

Limit or liberation

Ellen Key's view on religious education in school

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Abstract

The Swedish author Ellen Key (1849-1926) argued, in her time and from her idealistic and modern perspective, for a disconnection between the educational system at schools and the authorities of the State Church of Sweden. Meanwhile, in her pedagogical manifest *The Century of the Child* (1900/1912) she promoted a deeper encounter between the pupil and the textual stories of the bible. Not as fundamentals for theology and a systematic structure of belief, but as an important contribution for the growth of the child.

The article takes its point of departure from the historical context of Ellen Key's time, the educational and political-religious framework where Key's visionary ideals developed and were formulated. Furthermore, Key's arguments and demands in *The Century of the Child* for the exclusion of Christian instruction in schools, as well as her perception of the implication on the educational practice, is detailed.

Key's texts will be analyzed through the methodical and theoretical works of Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (1931 -). In his work Taylor investigates the possibility to view the world in "excarnated" or "incarnated" terms, and Ellen Key's arguments are sharpened in this classical theological and philosophical structure.

In the conclusion the over-arching question is: will religious instruction in general and Christian instruction in particular, in Key's opinion, create problems or possibilities for the child in its upbringing? Will they serve as limit or as liberation for the development of the individual?

Keywords: Ellen Key, school, religion, society, freedom

Introduction

With Tolstoy Ellen Key (1849 – 1926) considered Christian instruction in the schools of her time to be not only a misguidance of the child and contradictory to scientific knowledge propagated in school, but also a violation on the just and pure mind of the young. Key (1900) argued in the chapter “Religionsundervisningen” in *Barnets Århundrade*¹ that only by liberating the child from the influence of Christian education, would it be able to shape its own concept of ethics, devotion and the divine.

The purpose of the following article is to put Key's thoughts in the educational and political-religious context of her time. Furthermore I will pose some critical questions, using the terminology of philosopher Charles Taylor to Ellen Key's text in order to clarify her arguments and conclusions. The purpose is to give a suggestion to Key's part of the historical context leading up to the secularization of the Swedish educational system during the 20th century.

The two chapters “Religionsundervisningen” and “Själamorden i skolorna” (“Religious instruction” and “Soul murders in schools”) published in *Barnets Århundrade* 1900 will form the base for the survey. *Barnets Århundrade* was translated 1909 into English from the 1902 German edition as *The Century of the Child* (Key, 1909). The second edition in Swedish was published in 1912, with the same disposition as the German publication.

In the chapters mentioned above Ellen Key debates the conflict between the historic, scientific and religious traditions. According to Key the school authorities need to make a choice between the different worldviews as presented in school. If education reproduced the conflict between contradictory, what in sociology is called “Weltanschauung”² instead of choosing one over the other, the willpower of the young would unavoidably break down due to the exhaustion caused by mental conflict. For Key the traditional religious instruction had no place in the modern school, and she agreed with Tolstoy that “we are so used to the religious lie that we do not notice its stupidity and cruelty” (Key, 1912, p. 94).

Key's critique was not uncommon in her time. Several politicians, philosophers and freethinkers argued in a similar way. In 1859 a first step towards freedom of religion was taken in the so called Dissenter Law, but it was still against the law to choose any other religion than the Christian, and conversion could only be made to a State approved Christian community. Key and other critical thinkers might be seen as leading the way toward the modern secular Swedish society.

In the following I will use Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor's concept "incarnation" understood as the opposite of "excarnation", which is more fully explained in his work *A Secular Age*. Charles Taylor also argues in his other works such as *Sources of the self: the making of the modern identity* that the secularization theories of for example sociologist Max Weber, who claims that modernity *per se* has to out-date religion and diminish its influence in society, is inaccurate. In contrast, Taylor underlines that religion always appears in new and different forms.

