was quite “up-to-date” with its references to contemporary sexology and psychoanalysis, bringing up Havelock Ellis’ and Sigmund Freud’s ideas. Thus, the novel also suggests that the sexologists’ discourses were wider known in Sweden than in Finland at that time.
time. These discourses, as Kuhlefelt writes, form the background of the novel also because they help to make the main character’s non-heterosexuality obvious for the reader.\textsuperscript{764} Furthermore, she states that Charlie represents a “New Human Being” (in an allusion to the New Woman, but transcending it) that transgresses categories of gender and sexuality and unmask them as constructions – she is critical towards society, and she is anti-heteronormative: not only because of the way Charlie is characterised, but also because her character cannot be grasped by simple categories like “homosexual” or “lesbian”, since these categories, for one, did not exist in the world of the protagonist herself. Accordingly, Kuhlefelt calls the novel one of the first anti-heteronormative novels in Swedish, since it problematises the idea of heterosexuality as normal.\textsuperscript{765} She summarises Charlie’s character as one whose masculinity is a style and whose same-sex desire seems to rather constitute a part of her masculine identification than to be the reason for it. Suber makes her into a New Human Being that oversteps the categories of gender and sexuality and unmask them as mere constructions.\textsuperscript{766}

In this respect, Charlie also raises and challenges the question of the New Woman that I have discussed earlier. As Fjelkestam writes, one striking question was the ontological status of the New Woman: had she existed in reality before literature wrote about her, or was she a product of literature?\textsuperscript{767} The concept of the New Woman in reality was not commonly accepted, nor was the concept of the Flapper or the mannish lesbian. A hostile attitude towards “abnormal” sexualities is expressed for example in one review that says that the novel “is a depiction of a young woman who is not a woman but attracted by her own sex.”\textsuperscript{768} The reviewer denies Charlie her womanhood since she does not follow the set rules for female desire that equals to desire men. This is, in its naïve equation, a common stereotype about homosexuality that derives from an anachronistic view on sex and gender: if her desire is not focused on men, then she cannot be a woman.\textsuperscript{769}

Yet, Charlie immediately received many positive reviews, despite – or rather just because? – the protagonist is a very sympathetic character; interestingly, also in spite of the fact that same-sex desire and the love of the young girl for another women is depicted in the way in which usually romantic heterosexual love has been depicted in fiction. Thus, the question arises whether it was the ten years between Söderhjelm’s \textit{Kärlekens väninna} and Suber’s \textit{Charlie} that were the reason for a very different reception, or whether the mostly positive reaction to Charlie was an exception? Both explanations

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{764} Kuhlefelt 2009, 71. Havelock Ellis wrote also the foreword to Radclyffe Hall’s \textit{The Well of Loneliness}.
\item \textsuperscript{765} Kuhlefelt 2009, 69–70.
\item \textsuperscript{766} Kuhlefelt 2009, 82.
\item \textsuperscript{767} Fjelkestam 2002, 12.
\item \textsuperscript{768} \textit{P–n: Jämtlands Tidning}, Östersund, 2.6.1932. “Det är en skildring av en ung kvinna, som icke är kvinna utan attraheras av sitt eget kön.”
\item \textsuperscript{769} Fjelkestam (2002, 95) states that during the interwar years, to call a woman for example a “masculine monster” was a grave accusation, since to keep up the gender-complementary doxa of what defines a man and what defines a woman was most important.
\end{itemize}
are right, it seems: the ten years between the two novels had changed a lot in Swedish society: psychoanalytical ideas had spread, and the thoughts about homosexuality in some circles had, with the influence of Freud and others, changed into a more positive direction. The latter explanation indicates a period of openness in Sweden, since the novel was published at just the right time, in a gap of some years that enabled topics that were otherwise problematic. Not only came the Social Democrats into power, but one year later, in 1933, also RFSU (Riksförbundet för sexuell upplysning, the Swedish Federation for Sex Education) was founded. Also the discussion about “folkhemmet”, the Swedish welfare state, included in its beginnings discussions about how to integrate homosexuals into society. As noted before, the discussions about sexual matters were mostly led from a procreational aspect, while sexual deviance was usually discussed within a medical and criminal context.

Probably due to the fact that Suber was well-known in Finland-Swedish circles, Charlie was reviewed by the most influential Finland-Swedish newspapers, both by Hufvudstadsbladet and by Åbo Underrättelser. Both reviews are rather positive and recommend the book. Åbo Underrättelser sees it as one of only few noteworthy novels from Sweden in the spring of 1932: the reviewer criticises that Swedish literature usually would not take up urgent problems,


It is striking that the reviewer, who shows understanding for the topic and the protagonist’s fight to find herself, in the last sentence states that Charlie does not succeed in finding the key to her self – as shown, she certainly knows in the end who she is, her body being ready to live the life it should. Of course, this is today’s perspective and was different in the 1930s. Yet, the review also takes up the discussions about decency and states that it is not at all indecently

770 E. Hbg: “Tunt och fullhaltigt. Ur vårens bokflod”, Åbo Underrättelser 7.4.1932. “[...] and if one goes a little deeper, it usually happens in the merely erotic, a topic which should as an object in literature really be threshed out for the present. [...] Such a book, which, however, exposes a certain talent of its author, is Margareta Suber’s novella Charlie. It deals, in a discrete and fully artistic way, with an unhappy destiny of a woman, a young girl with a perverse trait, whose attitude towards human beings seems to be deeply tragic, totally unintelligible as it is for herself. The book is not at all indecent, on the contrary. It is fully kept in a distinguished, chaste tone, and what becomes clear is the painfully isolation of the soul of this young woman who does not find the key to her being. [...]”
written, in contrast. Homosexuality is called a “perverse trait”, one that makes the protagonist unhappy. I would also argue against this, since the future of Charlie remains open. The last sentences, nonetheless, give hope for it.

The poetically written review in *Hufvudstadsbladet* is titled “A little masterpiece” and begins in the same way as the review in *Åbo Underrättelser*, namely with the flood of books being published in Sweden. Also for this reviewer, Charlie is a find. He calls it

[...] en liten bok, som genast fängslar en genom sitt mjuka och levande tonfall. Med en takt och en klarsynhet som icke kunnat vara större har Margareta Suber behandlat den snedvridna erotikens ömtåliga psykologiska problem. Av halva tankar och dunkla förnimmelser, av kroppens reaktioner inför jubel och smärta, och av de ursprungliga företeelser vilka heta dagarnas och timmarnas växlingar, har hon skapat en atmosfär som förunderligt levande dalar sig i vängelserna med den unga kvinnosjälen. Utstötthetskänslans kusliga föraningar håller på att bryta sönder den slanka, starka kroppen; instinkten bubbla fram ur djupet och tvingas till medvetande. [...] Att Charlies unga öde inte bara blir sympatiiskt, utan att man även fattas av medkänsla för denna unga och charmfulla varelse, som tyckes vara bestämd för en så rik och ljus tillvaro, är helt och hållet Margareta Subers förtjänst. Hon har gjort Charlie till en levande människa med hjärta och nerver och en kropp som har “its own rhythm with the sun and with the moon”.

The reviewer acknowledges especially Suber’s talent to create her character in a many-sided way that leaves the reader no other option than to sympathise with the protagonist. He does not name the topic directly, but calls it “distorted eroticism”; nonetheless, it becomes clear what is meant, and has then, in a time of discussions about morals and even homosexuality, been clear as well, one can assume. Also the Swedish reviews used the same kind of language.

There is yet another reason to include Margareta Suber’s novel into this study: it has an exemplary status within the context of archive research. Suber’s archive at Kungliga Biblioteket in Stockholm has turned out to be a class of its own in comparison to many archives of Finnish authors I have researched when it comes, for example, to the correspondence between author and publisher. Concerning Charlie and its delicate topic, the archive actually contains all the material a researcher can wish for: the publisher’s reaction and his considerations, a broad collection of reviews, and even personal letters.

Taking these materials as an essential background for this chapter and the question of the reception of and reasons for the publishing of Charlie, I will

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771 H. K.: “Ett litet mästerverk”, *Hufvudstadsbladet* 17.12.1932. “[...] a little book that immediately fascinates by its soft and living intonation. With tact and clairvoyance that could not be greater has Margareta Suber dealt with the delicate psychological problem of distorted erotics. Of half thoughts and dark perceptions, of the reactions of the body before jubilation and pain, and of the original phenomena that is called the change of days and hours, she has created an atmosphere which trembles strangely alive in reciprocal action with the young soul of the woman. The creepy notions of the feeling of exclusion are breaking the slim, strong body; the instincts bubble up from the deep and are forced to consciousness. [...] That Charlie’s young destiny not only becomes sympathetic, but that it also grasps one with compassion for the young and charming creature, who should be destined for a rich and light existence, is completely Margareta Suber’s credit. She has made Charlie into a living human being with heart and nerves and a body that has ‘its own rhythm with the sun and with the moon’.”
now examine some more Swedish reviews of the novel. Many of them concentrated on the qualities the book has. They, for example, praise Suber’s abilities in style, but also her abilities in writing about a difficult topic that, as some point out, required tact, empathy and bravery. As said, Charlie is repeatedly compared to Hall’s Ensamhetens brunn, while Suber herself is repeatedly compared to the Swedish writer Agnes von Krusenstjerna. The newspaper Social-Demokraten, for example, even calls it one of the best written books in Swedish and asks, also referring to Hall’s book “why some people are created in a way, that they from the beginning on do not have an honourable place in society? What have we done that we should be so condemned to loneliness – with each other?” That the article is simply called Lesbos already tells of the reviewer’s liberal agenda. Svenska Dagbladet in turn, and despite its conservative orientation, foresees the expectations and reactions of the broader readership. He also addresses the role of the publishers as an institution that should give talented writers the possibility to get an audience, independent of the topics they write about:

För många och kanske för det flesta skall en novell sådan som Charlie te sig som en irriterande onödighet, en av de saker som varken behöva skrivas eller utges. Men ägnar man en smula eftertanke åt Margareta Subers fina behandling av ett problematiskt fall, blir det omöjligt att misskänna det psykologiska och konstnärliga värdet av denna lilla berättelse, som i sin skärpa och elegans rätt mycket avviker från vännlig svensk standard. [...] Margareta Suber visar in det hela något av samma modiga grepp, som gör Agnes von Krusenstjernas talang, och det vore orättvist om hon skulle avskräckas i portgången genom ytligt prohibativa förmaningar beträffande ämnesvalet.

In contrast to several reviews of Söderhjelm’s book, this one considers it even as necessary to publish a book that deals with same-sex desire. It might have even been seen as a required complementation to the (heteronormative) canon. However, there were also voices that could not understand the necessity of a book about female same-sex desire. The social-democratic newspaper Ny tid from Gothenburg for example wrote that the book would deal with its topic in a very simple way, and that at the same time the “perverse

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773 A.O. Böcker: “Charlie”, Svenska Dagbladet 10.4.1932, Kungliga Biblioteket Stockholm: Margareta Subers samling, Acc 2003/10, Recensioner 1932–46, Recensioner rör. Subers roman Charlie – 1932. “For many, and maybe for the most, a novella like Charlie will be an irritating redundancy, one of these things one neither needs to write nor publish. But if one slightly reflects Margareta Suber’s fine treatment of a problematic case, it becomes impossible to misinterpret the psychological and artistic value of this little tale that in its sharpness and elegance differs considerably from the usual Swedish standard. [...] Margareta Suber shows the same brave grasp as does Agnes von Krusenstjerna’s talent, and it would be unfair to discourage her at the doorway through superficial prohibitive warnings with regard to the choice of topics.”
gets a certain romance around itself that would make the book dangerous, if it was not so insignificant.”