Taylor concludes that the religious person develops from embodied to individualized and intellectualized religiosity. The development leads to "A transfer out of embodied, enfolded, forms of religious life, to those which are more, in the head" (Taylor, 2007, p. 554) and moves from being incorporated in society to being an intellectualized and individualized practice. But this is not the whole picture.

The "incarnation" is put in contrast to "excarnation" in which spiritual life is raised to an idealized level, and church and community reduced to secondary level. But religious development in society as well as in the individual is dialectical and will in time further the neglected stance. The discourse used in this article is inspired from Dr Div Jan Eckerdal *Folkkyrkans kropp – Einar Billings ekklesiologi i postsekulär belysning*, (*The Body of the Peoples Church – the Ecclesiology of Einar Billing in a Post Secular light*) and his references to Charles Taylor.³ Eckerdal concludes "[Taylor] contrasts [...] against an according to him a archaic/religious society, where the individual person in a more obvious way was surrounded by and inbedded in larger social and religious context" (Eckerdal, 2012, p. 54)⁴.

The discourse of "incarnation" and "excarnation" is a valuable tool when exemplifying polarity and categorization. Furthermore, the polarity includes the dichotomy between limit and liberation. "Incarnation" includes *per se* connections, while "excarnation" is defined by divisions.

The "excarnation" of the world means the division of spirit from matter generally, and the dissociation of the Christian teachings of God incarnated in man more specifically⁵. This was a development pursued both by advocates of religion and secularity, according to Taylor, and left a large gap to be filled – by natural and social sciences which eventually could do without God altogether. Taylor writes: "[Excarnation is] the steady disembodiment of spiritual life, so that it is less and less carried in deeply meaningful bodily forms, and lies more and more in the head" (Taylor, 2007, p. 771). The step from divinity present in the natural world to divinity excluded from it passed through stages of deism and

other theological and philosophical endeavors of reformulating God's place in the universe.

Taylor distinguishes between "Incarnation" with a capital I, which refers to the specific Christian belief in Christ born as man and "incarnation" as a phenomenon current in both the individual and in historical society. "Incarnation" in this latter sense can both be an embodied "fullness" and "communion" with one's individual context as well as, more freely interpreted, an "incarnation" in society as a whole. The "incarnation" of society would then be equal with the pre-excarinated world, which, according to Taylor, followed the intellectualizing of the Reformation (Taylor, 2007, p. 554) and therefore includes an embodiment of the divine in the world. An "incarnated" society does not exclude the transcendent from the physical world.

While Taylor thus as a rule utilizes the terms "excarination" and "incarnation" to symbolize the conditions and stages of process which allowed for secularism to emerge, and fundamentally would reshape individual relation to religion in the West, the terminology can also be relevant on society at large, and will in the following be used as a model to highlight Key's vision of children's reception and incorporation of religious instruction in school.

The article will, after a short historical context, consist of a presentation of key arguments in Key's text, put into a context of ideas concerning Christian education of her time, and reflected by Taylor's terminology. The research limits itself to Key's critique of Christianity and do not include her development toward a new religiosity, based on evolutionism and monism, as expressed in her work *Lifslinjer I-III*.

Historical context - power relations between state and church

The difficulty in defining a border between society, school authorities and the Christian churches, has a long history in Sweden. Consequently a summary of the historical changes will be over-simplified in a short essay like this. To start with, the connection school and religion must be understood in the context of the unique and strong relation between state and church in Sweden. The kingdom of Sweden and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden are still in such a strong connection that the content and organization of the Church are stated by law. The king is still in some sense considered the *summus episcopus*, as he and the royal family are obliged to be members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden. To understand this exceptional arrangement travelling back in time of the Reformation is essential. The Swedish king Gustaf Wasa (app. 1496 – 1560), the

leading historical figure of the Reformation and of unifying the rival parts of the country, put himself at the highest rank of the Church of Sweden, above the bishops. On the one hand the reformation can be understood as a liberation project, and a final break with Catholicism and the Pope in Rome. But on the other hand Gustav Wasa positioned himself as the new high ruler of the Church.