Yet, Charlie turned out to be not so insignificant when we consider how many reviews it received: about 40 are collected in Suber’s archive. Almost every Swedish newspaper, it seems, had to say something about it, both positive and negative. Also the local newspaper Örebro Kurier is critical and does not name the topic of the book directly, but writes that “the topic Margareta Suber brought up is the one that Weininger once shocked the world with. She has narrative talent, but her novel still does not give anything else than disgust. [...] Charlie] is and will be a little spoilt and useless being that definitely would need to fight for becoming healthy and strong.”

The socially-democratically orientated Aftonbladet wrote the probably most scathing review by drawing a parallel between the author and her topic – the same phenomenon as observed in Söderhjelm’s and Hämäläinen’s cases: “The gratuitous occupation with sexual abnormalities that concern only psychopathologists is a repulsive feature of the time, and authors, who without discretion and affection with regard to the suffering of those with psychopathological tendencies seek to evoke sensation in this topic, are themselves suspicious.”

In the case of both Suber and Söderhjelm it is their début novels that deal with queer characters (and in Suber’s case it has remained her only one that addresses queer issues). It is actually remarkable that it was precisely début novels that included queer topics and that they were nevertheless published and also received publicity. One might suppose that a début novel meant a smaller risk for a publisher, since then the authors were not known and thus would not necessarily cause a sensation. In Söderhjelm’s case, her academic career, of course, contributed to the amount of reviews, while Suber had written only some less known children’s books before; interestingly, she also there approached marginal topics. Negergossen Yoka (“Negroboy Yoka”) from 1924, for example, according to a review in Stockholms Tidningen “fulfils a mission: to teach children to see a brother in a Negro, naturally and nicely done, without preaching or hysteria.” It was marginal groups she tried to

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bring closer to her readers with her writing, as one may deduce from the choice of topics.

It is also astonishing that a début novel with such an openly positive attitude towards female same-sex desire as Charlie got published by a big publisher like Bonniers. Suber’s archive includes also a letter by the publisher Tor Bonnier’s which he wrote after having read the manuscript. Bonnier had certain doubts with respect to the topic, but also liked the book. He has the impression that


778 Tor Bonnier was foreseeing, but in the end the book got published even without an introduction; it was after legal consultation that Bonnier decided to publish the book the way it was written.779 This case also shows the differences between the Swedish and the Finnish literary field in terms of differentiation and the distribution of power. There was no attempt, then, by the publisher to interfere in any way in the text before publication. For Bonnier, the topic was pertinent and legitimate. A foreword came only much later, namely in the reissue from 2005 by the Swedish Normal Förlag. There, the Swedish author and translator Birgitta Stenberg writes that the decision for publishing the book, despite the hesitation, probably was also influenced by the literary streams in Europe, that is, for example Hall’s novel The Well of Loneliness that was censored in England780, but published in the USA and translated into Swedish in 1932. Charlie’s topic was not mentioned on the back cover of the original in 1932, which was, however, quite common at the time; rather, the back cover presented other authors Bonniers had published. It also was published in an only modestly big edition and thus difficult to get later.781

The publishing house Bonniers dominated the publishing of Swedish fiction in the years between the wars and had so already since the 1880s with the aim to control the publishing of quality-fiction.782 Important to add here is the fact that the topic of same-sex desire seems to have had some kind of a

778 Kungliga Biblioteket Stockholm: Margareta Subers samling, Acc 2003/10, Brev till M. Suber från förlag 1932–76, Tor Bonnier, Stockholm, 5.2.1932. “[…] seems that the characters and the course of events are solidly and artistically done. However, it is an enormously delicate topic that you deal with. It might happen that a scandal arises around the book, that it will be described not only as sick and unhealthy, but also as indecent. Thus, it is the character of the topic that made us hesitant. Although it is unusual and I as a matter of fact consider it unmotivated, it still might be appropriate to try to get an introduction by some person with authority in the field.”
779 Topelius 1989, 84.
780 Stenberg 2005, 6.
781 Lindeqvist 1985, 50–52.
“tradition” at Bonniers: in 1930 they also published Rosamond Lehmann’s afore analysed novel *Dusty Answer* (1927). The Swedish title is *Dunkelt svar* and it came out in the series “Moderna unga människor” (Modern young people) that started in 1930. This series also included the novel *Stud chem. Helene Willfüer* (1930, original 1928) by the Austrian writer Vicki Baum (1888–1960) that depicts a marginal queer side character. Bonniers furthermore published Karin Boye’s (1900–1941) autobiographical novel *Kris* (Crisis) in 1934 that contains lesbian motives. However, after they had published the first three parts of the Pahlén-novel-series by Agnes von Krusenstjerna, they refused to publish the last four parts, which were then published by a smaller, radical publisher called Spektrum. The reason for the change of the publisher was Karl Otto Bonnier demand to delete erotic passages, but Krusenstjerna refused.\(^783\) At that time, the times of open-mindedness had changed back to more conservative attitudes. In Germany, Hitler had taken over power, and the nationalist atmosphere in Europe had also had its impacts not only on Finland, but also on Sweden.\(^784\)

Kristina Fjelkestam sees the possible reasons in Bonnier’s refusal to publish Agnes von Krusenstjerna, but nonetheless to publish Suber and Boye in the fact that Krusenstjerna represents the physical completion of homosexual love, while Suber and Boye represent physical unfulfilled/unrequited love.\(^785\) So why did Suber write the book, when there was the risk that it would not even get published or, if published, cause a scandal? One reason might be a rather simple fact: it was, as many début novels are, the result of the author’s personal experiences which Suber cleverly used and set into a broader context by opening up a discourse on contemporary society’s and sexologists’ ideas.

The latter was also the case with Radclyffe Hall’s novel *The Well of Loneliness* which tells about Stephen Gordon, a member of the upper-class that might nowadays be called transgender, and her affection for and her life with women. Stephen’s “sexual inversion” had been clear since she was a child, and she

\(^783\) Paqvalén 2007, 50. Bonnier wrote that the erotic motive would overstep the border to what can be called good taste, and not even the greatest author could do that. Paqvalén cites Karl Otto Bonnier’s letter to Krusenstjerna (5.11.1932), published in: David Sprengel (ed.). *Förläggarna, författarna, kritikerna om Agnes von Krusenstjerna och hennes senaste arbeten*. […], Stockholm 1935, 2. Agnes von Krusenstjerna’s novel *Av samma blod* came out in 1935. It includes the first lesbian sexual intercourse in Swedish literature. The author was labelled as amoral, abnormal, psychically and mentally disturbed. The novel was reported as obscene, but not censored in the end. Svanberg sees the reason for the scandal in the positive description; the relationship between the two women is related to nature, youth, health and beauty. Svanberg 2012a, 3.

\(^784\) This impact is articulated for example in a letter from the publisher Tor Bonnier to Agnes von Krusenstjerna about her book *Porten vid Johannes* in 1933: “Det är icke nog att boken innehåller scener av en hittills i svenskt språk okänd nakenhet och uppriktighet […] utan hela boken är av den art som det nya Tyskland kallar zersetzend och som ju hela den ”anständiga” publiken även här hemma betraktar som ”upplösande”. Särskilt sitter vår firma i glashus, där vi inte bara bli övervakade av tusentals ögon, utan där det sammanligen finns massor av människor som gärna vilja kasta sten.” See Paqvalén 2007, 50–51, citing: Tor Bonniers brev till Krusenstjerna (21.9.1933), published in: David Sprengel (ed.). *Förläggarna, författarna, kritikerna om Agnes von Krusenstjerna och hennes senaste arbeten*. […], Stockholm 1935, 4–5.

dresses like men. Like Charlie, she also has a male name what in both cases right from the beginning indicates their complicated identity that deviates from a heterosexual one. After several affairs, Stephen meets her lover Mary Liellewyn during her time as an ambulance driver in the army in World War I. In her youth, comparable to Charlie, she finds a book by Krafft-Ebing (probably Psychopathia sexualis) in her father’s office. Stephen and Mary live together in Paris after the war, but are not accepted by society. Mary gets depressed and feels left alone by Stephen. Stephen, in the end, pretends to have an affair to make Mary leave her and start a life with a man. The last sentence of the novel stands in direct connection to the last sentence of Suber’s novel Charlie, also referring to God whom she asks: “Please give us also the right to our existence!” But while Charlie ends with a positive outlook on the future – her body is ready to live the life it was created for –, Stephen has not come as far as this. She still needs to beg God for allowing her to live the way he actually has created her. Also Hämäläinen’s Kaunis sielu addresses the same question and makes the protagonist turn to God while struggling with her sexuality; like Stephen, Hämäläinen’s protagonist has not yet found her inner freedom. Although Hall’s book is the topic here, I will not go into a deeper analysis of it, since it has internationally been analysed rather massively. Since it was not translated into Finnish and known only to a few people with close connections to England, it will serve here merely as a background and complement to Suber’s novel. It is probable, albeit not provable from the materials at hand, that Suber had known Hall’s book: she worked as a translator of mostly English, but also French and Italian literature and had a big interest in especially new literature that came out in the 1920s to 1940s. However, even if Suber had read Hall’s novel, the question arises how much it had influenced her – or in case it had influenced her, she wanted so set a counterexample. Despite the similarities of the two novels on the surface, it is namely striking how different the two books are in their attitude towards homosexuality – Suber describes Charlie’s life despite all problems as happy and positive in the end, while Hall’s protagonist Steven Gordon is a bitter and anguished character. Karin Lindeqvist, consequently, also doubts that Hall had influenced Suber directly.

The Well of Loneliness was translated into Swedish by Louis Renner in the same year as Charlie came out, i.e. in 1932, under the title Ensamhetens brunn. The publisher was Tidens förlag. The novel is quite different from Suber’s, concerning both its way of addressing homosexuality, and its reception and the correspondence between publisher and translator/ writer. Having consolidated its economic position, Tidens förlag had from the end of the 1920s onwards a significantly increased interest for quality foreign literature. Due to the economic carefulness of its director Karl A. Olsson, who was moreover conservative when it came to aesthetics, Swedish literature was

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786 Hall 1990 (1928), 437.
787 Topelius 1989, 82-84.
not very much favoured by him.\textsuperscript{788} After 1932, Tidens förlag was sold several times and its archive is scattered over different places and can for example partly be found in the archive of the Centrum för Näringslivshistorik, where there is, however, no material related to the translation of Hall’s novel.

Although Charlie was often compared to \textit{Ensamhetens brunn}, there were apparently not many reviews of it in Swedish newspapers. Nevertheless, two interesting ones can be found: one by the extreme right-wing newspaper \textit{Vestsvenska Dagbladet} and one by \textit{Tidevarvet}, a weekly political-cultural paper published by the “Frisinnade kvinnors riksförbund” (the Liberal Women’s Union). \textit{Vestsvenska Dagbladet}’s reviewer Arne Lindström appreciates for example the way the novel is written – he is moved by the protagonist Stephen’s fate – but nevertheless is of the opinion that the book could have remained unwritten. He doubts that the problem explained in the novel – “[...] a broadly done description of an abnormal young woman’s tragedy, her fumbling in the world of normal people, her temptations, fall and final conviction about her task to present the fate of those equal to her to the world [...]” – could be solved “by crying it out on the streets.”\textsuperscript{789} Besides, he is disgusted by the character of Stephen. While he still recommends the book to those interested in the human condition in all its expressions, he criticises Hall in one major point: Hall, in his opinion, would in the description of the suffering of Stephen forget that there are “normal people” who also live a life of suffering. She would, that is, displace proportions and thus also her whole intention would fail.

Ada Nilsson’s review in \textit{Tidevarvet} is based on many facts about homosexuality. She reviews three books, one of them Hall’s novel, the others medical books in the category of popular science that also deal with sexual deviation – this probably due to her profession as a physician. She calls \textit{Ensamhetens brunn} a well-written book, free from any kind of vulgarity.

Låt vara att den belyser endast de längst gående avvikelserna, vars tragiska öden i hög grad formas av samhällets inställning, liksom att den invändningen kan göras att fallen pressas alltför hårt. Konfliktarna äro många gånger allmänt mänskliga, oberoende av den sexuella konstitutionen. Det skadar dock icke att ämnet även på detta sätt tas upp till behandling, ty, som doktor Helweg framhåller, de faror som kunna anses hota sexuellt osäkra övergångsåldern från de utpräglat homosexuella avvärjes säkra genom öppen kunskap och insikt än genom fördöljande och fördömande av livsformer som alltjämt existera.\textsuperscript{790}

\textsuperscript{788} 
\textsuperscript{789} 
Arne Lindström: “Romaner i översättning. Problem i öst och väst”, \textit{Vestsvenska Dagbladet} 26.11.1932. “[...] en brett upplagd skildring av en onormal ung kvinnas tragedi, hennes fältande i de normalas värld, hennes frestelser, fall och slutliga övertygelse om sin uppgift att inför världen framlägga sina likars tragiska öde [...].” “[...] genom att utropas på vägarna.”
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Ada Nilsson: “Tre böcker om själens kamp och nöd. Ensamhetens brunn – sakkunskapen”, \textit{Tidevarvet} 1932 (10): 46, 26.11.1932, 1; 4. “Although it illuminates only the longest going abnormalities whose tragic fates are particularly shaped by the attitude of society, one can also object the fact that there is put too much pressure on the case. The conflicts are at many times common human ones, independent of the sexual constitution. It does, however, not hurt that the topic is also taken up in this way, although,
Thus, like some of the reviewers of Charlie, also Ada Nilsson emphasises the importance of the topic. It is essential to note here that Ada Nilsson was also the editor-in-chief of Tidevarvet around which many well-known women gathered, amongst others Elin Wägner and Hagar Olsson. Nilsson was a medical doctor specialised in women’s diseases and worked in the area of sexual education. She was active in the liberal women’s organisation and fought for women’s right to vote. In the context of the medical discourses mentioned in the reviews, it is interesting that Tidens Förlag, in contrast to Bonniers who considered an introduction to Charlie before printing it, decided to leave the introduction of the original by Havelock Ellis out in the first edition of the translation. It was in the beginning only used as an argument for sale in the publisher’s advert. However, already in the same year of its publication, Ensamhetens brunn went into its second edition and from then on Ellis’ introduction was included.

Karin Lindeqvist, who has compared the two novels, sees many similarities – the way the protagonists dress, their male names, how they live independently and break gender norms –, but for example with regard to style, the two novels are very different. Also the time span of the novels – Charlie takes place during one summer, The Well of Loneliness during several decades – is different, as well as their idea of the origin of homosexuality. While Hall sees sexual inversion as inborn, Suber discusses several theories. And while Hall has many expressions for inversion, Suber offers not a single one. A major difference between the novels is also the way in which the society around the protagonists relates to them: Charlie has many friends from different countries and circles within an open group of people; the women in the novel are not married (any more) and do not look for men, either. Stephen, on the other hand is lonely and not accepted in her being different. The end of the two novels, however, is similar: both protagonists are alone in their room, they pray to God, but with different aims: Charlie is calm and sleeps, Stephen explodes inwardly and asks God for help in her unhappiness. In Charlie, God is not so much needed, since Charlie’s body is ready for the future. Thus, whether Suber had read The Well of Loneliness or not, her novel seems to be a reply to it in both its discussion of homosexuality and God’s and people’s role in it.

The Finnish translation of Hall’s novel, titled Yksinäisyysden kaivo, came out as late as 2010 by the publisher Basam Books. The translation was not much noticed; while the book is a classic in lesbian literary history, it is at the same time also outdated in its way of dealing with the topic. Since the first edition in Swedish was sold out quickly and followed by several reprints,

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as doctor Helweg points out, the risks that might threaten the sexually insecure age of transition by the typical homosexual is fended off better by open knowledge and insight than by hiding and condemning forms of life that still exist.”

793 Lindeqvist 2006, 12–14; 18; 23.
one can assume that it was a favoured book also within lesbian circles; the translation into Swedish made it probable that the book was also known in Finland. The National Library owns the original version of Radclyffe Hall’s novel in English. One can assume that it was acquired also then, in 1928. Outside Helsinki, only Åbo Akademi owns the original print. The trial which the novel and its author went under in several countries was known at least within certain literary circles in Finland. In the Finnish press, however, the novel was apparently mentioned in only one article in Finnish. The Finland-Swedish press seems not to have noticed it at all, as one can conclude from the press collection in Brages pressarkiv from the beginning of the 1930s. Theodora Bosanquet, the person who wrote the article in Finnish, was a British critic visiting Finland (so that one can assume that this article was a translation). She mentioned Hall’s book in an article that was published in the magazine Tulenkantajat in 1930 as a part of an extensive article about contemporary writers from England. The article deals, amongst others, also with D.H. Lawrence. In the article, Bosanquet states that she would understand why Lady Chatterley’s Lover had been censored in England, but that it would be hard to say why the same had happened to Hall’s book. “But no matter why: put into the same boat as the famous lady Chatterley and her lover, this much more innocent book blushes from the same indecent red that have purpled the lady’s cheeks.” This article indicates that there was, albeit within the smaller literary circles, knowledge about the book and its plot also in Finland. But although the article defends the novel, no publisher seems to have considered translating it in the 1930s or later; at least there seems to be no evidence available in publishers’ archives.

In 1934, an article in the magazine Kotimaa that had the “deterioration” of literature as its topic, discussed the situation in Sweden: young people there were forming a front against bad literature that had crossed the line of what can be tolerated, especially so-called pornographic topics. The article mentions mainly foreign books and foreigners who were allowed to publish books in Sweden, many of them forbidden in their original countries. The writer, however, does not name any book titles or authors; one can assume, however, that Hall’s book was one of those the article targets at. In the opinion of the journalist, the law that punishes such actions had seemingly fallen into

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795 The edition of the National Library is from the Parisian print in 1928. However, there is no evidence that would tell when exactly it was acquired.
796 The Well of Loneliness was banned in Great Britain under the “Obscene Publications Act” after a campaign by The Sunday Express that began shortly after its publication. In France, however, it was available and sold one hundred copies a day; also in the USA it was on trial, but not banned in the end. See Castle 2003, 633.
798 However, Swedish and other foreign newspapers were of course available in Finland, so one can assume that at least those interested in literature in general or working in the literary field had heard about Hall’s novel.
oblivion. Furthermore, the reviewer states that “it is impossible to comprehend why it should be artists that have the right to flout the law by e.g. idealising adultery or other things that both the law and we normal people regard as phenomena that need to be punished.”

This is an essential sentence in the way that it refers to the law that is concerned with morals, be it adultery or homosexuality – a reference that is very rarely made in any of the material of the 1920s and 1930s.

Although there apparently was only one article on Hall’s novel, there were also two well-known personalities of the Finnish literary field who knew about the scandal and even mentioned it in printed works. Already in 1929, Elsa Enäjärvi wrote in her book Vanha iloinen Englanti (“Merry old England”) about a trip to England where she, right on her first day, had visited a literary event with an award ceremony for a price similar to the French “Fémina”. It was Radclyffe Hall who received the price for her book Adam’s Breed (1926). Enäjärvi sees the New Woman – in her view: a man – embodied in Hall:

Miss Radclyffe Hall oli ulkoasultaan täysi Uusi Nainen, eli mies. Hän oli puettu vaaleaan siniharmaaseen kävelypukuun herraintyylisine takkeineen ja lyhyine suorine hameineen. Suorat sääret, kilpikonannahkaiset urheilutyyliset puolikengät; kovat kalvosimet hihansuissa, valkoinen herrankaulus ja rusetti leuan alla, suora olkihattu vähän viistosti päässä, takka lyhyeksi ajeltu. [...] Hän oli ilmiö täynnä hienostumista ja abnormiteettia. Sohvilla istui hänen erottaman ystävänä ja blaseerattu kaunotar, jonka vahva ihomaali peitti kasvojen väsähtymystä, mutta korosti suupielten äkkikäänteitä alaspäin. Hän oli kuin demoni istuessaan siinä [...].

Enäjärvi is to some degree impressed by the appearance of Hall, but does not like what she sees; the girlfriend is a demon, watching over Hall, while Hall tries to be a man in her features – an unpleasant appearance for Enäjärvi; she is the prototype of the mannish lesbian. Some lines later she writes that she would have wished to have met Virginia Woolf on her trip, but did not manage to. Concluding from the way Enäjärvi writes about Hall, one can assume that she had not heard about her before. Yet, also Woolf was translated only late

799 N.N.: “Kirjallisuuden huononeminen”, Kotimaa 28.3.1934a. “[...] on mahdotonta käsittää, miksi juuri taitelijalla olisi oikeus asettua yhteiskunnan etujen yläpuolelle esim. siten, että kirjallisuudessa ihannoi aviorikoksia tahi muita asioita, joita sekä laki että me tavalliset ihmiset pidämme rangaistavina ilmiöinä.”

800 Enäjärvi 1929, 353–354. “Miss Radclyffe Hall was a complete New Woman, i.e. a man, in her appearance. She was dressed in a light blue-grey jacket suit with a jacket in the style of a man’s and a short skirt. Straight legs, turtle-leathered, sportive loafers; hard cuffs at the end of the sleeves, white gentleman’s collar and a bow tie under her skin, a straight straw hat slightly askew, short-cut hair. [...] She was a phenomenon full of elegance and abnormality. On the sofa sat her inseparable girl-friend, a smug beauty whose strong make-up covered the tiredness of the face, but which emphasised that the corner of her mouth made a swerve downwards. She was like a demon, sitting there [...]”. Enäjärvi’s book was a best-seller: it sold out within a month, and also the second edition, 3000 copies, sold well. This means that also the name Radclyffe Hall was known to many readers as well as publishers. Enäjärvi’s book also received very positive reviews. As Sievänen-Allen writes, England and its culture had been quite unknown in Finland in the 1920s. See Sievänen-Allen 1993, 157–158. The book, moreover, came out shortly before Paavolainen’s Nykyaikaa etsimässä that also addresses the figure of the bachelorette. Paavolainen mentions her book and writes that she would, in her non-modernity, give a picture of the modern England. See Riikonen 2014, 120.
into Finnish; the first translation was *Mrs Dalloway* in 1956. Worth mentioning in this context is Enäjärvi’s later engagement with regard to the question of population policies; especially in the beginnings of the 1940s she wrote articles on the importance of higher birth rates – the ideal family would consist of six children to guarantee a sufficient population number (she herself had five)–, as already the Myrdals, for example, in the 1930s had remarked and criticised as a sign of insufficient modernisation; when Väestöliitto, the Family Federation of Finland was founded in 1941, Enäjärvi became the vice-chairwoman. For Enäjärvi, there was, however, no reason for women to give up the founding of a family due to studies or a career; in her opinion, both was possible and simply a question of organisation.  

The second literary personality who wrote about Hall was the author Aino Kallas, one of the most important Finnish female authors in the 20th century. She had met Hall in London as well, slightly later than Enäjärvi did, namely in 1928, the time of the scandal around Hall’s novel, that is, but the diaries in which she wrote about it were only published in 1956. Kallas had spent time in London due to her husband’s position as a diplomat in the years 1922–1934. During that time, she had become an important person within the literary circles in England, and it was also during that time when she made her career as an internationally significant author. As Ritva Hapuli states, both her diaries and letters show how determinedly she conquered the London literary circles to get her works published in English, while she at the same time longed for acknowledgement in Finland.  

Kai Laitinen, again, emphasises that Kallas, although she was interested in London and its outskirts, had not very much contact to the city’s bohemian circles. Her acquaintances were rather part of the aristocracy. Nonetheless, Kallas’ writing about her relationship to Hall is quite interesting. In her diary, she first is angry about not having written about her time in London very much, but at least wants to write down the following:


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802 Hapuli 2003, 49.  
803 Laitinen 1978, 74.  
804 Kallas 1956, 137. "For necessity’s skull some small features – to be used for my London memoirs: Hugh Walpole came to us directly from the police investigation of Miss Radclyffe Hall’s *Well of Loneliness*. (I was also invited to come there as a literary witness, but because of Oskar’s official position I thought that I could not appear in public against the English Home Secretary. Witnesses are, by the
Kallas was, one can assume from these lines, on Hall’s side during the trial, although she did or could not witness. Having been invited, she must have been known as someone who defended the freedom of speech, on behalf of whatever topic. Accordingly, both Charlie and The Well of Loneliness were known in Finland within the literary circles. The little publicity they received tells about the status of the topic, as well as about the probable interest in the books and their discussions. Similar books can hardly be found on the Finnish book market, and to translate one that so openly addressed queer topics would have been surprising. Lehmann’s Dusty Answer was translated, but the topic of the queer characters is only a minor one and was not necessarily detected by the common reader. When Finnish-language books with queer topics could only find their way into topic by using certain techniques to undermine the prevailing ideas, it is then striking how open-minded the Swedish book market – Bonniers being the equivalent to WSOY or Otava – was during a few years in the beginning of the 1930s.

way, not allowed to be investigated!). Walpole, a man at the age of about 45, a big, sturdy, angular face, prominent chin, a kind and friendly look and smile. ‘The main thing in this lawsuit is the freedom of speech, the freedom of the writer’, he said.” Some of Kallas’ works were also translated into English.
5 Possibilities & Silences: How an Unabridged Translation Became Censored

A remarkable case in the context of this study is Émile Zola’s (1840–1902) novel Nana, published in French in 1880. In 1930, it was for the first time translated into Finnish and published by the small publishing house Minerva. The novel tells about the young prostitute Nana who works her way up in society with the help of different men whom she (financially) destroys. In the beginning of the novel, she débuts as an actress in a Parisian theatre, amongst others with a nude scene – the male public is thrilled and queues to be able to pay their tribute to her in the form of flowers and money. In the course of the novel, there are several men in more or less high social positions in Paris who get dependent on her and who cheat on their wives to spend a night or more with Nana. The novel circles mostly around the love lives of the different characters and their affaires with each other. Central to Nana’s character is on the one hand her vivid love life that is rather strictly managed with timetables for the different men she sleeps with, and on the other hand it is her constant lack of money. She also has a little son whom she has given into fosterage. Nana ruins the life of many men; or rather they ruin their lives in their passion for her. One of them is Georges who is in love with Nana, but does not endure her decision to leave him after a few nights. He commits suicide. Also Nana dies in the end of the novel due to a sickness after having herself withdrawn from society, rotting away in her bed – a symbol, as literary research has emphasised, of the rotten state of the French society in the end of the 19th century. I will not go into details of the different interpretations of the novel within international research, but concentrate on the comparison between the two Finnish translations.

The novel is essential for this study since it – in the original as well as in the first Finnish translation from 1930 – contains several passages about the protagonist’s intimate relationship with a close friend of hers, Satin. Additionally, the Finnish edition from 1930 is equipped with a short foreword that tells about Zola’s importance as a writer and lists some other translations into Finnish, all part of Zola’s series Les Rougon-Macquardt that comprises 20 novels. The first part of the Rougon-Macquardt-series was Ansa (L’assomoir) in 1903.

Suurimman levikin on Ranskassa saanut nyt lukijain käteen laskettava teos, Nana. Ymmärtää hyvin, minkä hälinän se nosti ilmestyessään, sillä tuskin milloinkaan on niin häikäilemättä ja lahjomattomasti isketty yhteiskunnan arkaan kohtaan.
These sentences make it already rather obvious that the publisher and translator appreciated the work the way it was written in the original; they did not make drastic changes. The publisher Minerva had specialised in translations. In the year when Nana came out, the list of 35 published books there included only one book in Finnish (a cook book). The rest are translations, mostly from English and French, like works by Maurice Leblanc, Jack London or Berta Ruck. According to the National Biography of Finland, Minerva published their first books in 1902 and the last ones in 1931, i.e. one year after Nana. In 1931, the house got bankrupt. The journey of Minerva and some other small publishers, according to Kai Häggman, ended with the death of their owner. Many of those publishers who operated before the wars have left no archive. Either they got lost or had never existed.

Despite Zola’s popularity in Finland, there seems to have been only one review of Nana in 1930, and a very short one, moreover:

Although the reviewer remarks weaknesses in the translation, it seems to be still acceptable. The topic prostitution is mentioned, but not the episodes that content Nana’s intimate relationship with her friend Satin. As in some works analysed in the preceding chapters, it is again silence that occurs in the review. However, since the article is only a few lines long, one can assume that the topic of same-sex desire, which is only a side-topic in the novel, was subsumed under the words “dauntless” and “naked description”.

Concerning the topic of female decency, Nana not only brings up queerness, but also prostitution. Although this is a characteristic topic of French decadent literature, it might have also been a topic to be censored,
since prostitution has always been connected with dangerous illnesses, illegal sale of alcohol, violence and corruption. The highest percentage of prostitutes compared to the number of inhabitants in Finland had been counted between the First World War and the 1960s. In the 19th century, the percentage of prostitutes in Finland (especially Helsinki) was at some times more than for example in London, but nonetheless less than in Berlin or Paris, where Nana takes place. Yet, prostitution has long been a topic in world literature; in Finnish-language literature it has been a topic since the 19th century, in, for example, Minna Canth’s Kauppa-Lopo (1889), Eino Leino’s Jaana Rönty (1908) or Mika Waltari’s Kultakutri (1948). As this literature makes the reader believe, the life of prostitutes was usually marked by persecution by family, neighbours, officials and clients. Such a typically negative picture of prostitution is given also in the case of Nana, who on the one hand exploits her clients, and on the other hand lives a decadent life that also included a same-sex relationship with her friend.

About two decades after the translation of Nana by Minerva, the originally left-wing publisher Tammi, founded in 1943, decided to translate Nana again in 1952. The reason why it was retranslated remains uncertain. This version of the translation misses out all the passages that refer to same-sex desire; besides longer passages of descriptions of events, a whole plot line and one of the female characters, namely Nana’s (girl)friend Satin, are more or less elicited from the novel. A review of the new translation in the magazine Suomalainen Suomi mentions that the book was partly censored with the words: “[The translator] Georgette Vuosalmi has accomplished this faultless translation in an abridged version what might mean a certain doubt with regard to Zola’s savouriness among present-day’s audience (and a wise decision this abridgement certainly was).” This is also a form of silence, when the reviewer did not regard these censored passages as important: a rather presumptuous attitude that undermines the authority of the author and his text. Besides, also some parts of the text are regarded as unsuitable for the Finnish readership in the time after the war. This feature repeatedly appears in reviews of works written by female authors, as for example Pennanen’s case has shown. It was, as said, the beginning of the 1950s when the legal situation with regard to female same-sex relationships was the most difficult throughout the whole period of the law that forbade male and female homosexuality. The peak of law suits happened exactly then, so that the reaction of the reviewer is actually not surprising.

Moreover, in this context of a peak of law suits, the “encouragement section” may not be forgotten, that means that also the slightest positive depiction of same-sex desire in a novel might have caused legal problems for a publisher in this time of stricter law obedience than in the 1920s and 30s;

even more so, one might suppose, if the work in question was a classic and written by an acknowledged, albeit controversial author. The potential readership was bigger than the one of a less known author and one might also suppose that for example students of French literature would read it. The translation might have also been aimed at reading circles, and thus been tried to make easier to approach. In the case of censorship, the earlier introduced question of legitimacy and power is especially significant. The literary field, namely, is according to Bourdieu always structured by a series of rules for what can legitimately be said. The monopoly of legitimacy in a case like _Nana_, it seems, lay then totally in the hand of the publisher and/or translator.

As Foucault stated, there is a speaker’s benefit with regard to speaking about taboos concerning sexuality: those who are able to express their sexual awareness are at the same time, within the speech act, able to free themselves from being subordinated. If the episodes that describe same-sex desire are censored, as in _Nana_ from 1952, as I will show, then these are a taboo that cannot be expressed. The current discourse about sexuality within society then comes clearly to light with the example of such a translation. When, moreover, the success of a novel (the understanding of what can happen) is dependent on the reader’s knowledge that is conditioned by his/her cultural presuppositions, then the censorship of the translation in 1952 also implies that the knowledge about the possibility of homosexuality was bigger than it might have been in 1930. Concerning censorship, Ilkka Arminen differentiates between three lines in Finnish society:

> Ensimmäinen on [...] julkisuuden kehittämisen hitaus, jota ovat ylläpitäneet voimakkaat institutionaaliset rajoitukset. Suomalainen julkisuus oli 1940-luvun lopulle asti paria lyhyttä ajanjaksoa lukuun ottamatta, osin virallisten, osin epävirallisten, sensuurimääärysten alainen. Toinen, osin sensuuria legitimoinut, juonne on ollut kansallisen eheyden korostaminen, joka oli vahvimillaan ensimmäisen tasavallan aikana epävakaan valtioksi tulon jälkeen ja toteutui pyrkimyksenä sulkea kansallista yhtenäisyyttä uhmanneet pois julkisuudesta. Kolmas juonne on suomalaisen julkisuuden valtiollisuus, joka tulee kiehtovimmin esiin toisen maailmansodan jälkeen valtiollisen symbioosin “kriittisenä” julkisuutenan.

The time of _Nana_’s retranslation in 1952 was then a period of enforced nationalisation, a backlash that can be compared to the time directly after the Civil War. Therefore, one can assume that it was reinforced post-war nationalism combined with greater knowledge about homosexuality that stood...
behind the censorship of certain parts of *Nana*. When taking the task of translations into account, it is “[t]hrough their domesticating function, [that] translations and other rewritings reconstitute their originals by negotiating anew their source texts’ meaning and value in the shifting web of currently topical discourses, and they enable their “sur-vival” [...]” In the case of the abridged version, the question of the domesticating function is especially interesting. Since when the episodes addressing homosexuality are censored away, the topical discourses must have been such that deny/ fear homosexuality. And when also a review, like the one quoted above, tacitly accepts censorship – an action of power –, then this action is also legitimate.

Besides, a translation that was seen as indecent might have also put the translator under suspicion. When asking how classical texts have been translated with regard to gender-issues, one always has to consider the background of the text and the translator, as Kristina Sjögren writes: “It is inevitable that the translators bring some baggage with them into the translated text, such as their own ideology, the prevailing literary rules of their time, the very language itself, the expectations of dominant institutions and ideology, and what the public for whom the translation is intended expects.”

Sjögren’s article analyses the translations of August Strindberg’s autobiographical *Le Plaidoyer d’un fou* (1893), in which one of the main female characters throughout the novel breaks the rules of what is seen as normative femininity and also has an affair with another woman. In her analysis of a very early English translation from 1912 called *The Confession of a Fool*, translated by Ellie Schleussner, which erases everything that is related to sex or “indecencies” of any kind, Sjögren writes that

Schleussner probably felt compelled to carry out such extensive editing and cutting as some things simply could not be published in Britain at the time if one wanted to avoid the ire of government officials and social purists. As obscenity prosecutions directly affected publishers and printers, Schleussner’s publisher probably had a strong influence over the text, too.

The translation resembles the one of *Nana* from 1952 in many ways. It might even be, as Sjögren concludes, that this cutting and editing was the only way that the novel could be published at all. The Finnish abridged translation of *Nana* from 1952, though, cannot be excused with this argument, since a complete version had already existed for over 20 years. Moreover, the question comes up whether cutting and editing benefits any work, since it is not a translation of the original any more, but rather an adaptation.

When a new edition of the translation of *Nana* from 1952 came out in 1982, the censored passages were still missing, and they have not been added until today. What is even more astonishing is that the omissions are not even

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811 Hepolampi 2003, 70.
812 Sjögren 2009, 8–9.
813 Sjögren 2009, 27.
mentioned any more in the edition from 1982. However, Tarmo Kunnas, a professor of literature, reminded of the omissions in an article on Zola in *Helsingin Sanomat* in 1983:


The word “typistetty” (truncated) is well chosen with regard to the many missing passages which I will analyse below. Also the character of Satin remains shallow. The attitude towards the queer topic in 1982, one might suppose, would have been quite different from what was maybe feared in 1952. In 1981, homosexuality was deleted from the list of sicknesses, after having been decriminalised in 1972. In 1984, one year later, *Kainin tytär* by Pirkko Saisio was published, despite the still existing “encouragement section” in the law that was deleted only as late as 1999.

In an article on translation and retranslation by using the example of Zola’s *Nana* into English, Siobhan Brownlie writes that the reasons for new translations of works are manifold: retranslations of so-called classics are often undertaken until a so-called canonical translation has been made. An improvement is often seen in the fact that “the successive translations come closer to conveying the essence of the source text, to revealing the truth of the being of the source text.” This is not the case with the retranslation of *Nana*, as also Kunnas’ review shows. More likely, it was morals that were the reason for the Finnish retranslation in 1952, since also norms and ideologies may be the driving force behind the idea of retranslations:

Retranslations are undertaken because there has been a change in ideologies and/or norms in the initiating culture (usually the target culture), and the translation is thought to have aged or is unacceptable because it no longer conforms to the current ways of thinking or behaving. The study of retranslations can thus reveal changing norms and ideologies in society.

This theory proves the non-linearity within translations and publishing as well as concerning moral values: what was allowed in 1930 and thus not censored was not acceptable any more in 1952 and thus certain passages are

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814 Tarmo Kunnas: “Sensaatiosta instituutioksi”, *Helsingin Sanomat* 9.4.1983. “It is a pity that the just published translation of *Nana* has not been revised and completed. It seems that rather wantonly many passages from the original text are missing. Nana’s bourgeois opinions and her political reactionism are better outlined in the original. The detailed depictions of the surroundings that are left out now have their own important symbolic meaning. Lesbian love-scenes are sometimes strangely truncated.”

815 Brownlie 2006, 148.

816 Brownlie 2006, 150.
missing from the retranslation. Moreover, no effort has been made to publish a complete translation of this canonical work until today.

Still, as translation theorists also argue, the idea of retranslations simply due to social or political changes might often be too easy. According to Brownlie, it might be false to presume time periods with different sets of norms and ideologies which would explain retranslations:

[I]n practice there is not always a neat and homologous relationship between time period and norms/ideology. Norms typically associated with one time period may appear occasionally in another time period. Within one translation there may be evidence of heterogeneity of norms. Earlier and later translations may haunt the present one. We can take these phenomena to be due to the operation of unbounded textuality, and/or they may be explained by the translator’s role of deliberation with regard to various options [...].

Nonetheless: I argue that in the case of the Finnish translation from 1952, norms were the reason for the censorship of certain passages. Namely, when having a closer look at this retranslation, the characteristics of the missing scenes become clear. It is mainly those where Nana and her girlfriend Satin meet, fall in love and live some kind of a relationship. In fact, many features of Satin’s character are erased from the retranslation. An analysis of the character of Satin demonstrates why: almost all her appearances in the novel, and for certain all those that last longer than some sentences, are connected to relationships between women. Those are consequently deleted from the retranslation. In the following, I will discuss those scenes that are missing from the retranslation in 1952, and compare them to the original as well as to the translation from 1930.

A first scene, where it becomes obvious that Nana has entered the Parisian lesbian scene by getting to know Satin better and having become her closest friend, is described when the two of them meet in the restaurant of a certain Laure:

Cette Laure était une dame de cinquante ans, aux formes débordantes, sanglée dans des ceintures et des corsets. Des femmes arrivaient à la file, se haussaient par-dessus les soucoupes, et baisaient Laura sur la bouche, avec une familiarité tendre; pendant que ce monstre, les yeux mouillés, tâchait, en se partageant, de ne pas faire de jalouses.

This passage is also translated in the retranslation of 1952, although the last word of the French text, “jalousie”, is translated with “loukkaantua”, which

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818 Zola 1985, 257. The English translations from Zola’s Nana follow the translation by George Holden from 1972 (Penguin 1972/1985). Zola 1977/2002, 260. “This Laure was a lady of fifty whose swelling contours were tightly laced by belts and corsets. More women came in one after another, and each one craned up to reach over the saucers piled on a counter and kiss Laure on the mouth with tender familiarity, while the monstrous creature tried with tears in her eyes to divide her attentions in such a way to make nobody jealous.”
rather means “getting insulted”; a more direct translation would be the word “kateellinen”. Despite the fact that the women here kiss each other on the mouth and might be jealous, the description of Laure nevertheless is negative: she is called a monster. Shortly after this scene, there is an abridgement of about one page in the Finnish translation, in which in the original version a young woman appears, dressed like a man. Nana, in the original version, has not yet totally realised that she is in the middle of a circle of lesbians, but the reader might have because of the emergence of the mannish lesbian.

In the version from 1930, an interesting change was made to the chapter: it was not censored, but rather even intensified. The English translation says: “At first, Nana had been afraid of meeting some old friends who might have asked her stupid questions; but she was relieved to discover that there was nobody she knew in that motley throng, where faded dresses and lamentable hats mingled with expensive costumes in the fraternity of shared perversions”\(^{819}\) The last part of the sentence in Finnish is made into a main sentence. It says shortly and concise: “All belonged to the same sisterhood of being sick with regard to their sex life.”\(^{820}\) While the original version speaks of perversion in a subordinate clause, the Finnish puts an emphasis on the sexual connotation of the perversion and calls it what it is, while it also adds the word “sick” to make its own (the translator’s and publisher’s?) moral stand clear, i.e. it hints at heteronormative ideas about sexuality.

Another scene that is missing from the retranslation is the beginning of the intimate relationship between Nana and Satin, while this passage is translated in the 1930-version on the close basis of the French original.\(^{821}\) Here, the two women had not met for a while, when Nana one afternoon sees Satin, dirty and with shabby clothes, on the street and takes her home.


820 Zola 1930 II, 23. “Kaikki olivat samaa sukupuolielämää ja sairaalointa sisaruskuntaa.”

821 See Zola 1930 II, 93–114.

822 Zola 1977/2002, 329. Zola 1985, 326–327. “From then on Nana had a passion to occupy her attention. Satin became her vice. [...] And the two women began to spend tender afternoons together, murmuring endearments to each other and mingling their kisses with laughter. [...] One fine evening, however, it took a serious turn, and Nana, who had been so disgusted at Laure’s, now understood. She was overwhelmed and excited by this new experience, the more so when on the morning of the fourth day Satin disappeared.”

Dès lors, Nana eut une passion, qui l’occupa. Satin fut son vice. [...] Et des après-midi de tendresse commencèrent entre les deux femmes, des mots caressant, des baisers coupés de rires. [...] Puis, un beau soir, ça devint sérieux. Nana, si dégoûtée chez Laure, comprenait maintenant. Elle en fut bouleversée, enragée; d’autant plus que, justement, le matin du quatrième jour, Satin disparut.\(^{822}\)

Satin comes back and leaves her several times, while Nana becomes more and more used to her new role as the betrayed woman. She is switching roles here, since until then it had been her who was the mistress and some man’s
wife the betrayed one. She even thinks of challenging her female rival to a duel: she has become dependent on Satin. Also her male friends and lovers get to know about the relationship and are jealous and cruel in their use of words.

After this, the Finnish version continues with the men and Nana talking at the length for about two pages, while the rest of the chapter is missing, all in all about 13 pages in the French paperback version. These censored pages deal with a dinner party at Nana’s place which several men and Satin attend. Satin wants Nana for herself and asks her to send them all away for the night to be able to spend it only with her. Nana in the end manages to get rid of all, even of Count Muffat, the man who supplies her with an apartment and money for living, and she spends the night with Satin.

Towards the end of the novel, Satin is still a part of Nana’s (sexual) life every now and then. Also this part, when Satin and their relationship comes up again as a topic in the dialogues, the Finnish retranslation logically lacks these pages, all in all about three in the French paperback version. In this scene, Muffat feels betrayed both by Satin, and by other men. But the men make him even more furious than Satin does:

Dans l’angoisse de sa jalousie, le malheureux en arrivait à être tranquille, lorsqu’il laissait Nana et Satin ensemble. Il l’aurait poussée à ce vice, pour écarter les hommes. Mais, de ce côté encore, tout se gâtait. Nana trompait Satin comme elle trompait le comte, s’énrangeant dans des toquades monstres, ramassant des filles au coin des bornes. Quand elle rentrait en voiture, elle s’amourachait parfois d’un souillon aperçu sur le pavé, les sens pris, l’imagination lâchée; et elle faisait monter le souillon, le payait et le renvoyait. Puis, sous un déguisement d’homme, c’étaient des parties dans des maisons infâmes, des spectacles de débauche dont elle amusait son ennui. Et Satin, irritée d’être lâchée continuellement, bouleversait l’hôtel de scènes atroces; elle avait fini par prendre un empire absolu sur Nana, qui la respectait.823

This quotation that stands at the end of the relationship between Satin and Nana, might be one of the key ones to the fact that the translation of 1930 was not censored, but rather quite literally translated. Namely, all in all, despite a few scenes that describe the relationship between the two women or the mode of it in a positive light, a same-sex relationship is no real alternative in Zola’s novel. It is as corrupt and bad as the heterosexual one, following the tradition of many canonised works about the decadent life of the upper-class. Moreover, same-sex desire is associated with dirty streets, dark restaurants, and above
all with prostitutes. It symbolises one more dimension of the corrupt figure of Nana, one more step with which she degrades herself (by being jealous of her female rivals, for example), and one more step to her final death which is depicted as a mere rotting away. Also Satin dies, likewise from a sickness. This is the way typical lesbian characters usually did in novels until long into the 20th century.

Another passage that is censored in the 1952-version in Finnish is the last mention of Satin, shortly before she dies. She is in hospital, and Nana, after having heard about it, wants to go there and see her for a last time. This scene is very short, not even one page long in the French version: “I’m going to the hospital. ... Nobody’s ever loved me as much as her. Oh, they are right when they say that men are heartless. ... Perhaps she’ll be dead by the time I get there – who knows? Never mind, I’ll ask to see her. I want to give her a kiss.” Satin is not mentioned here in the Finnish version, and neither, then, is her death. But this death has no meaning in the abridged version, since Satin is only a very minor character whose destiny is neither important for the development of Nana’s character, nor is it important for the novel as a symbol in this version where the character Satin hardly exists.

The text then continues in Finnish according to the French original, but the last part of the very last sentence of this chapter is missing again. The sentence starts with Nana dreaming of something bigger and better, and there it also ends in the Finnish version. The French, however, continues with her departure to Satin: “She set off to kiss Satin for the last time, dressed in all her finery, and looking clean and wholesome and brand-new as if she had never been used.” In the translation from 1930, this goes as follows: “[...] and went in her evening dress to embrace Satin for a last time, clean and fresh like a rose that has just come into flowers. She looked totally different, and she seemed like a woman who goes to meet her sweetheart for the first time.” Again, the Finnish translation says even more than the French original does, and here it gives an even more positive impression of Nana. The reader sympathises with her in her grief of losing a beloved person – regardless of the gender of this person.

The systematics of the censorship of all the scenes in the retranslation from 1952 that are connected with Satin and the relationship between the two women suggest the thesis that this retranslation was undertaken to remove the passages that openly depict same-sex desire. After the analysis of the censored scenes, I would thus argue that it undoubtedly were norms that functioned as the reason behind the censorship, and maybe also behind the retranslation of Nana. Another possible reason for the retranslation is mentioned in the review

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826 Zola 1930 II, 228. “[...] ja ajoi juhlapuvussa syleilemään viimeistä kertaa Satinia, puhtaana ja tuoreena kuin vasta puhjennut ruusu. Hän oli aivan toisen näköinen kuin ennen, ja hän vaikutti naiselta, joka lähtee ensikertaa tapaamaan omaa lemmittyyään.”
from 1952: it was 50 years after Zola’s death that the new translation came out.

A third reason might be the bankruptcy of Minerva in 1931 – the first translation might not have been available any more, so that when a retranslation was needed, it could also be “adapted” to prevailing ideas about decency.

Also the background of the translators of the work is worth having a look at. Yrjö Weijola (1875–1930), Nana’s translator for Minerva in 1930, was mostly active as a writer himself. He translated some poems from Swedish into Finnish in the beginning of the 20th century, but also wrote poems and plays himself. He died in the same year as Nana was published. He was better known under the name Yrjö Weilin and was the director of the publishing house Minerva from 1901–1911. Georgette Vuosalmi, who translated the novel in 1952, was presumably someone with a nom de plume, a pseudonym for someone who for some reason did not want to be known as the translator of Zola’s work. Research in the archive of Tammi has resulted in the assumption that the translator probably was Tauno Nurmela (1907–1985). Yet, there is no exact proof in the archival material that would definitely illuminate the case. What can be found in the archive are contracts with Nurmela on other books. He translated Alberto Moravia from Italian into Finnish, both under his own name and under the pseudonym Kai Vuosalmi – the same surname, that is, as Nana’s translator Georgette Vuosalmi. Nurmela was a linguist specialised in French and professor for Romance philology at the University of Turku from the end of the 1940s until 1970.\textsuperscript{827} Georgette Vuosalmi has translated only one more book, Christiane Rochefort’s Les petits enfants du siècle (1961; Vuosisatamme lapset in Finnish) in 1964, also for Tammi. Interestingly, Rochefort is known as a feminist writer who dealt with topics like women and sexuality and the novel translated by Georgette Vuosalmi deals with or rather satirises the French policy after the war that raised family allowances to increase the birth rate. Zola’s and Rochefort’s novels differ then considerably in their ideology.

As the research on Nana and many other examples has shown, it is still relatively easy to find material about published (albeit nowadays forgotten) books when combing through newspapers’ and magazines’ archives, at least inasmuch as the books were considered to be worth reviewing. With publisher’s archives, however, the case is different. The reasons why Tammi decided to censor certain parts of Nana even after a complete translation had already existed, remains in the darkness for the time being. In Tammi’s archive, nowadays at Porvoo kirja-arkisto (Porvoo book archive) are contracts about Zola’s translations, but the omissions are not mentioned in these. Also in a work on Tammi’s history, edited by its long-time director Jarl Hellemann, nothing is said about it. Hellemann died in 2010, so that it is even more difficult to get information about the works that came out during his time.

\textsuperscript{827} The reference to Nurmela was suggested by prof. Hannu K. Riikonen; Mirkka Hynninen from Tammi and Jukka Kostiainen from Porvoo kirja-arkisto helped with the research on the case of Tauno Nurmela and Georgette Vuosalmi.
at Tammi. Examining the archive of Tammi’s publishing director at that time, Untamo Utrio, in the Finnish National Archive has not brought light into the reasons for leaving out those passages, either. The book is not even mentioned. One can conclude, then, that the novel and its “delicate” passages might have either been a topic of a personal meeting between publisher and translator, or the publisher had decided to leave those passages out after the translation had been accomplished, also without mentioning it anywhere. For now, it is then impossible to say who decided about the omissions concerning Nana and what the discussion about the book might have been like. This omnipresent silence concerning such a renowned book like Nana, then, raises again the question whether the censorship of queer topics was something that was still – or precisely – in the 1950s agreed upon as an unwritten rule that was obeyed without the need to mention or question it: a silent agreement, that is, due to the publishers’ loyalty to the prevailing political ideologies and their contribution to establishing/ confirming bourgeois values, i.e. heteronormativity. The tight connections between state, culture and church continued after World War II. While striving for a homogeneous national identity, everything that did not fit into the ruling discourses needed to be relegated to the fringe, it seems, also in literature that remained an essential part of the nation-building process until very late in the 20th century: the institutionalisation of homosexuality had reached another peak after World War II and did not allow any kind of sexuality outside the prevailing values, i.e. reproduction.

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6 Conclusion

The works analysed in this study document that the history of Finnish publishing has never been linear in dealing with literary works with queer content. Through a queer reading of the selected texts, i.e. by assuming that the queer exists in every work, I have shown that despite the dominant nationalist and conservative attitudes prevailing in the literary field in the first decades of the 20th century, literature that defied the normative expectations in terms of gender roles and sexuality could be published in Finnish. But the exemplary works of this study have also clarified the limits of publishing in enabling queer topics; topics, that is, which are at odds with heterosexual norms. While a direct, positive utterance of queer topics was rarely possible to be published in Finnish literature, the probability of resisting set norms was greater and clearly can be observed within the Finland-Swedish literary field. Yet, the analyses of the literary texts chosen have illustrated that a queer reading that goes beyond and against the text and its former interpretations, and that catches its silences, can unearth topics in works and rediscover works themselves in ways that a superficial reading mostly fails to do. Soini’s or Lehmann’s works demonstrate this very clearly. The queer reading both has shown how different cultural discourses, representations and general value-constellations and conceptions of queerness and heterosexuality are constructed, and it has illustrated in which ways the texts either undermined ruling values or confirmed them. But at the same time it also remains clear that a subtle way of undermining may not always have been visible for the general reader who in all probability has expected and still expects heteronormativity when approaching a text.

One aim of this study has been to trace the processes that have produced silences as well as possibilities within publishing in Finland in relation to queer topics. Another aspect of my research looked at the ways in which these topics were performed. When some books were published and others were rejected or censored, this choice publishers ultimately made also communicated expectations regarding the position of women in society. Therefore, I also asked what both willing and unwilling silences in literature concerning female non-heteronormativity tell about the workings of these predominant social norms. In the Finnish media, for example, queer topics were mostly not taken up and female authors, who addressed queer topics, were not taken seriously and confronted by misogynist reviews; moreover, in case the topics were taken up, they usually were so in a closeted way, i.e. the reviewers referred to them with hints on characters or topics dealt with in the works, but did not openly address what exactly they were about and thus only a reader able to read between the lines could also recognise the topic in question. My starting point was the question whether the dominant values of society were tantamount to those predominant in publishing houses after independence, and if so, to
which extent? Especially significant has been the analysis both of the archived material and of the history of reception of the works. Both have shed a light on mechanisms and ideologies, in some cases more than the texts themselves sometimes can. The silences towards the queer, and content that adheres to dominant norms follow, as quoted in the beginning, the norms of society which are normative, or even normalise. Examples here are the later translation of Zola’s novel *Nana* or Mika Waltari’s *Suuri illusioni*, but also many reviews that ignored obvious topics. The challenge for the literary text in these cases is that a tacit acceptance of set norms within the literary field makes resistance against them all the more difficult: if the queer is not spoken out publicly, like in reviews that just did not name the dissenting topics or translations that left out certain passages, an undermining of values is doomed to fail. The question then is how much certain literary texts succeeded in subverting norms when their queerness was not recognised or was muted. The mere existence of a queer topic that is not understood by any of its readers has lost its power before it has even gained it. Accordingly, an important focus of this study was to analyse how queerness is represented in the works analysed, and how its different representations of sexuality might have affected readers’ understandings of sexuality and especially the queer. As shown, the representations of queerness in the 1920s and 1930s were manifold, and one main result of their influence can be seen in the literary war of the mid-1930s, a debate about decency and morals in literature and the task of literature in society.

The analysis of the literary works of this study is divided into two categories: possibilities and silences. “Possibilities” means that these works included queer topics and/or characters and were published in Finnish. The texts include both positive and negative representations of queerness. The results of my analyses show that queerness – in case they dealt positively with the topic – was generally not mentioned in the reviews. This omission happened partly due to the fact that the reviewers were “blind” towards the topics, since they expected heteronormativity. But the absence of queerness in some cases can also be seen as the result of a willing omission. Another feature the works analysed have in common is that they all approach the queer topic by using female characters that represent the type of the New Woman. This trope enabled them to deal with the topic by leaving traces that were not merely heteronormative. A third trope that almost all of these works share is that their queer characters are involved or embedded in a triangle love story of one man and two women, i.e. they reverse the classic, well-known triangle love story and hereby introduce queerness into the plot.

Chronologically the first, Ain’Elisabet Pennanen’s works received mostly negative reviews, while, a decade later, Elsa Soini’s received positive ones. Yet, Soini’s novels were mostly categorised as light fiction, i.e. they were not taken as seriously as other works by the literary elite, which also gave them more space to critically approach difficult topics. While the translation of Rosamond Lehmann’s *Dusty answer* novel with several queer characters was seemingly
not reviewed at all, Mika Waltari’s novels that depict queerness and homosexuality by following the model of French decadent literature, and confirm heteronormativity, received mostly positive reviews. However, Waltari’s character with “abnormal dispositions” was also mentioned only once. Thus, obvious or hidden, queerness was almost totally ignored by the reviews. In case it was referred to, it was between the lines in a negative context of, for example, an allegedly failed description of characters.

The literary methods with which the queer characters were introduced into the works vary, partly dependent on the “aim” of their depiction. While Pennanen introduced the topic straightforwardly and discussed Sapphism in an ironic and funny way in the dialogues of the play *Ja se laiva lähti kuitenkin*, the queer character of her début novel *Voimahämisä*, created more than a decade before, is obscure and embedded in topics like rape and incest; the protagonist fears and at the same time admires the queer character. There were only very few reviews of Pennanen’s works, mostly scathing ones due to the works’ style or its topics that are directed against essential ruling values like marriage, motherhood and male dominance. Likewise, Elsa Soini approached the queer content in her novel *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit* with the means of irony. Making use of the conventions of the genre of light fiction, Soini ironised marriage, motherhood and gender differences, while she also emphasised social motherhood or the dilemma of women who try to make a career similar to men. Soini also introduced the concept of the New Woman and the ideas of the Swedish feminist Ellen Key, as well as the Finnish women’s organisations, into her novels. In *Jumalten ja ihmisten suosikit*, it is the character of Aino who concentrates on being a teacher and thus on social motherhood; she does not marry but lives independently. In *Uni*, it is the young boyish woman Uni who tries to succeed in academics and who is attracted by female bodies. This later novel also did not use irony any more, but is gloomier when dealing with gender identity; but at the same time it is more direct in its critique of heteronormativity. Soini’s works, more than others, show the discursive patterns of the 1920s and 30s, and the novels depict different alternatives for women; simultaneously, they are realistic in their depiction of the real possibilities women ultimately had – be it in terms of career options or family models.

Waltari’s two novels also introduce queerness in connection to the New Woman with several characters. Yet, these are either depicted negatively, like Madame Spindel who is rich and independent, but unsympathetic and degenerate, even “dirty”, or they combine, like Caritas and Lisbet, virtue and evil. The latter are the omen of a new and modern time that brings both good and evil with it: the bachelorette as embodied in Caritas and Lisbet is a threat to society and men. Waltari’s novels seem to suggest that modern times and their attitude towards sexuality form a threat to the foundations of a society that is built, amongst other norms, on the pillars of motherhood and decency. Both homo- and heterosexuality are connected to decay as are the big European cities which are part of these characters; and motherhood is not a
topic for these New Women who symbolise the new time, either. Because Waltari’s novels were praised in reviews for having captured the spirit of the time, one can conclude that the later 1920s were by many experienced as a time in which modern women and sexuality threatened the normative gender order.

Rosamond Lehmann’s novel *Dusty answer* represents the genre of stories of initiation. It is a classic tale of the innocent love of a school-girl combined with a style of writing that only hints at non-heteronormative desire but rarely articulates it openly. Conceptualised in this way, queerness was also possible in translation. Homosexuality does not lead to a happy ending in the novel, but neither does heterosexuality. Yet, even motherhood is nothing anyone aspires to or is able to fulfil satisfyingly – and insofar the translation of this novel, undertaken by a smaller publishing house, can be called courageous, although “queer”, that in the English original had already an ambiguous meaning, was translated rather harmlessly into Finnish. Thus, the queer content was less visible than in the original.

The second part of the analysis deals with silences, i.e. novels that were either not published in Finnish or not translated, but published and/or available in Swedish in Finland. The reasons for the rejection or for ignoring these works despite their importance and quality lay, I argue, in their depiction of and dealing with the respective queer topic. These works, in contrast to the first group, were openly dealing with queerness and non-heteronormativity – be it with regard to the sexuality of the characters, or to the problematisation of motherhood – and depicting the queer topic equal to heterosexuality. The first of these examples, Alma Söderhjelm’s *Kärlekens väninna*, introduces several queer characters and seeks an understanding and empathy for them. Not only is the husband of the female protagonist gay, but she herself is also assumed to have queer traits, both in terms of her own sexuality, and her relation to the topic of motherhood. Motherhood is, moreover, depicted critically: the protagonist loses her child, one that she never really wanted, while the gay husband cannot imagine more happiness than to become a father. The reviews were, accordingly, scathing: Söderhjelm was accused of willingly provoking a scandal and encountered all kinds of misogyny.

Hagar Olsson’s *På Kanaanexpressen* was seemingly too modern, too ideological, and too expressionist for being translated into Finnish at the end of the 1920s, and has not been translated until today, either. While Waltari’s *Suuri illusioni* was hailed at being the first modernist novel in Finnish, Olsson had left this kind of modernism already behind with her depiction of the Finnish modernist circles and their internationalism in both style and plot. The whole ideology of the book opposed prevailing ideas of the Finnish-language literary field that had turned inwards and pretended to be self-sufficient (except the literary group Tulenkantajat, which she depicts in the book). The queer topic is a side-plot, yet involves the female protagonist and also connects queerness and motherhood, with the latter being strongly connected to decency in prevailing discourses.
The only work whose queerness is explicitly named as the reason for its rejection is Helvi Hämäläinen’s novel Kaunis sielu. Yet, the queerness “leaked” into the text, i.e. the author rejected any knowledge of a queer possibility in interviews. However, the novel is far removed from the dominant values of its time: it not only names and reflects on the female protagonist’s queerness (and thus questions the author’s statements about not having known about anything like same-sex desire), but it also connects it to religion, murder, adultery and disrespect towards marriage. While the novel does not imply a positive view of queerness, the result of heterosexuality is even worse. In addition, the aestheticist style of the novel was certainly not an advantage for getting published, and neither was the fact that Hämäläinen was a woman – female authors were usually not expected to touch upon delicate topics, as the misogynist reviews of actually all works analysed here demonstrate. Misogyny, then, is also a common feature that appears in connection with female authors addressing queerness and questioning set values.

The excursion to Sweden and to Margareta Suber’s and Radclyffe Hall’s novels demonstrates that the reason that books with openly queer content were rarely published in Finnish was not necessarily the law that forbade homosexuality. Male and female homosexuality was banned by the law in Sweden, too. Similarly, the Finland-Swedish literary field underscores this thesis. Especially Suber’s novel is impressive in the way it deals with the discussions around homosexuality of the time. It was positively reviewed in the Finland-Swedish press where its elegant way of dealing with its queer topic was openly named and emphasised. Hall’s novel, in contrast, was hardly noticed publicly in Finland, neither in Finnish nor in Swedish-speaking circles. Yet, the way the Finnish intellectuals Aino Kallas and Elsa Enäjärvi wrote about her show the broad range of discourses of the time that divided the Finnish literary field into those who had a look beyond nationalist and conservative ideas and those who wanted to keep the status quo regarding women’s social role: while Kallas supported Hall in her trial, Enäjärvi wrote deprecatingly about her.

Finally, Zola’s Nana with its two translations is a textbook-example of censorship and the silencing of an unwelcome topic, but also of the non-linearity of publishing policies. Paradoxically, the novel was first published as a complete edition and then in 1952 in an abridged version that excluded all the scenes that were connected to the female protagonist’s relationship with her girlfriend. This process of first allowing and then censoring certain scenes clearly contradicts any assumption of linearity in the development of publishing towards more “moral” openness. Rather, it was a process of many factors that in each case led to acceptance or rejection of queer topics until at least the 1980s. Texts, as said, are always special representatives of the discourses of their society. The 1950s, thus, were also a time of differing attitudes towards non-heteronormativity. Likewise, the other examples analysed are not examples of linearity, but the decisions about these novels
were formed by a combination of values, power constellations, genres and personal attitudes of publishers and authors.

Thus, both the possibilities and the silenced/silent queer topics in fiction demonstrate the power relations within the Finnish literary field. There were three parties – the authors, the publishers and the reviewers – who struggled for the power over the monopoly of legitimacy in terms of decency, i.e., about who has the power to decide, who is an author, and which works will be published. Yet, these different parties were never equal with regard to the distribution of power: first, writing between the lines apparently was the most effective way for authors to undermine heteronormative values and to get published nonetheless. The case of Helvi Hämäläinen has, moreover, demonstrated that authors not always consciously addressed a difficult topic, but that the topic might have slipped into the work. Secondly, the decision by publishers depended on the background of the house and its staff. While Otava published several works with queer content, WSOY did not at all. Also, smaller publishers were more likely to touch difficult topics, as were the Finland-Swedish ones. Hence, heteronormative ideas were not equally dominating within the literary field, but different levels of heteronormativity can be observed. Finally, the position of power of the reviewers in the literary field is even more complicated, since even a negative review could attract many readers to a book (as Söderhjelm’s case has shown) – sometimes even more than a neutral or positive review might have been able.

The literary works analysed show – first, by being written, then by being published or rejected, and third by the reception – that the scheme of moral values concerning queerness was much broader than what merely the published works suggest. The question of what is published and what is not is, of course, always closely related to the opinion of those who decide: what do they regard as needed and what works do they believe will be read? As some of the works have shown, the 1920s in Finland were indeed characterised by a narrowed understanding of freedom of speech enforced by those with the power to decide within publishing. This limitation concerned also queer topics, since, as explicated, the role of women was more or less narrowed down to becoming mothers. Even social motherhood was not necessarily seen as a desirable alternative anymore, although motherhood in Finland was often connected to social influence and collectivity. Moreover, the “encouragement section” of the law dealing with homosexuality probably also had an influence on some parts of the production and publishing of literature with queer content. However, there are no direct references to this assumption within minutes, letters or other material related to the works analysed. Interestingly, there is mostly more material available in archives on cases that were “silenced” than on those that were published. By reading between the lines of the archival material and especially of reviews, we nonetheless can conclude that it presumably was a matter of common, unuttered and internalised consensus that too direct references to queerness were mostly excluded from literary texts. But also a novel like Dusty answer was available in Finnish,
although one might assume that the publisher Karisto was aware of the reviews in Great-Britain that addressed its queer topics and was capable to recognise them. This example also shows the differences between publishers – not only between Finnish and Finland-Swedish, but also within the Finnish-speaking literary field. Some of the publishers – Otava, Karisto, Minerva – were more likely to publish topics that were not in accordance with prevailing norms set by the intellectual elite.

This last example, as well as the genre of light fiction and its role in connection to queer topics illustrates that the two literary fields in Finland had their own rules and were to some degree independent from the society around them. Light fiction was not much appreciated by the elitist and intellectual section of society, and definitely not desired as a part of the national literature or canon, since literature was still seen as an educator of the people. The larger readership, however, wanted to read it and thus light fiction was not only translated, but bit by bit became an established genre also among Finnish authors. It then also became the genre that was most probable to succeed in undermining set values; it seems to have often been easier, and it still is, to disguise delicate topics under the label of literature than to discuss them in newspapers or the public. However, norms can only be undermined when they are visible as norms. As the analysed literary works have demonstrated, it was in most cases overemphasised motherhood and the power of heteronormativity that they tried to subvert and at which they directed their resistance. Söderhjelm, for example, succeeded in the subversion of both by sympathising with her queer characters and by questioning the role of motherhood for her protagonist. That the novel indeed succeeded in its subversion is demonstrated by the consternated reviews that named the topic and made the novel into a scandal. And it sold very well. Likewise, Soini’s novels succeeded in their subversion of heteronormativity and motherhood – with irony in the first novel and the dramatic turns in the life of the sympathetic protagonist in the second. Soini also managed to gain reviews, as well as readers, and so her alternative models could be recognised. Pennanen, in contrast, was less successful, since she did not reach a big readership, her works were not the subject of many reviews, nor did she become part of any literary canon; the same applies to the translation of Lehmann’s novel that was apparently not received as it would have been desirable. It was then mostly light fiction that enabled an introduction of queer topics, while high-brow literature was more likely to follow conservative discourses to meet its task of educating people, as Zola’s retranslation shows.

To conclude then, one can say that the Finnish-language book market after independence certainly included more queer topics than the society and its dominant, strict moral values suggest, but it also had its clear limitations. The comparison to some Finland-Swedish novels that were not translated into Finnish and to the Swedish book market in the beginning of the 1930s has made clear that the direct and open introduction of queer topics into literature, as Helvi Hämiläinen’s rejected text for example shows, was not a viable
alternative route to publication. Nonetheless, a subtle and clever approach to the topic was either not seen as dangerous, or it was not immediately recognised as a subversion of prevailing norms. The Finland-Swedish literary field shows that the law that banned homosexuality and also the encouragement of it had, however, not as much influence as one might have thought. In this case, because of its independent and parallel status as a literary field of its own within Finland, the possibilities of queerness in literature were even better. This is not least due to the fact that Finland-Swedish literature had developed differently from Finnish-language literature. Internationalism was the key word, as the cases of both Olsson and Söderhjelm show with influences from abroad that vividly appear in their works. Nonetheless, linearity, as said, was never the case in Finnish-language publishing, either: while Zola’s novel was partly censored in 1952, two years earlier a counterpart of Lehmann’s Dusty answer was also published: the novel Olivia by Dorothy Strachey Bussy, another classical school-girl’s love for her teacher. It was published by Otava, which had also published most of the novels analysed in this study that subvert heteronormative values. But even during World War II, a novel with a queer side-character, namely Sherwood Anderson’s Dark Laughter (Mustaa naurua, Tammi 1943), was translated into Finnish. Yet, the Finland-Swedish publisher Schildts had published it already in Swedish in 1928 under the title Mörkt skratt. Also a Finland-Swedish novel, Disa Lindholm’s Ficklampsljus (“The illumination of the flashlight”) was published in 1961 and can be compared to Olivia in its content. It was followed by Nalle Valtiala’s novel Lotus in 1973 that was said to be the first lesbian novel in Finland, albeit written by a male author.

Heteronormativity, then, was never totally institutionalised after independence. Individual cases show that the power in the literary field, the monopoly of legitimacy, lay as much in the hands of the critics as in the hands of the publishers, but also in those of the authors: all contributed – willingly or not – to both the confirmation and the undermining of set norms.

It has become clear that the result of a study that searches for silenced voices in literature depends much on the (archived) material that is available and can be found by looking for certain criteria. Despite the fruitfulness of archival research and despite the many results and insights this study presents, many questions still remain open, since archival material is rarely able to give a complete picture of the circumstances around the publishing decisions for or against a book.

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829 In the novel, a married woman called Esther tries to approach or even seduce one of the main female characters, Aline; what it is Esther does is not named explicitly but nevertheless leaves nothing open, either: “What was it Esther had tried on Aline? There are a lot of things you can’t get down in words, even in your own thoughts. What Esther had talked about was a love that asked nothing, and how really beautiful that sounded. ‘It should be between two people of the same sex. Between yourself and a man it won’t work. I’ve tried it’, she said. She had taken Aline’s hand and for a long time they sat in silence, an odd creepy feeling deep down in Aline. [...] ‘It’s getting so if a man and another man or two women are seen too much together there is talk. America is getting almost as sophisticated, as wise, as Europe.’” Sherwood Anderson: Dark Laughter, Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz 1926, 126–127.
And not always have relevant archive holders even allowed access to their collections. Thus, the institution of the archive, together with the institution of publishers, still today raises the issue of the exertion of power by institutions as Foucault has suggested. Archives are one modality of exerting power by the way of being organised and, most of all, by being accessible. This means that still today power can be and is exerted by not allowing access to old archival material that might open up cases like the ones presented.

Another way to exert power within publishing turned out to be the use of language: the way the texts are written and thus succeeded both to be published and to undermine set values. But it is also language in its non-existence, namely the silencing of topics either by censoring them before getting published or by not naming them in reviews or other material. Thus, when those who write indicate the borders for the world and create reality by writing down their stories, this study shows that a reality outside dominant moral values was possible in Finland during the researched period: mostly in Finland-Swedish literature, but also in Finnish literature. The difference primarily lies in the possible ways in which this reality could be expressed: the Finland-Swedish and even more so the Swedish authors and with them their publishers analysed in this study were naming the topic and discussing its status in their society. The works that were published in Finnish either confirmed dominant values (and thus could also name the queer topic), or they were published because they subverted the norms by only subtly presenting alternatives. As studies of more recent Finnish literature dealing with queer topics have shown, certain tropes and stylistic devices have not changed much in the course of time. Silence in reviews, insinuations or triangle constellations have continued to be the focus of queer readings of literary works. To measure the real impact of these older works on and their importance for readers and for the literature in the decades after the 1930s until today, however, is a complex task and requires another extensive study on the topic.
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Abstract

This doctoral thesis analyses both the proceedings that have produced apparent silences within Finnish publishing in terms of queer topics that focus on female non-heterosexuality, and the possibilities for these topics within the domain of published literature. By surveying the power relations within the Finnish and Finland-Swedish literary fields, this study examines ruling social discourses (e.g. nationalist and heteronormative) in Finland from the beginning of the 20th century to the mid-1930s (with an excursion to the 1950s), and the influence of these discourses on the eventual rejection of works with queer topics. Yet, through a queer reading – i.e. one that focuses on the heteronormativities that a text communicates, as well as on a text’s ability to question and undermine them – the study also highlights literary methods that still enabled a positive attitude towards queer topics within published literature. The material analysed consists of 13 literary works by ten different authors writing in Finnish, Swedish, English or French.


The methods used are based on (literary-sociological) discourse analysis and queer theory, especially works by Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Judith Butler. Archival research also plays an essential role. While many so-called queer classics were either not published in Finnish (e.g. Margareta Suber’s Charlie) or were published only much later (e.g. Helvi Hämäläinen’s Kaunis sielu) or in a censored version (e.g. Émile Zola’s Nana), the queer reading of published works (e.g. works by Ain’Elisabet Pennanen, Elsa Soini or Rosamond Lehmann) demonstrates that queerness was not absent from Finnish literature; rather, it had to be introduced in a subtle way, for instance through the use of irony. There were also voices with a clear deprecatory attitude towards queer topics, as demonstrated both by literary works (e.g. by Mika Waltari) and reviews. Within the Finland-Swedish literary field, published works by Alma Söderhjelm or Hagar Olsson demonstrate a rather tolerant attitude towards openly queer topics, although the attitude of Finland-Swedish reviews was not necessarily positive, either. This thesis thus
also examines the differences between the Finnish and the Finland-Swedish literary fields, especially with regard to publication practice. Since the distribution of power between the different parties – authors, translators, publishers, and reviewers – struggling over the monopoly of legitimacy (i.e. about what was published and what deemed acceptable, since it is always the pursuit of power that dominates actions) was never equal, introducing queerness between the lines remained the most effective way to undermine heteronormative values.

**Key words:** publishing policy, literary critique, history of literature, Finnish literature, censorship, Finland-Swedish literature, queer theory, discourse analysis, censorship, gender, archives.
Tiivistelmä

Väitöskirjan aiheena on ei-heteroseksuaalisia naishahmoja käsittelevä queer-tematiikka Suomen kirjallisuudessa 1900-luvun alusta 1950-luvun puoliväliin. Tutkimus analysoi toisaalta niitä käyttäntöjä, joista johtuen julkaisut aiheesta näyttävät miltei kokonaan puuttuvan, sekä toisaalta sitä, minkälaisia kirjallisuuden menetelmiä löytyi saada julkaistua aihetta käsitteleviä kirjoituksia. Tutkimus tarkastelee valtasuhteisiin pureutumalla Suomessa vallitsevia yhteiskunnallisia — mm. nationalistista ja heteronormatiivistä — diskursseja suomalaisen ja suomenruotsalaisen kirjallisuuden kentällä sekä näiden diskurssien mahdollista vaikutusta queer-teemojen hyökkäämiseen tai hyväksymiseen.

Tutkimuksessa on käytetty nk. queer-luentaa eli lukutapaa, joka fokusoi tekstin välittämään heteronormatiiviseen sekä sen kyseenalaistamiseen. Näin tulevat esiin myös ne kirjallisuuden menetelmat, jotka sittenkin mahdollistivat myönteisen suhtautumisen queer-tematiikkaan julkaistussa kirjallisuudessa.


aiheiden avoimeen käsitteelyyn, vaikkei suomenruotsalaisten kritikoidenkaan arvostelujen asenne ollut välttämättä positiivinen. Tämä väitöskirja tarkastelee siten myös suomenkielisen ja suomenruotsalaisen kirjallisuuskentän välisiä eroja, etenkin julkaisukäytäntöjä koskien. Valta ei koskaan jakautunut tasan eri osapuolten — kirjoittajien, kääntäjien, kustantajien ja arvostelijoiden — kesken. He pyrkivät kaikki vaikuttamaan, mitä julkaistaan ja mikä on hyväksytävä, sillä vallanhalu on aina ollut toiminnan käyttövoimana. Tehokkain tapa kyseenalaistaa heteronormatiivisia arvoja oli queer-tematiikan käsitteely rivien välissä.

Avainsanat: kustannuspolitiikka, kirjallisuuskritiikki, kirjallisuudenhistoria, sensuuri, suomenkielinen kirjallisuus, suomenruotsalainen kirjallisuus, sensuuri, queer-tutkimus, diskurssianalyysi, sukupuoli, arkistot.