The Swedish state-church controlled every aspect of human life in Sweden for more than 300 years. Conversion or a fall-back to old religious practices could lead to capital punishment. During the 17:th century national religious identity and international war efforts were closely connected due to the 30 year war. Not until in the 19:th century liberals, revivalist Christians and other free-thinkers inspired by political changes, democratic movements, High Criticism of the Bible, as well as of discoveries in new sciences and other modern developments, started to demand individual freedom in society and especially in religion.

But progress was slow. In the beginning of the 19:th century Sweden was in severe financial and political difficulties. The country's economy was fragile and unequal and is referred to in current history books as "Poverty Sweden" (sw. *Fattig-Sverige*). Hundreds of thousands of emigrants fled Sweden from starvation and religious persecution to find a new home, mainly in North America. As many as a third of the population in Småland, the county of Key's upbringing, left for the United States between the year 1850 to 1920. Industrialization and modernization of production and society did not develop until in the latter half of the 19:th century, very late in comparison with other European countries.

The schools were identified, in this modernistic and developmental age, as important tools, in preparing the child for participation in society, and building of the country. The official institutional relation between school and the Church of Sweden was understood as a crucial base for this wide-ranging project, primarily as a safe-guard and fundament for moral and ethics.

The demand for freedom for the individuals, stated by Ellen Key, as well as by other radical intellectuals of her time, should be understood in this context. The educational system went through a radical change through the School Reform of 1842, but did not include any relief in the dominance of State Church authorities when it came to religious instruction. The citizen's duty was to support in every possible way the attempt of the underdeveloped state, trying to raise itself out of destitution, while retaining the security of a national ethos defined by the State Church⁶.

The 1859 Dissenter Law was a first small victory for liberals and revivalists fighting for liberation from the State Church dominance. As late as 1858 eight women had been deported because of conversion to the Catholic Church. Membership in the Church of Sweden was compulsory, and even after the Dissenter

Law, leaving the church meant resigning all rights to positions in public institutions. To publically pronounce atheism meant exposure to harsh criticism from all parties, as well as difficulties in gaining respect in other issues. The demands by the free-thinkers ended up more than once with legal retribution and imprisonment⁷. Not only for the sake of the individual but also for the sake of the development of the country loosening the knots between state and church was considered crucial by the radicals, and was stressed by Key and her contemporaries.

Ellen Key and religious instruction in schools

“At the present moment the most demoralizing factor in education is Christian religious instruction” (Key, 1912, p. 85)⁸. With these words Key introduces the argumentation in the chapter “Religious Instruction” in *The Century of the Child*⁹. What is the reason for this statement?

Ellen Key argued against the Evangelical Lutheran State Church in Sweden, which was run by state authorities and had a dictating role inside the schools of the time. For example the vicars of parishes presided as chairmen in the local school boards. Key firmly claimed that the tight bonds between school and church must be dissolved. Put in another way, she seemingly pleaded for freedom from normative religious instruction in schools. On the other hand, her argumentation surprisingly shows a deeper level a profound respect for the unique meeting between the pupil as an individual and the texts and stories in the Bible. Key defines the texts as literature, not as fundaments for a dogmatic Christian structure and belief. And understood as literature these texts were important for improvement and inspiration in the growing children's development. She promotes a leveling between religions. The Bible and the stories within it are no more or no less valid and “true” than for example the Nordic myths in the Eddas, or the tales of the gods and their adventures in antique mythology.

Still the most demoralizing for a child is a resigned laissez-faire mentality. This is Key's view on Christianity of her time. Without being put into question, the church continues to infiltrate education even though it has turned void of content and will not stand up to ideals. What the church lacks is the perspective and the demand for consequence of the child. The lack of consequential thinking is Key's main focus, since she considers this a natural strait in a child.

In this sense, Ellen Key's chapter on religious instruction can at a first glance be seen as a text about liberation of the child, but a deeper reading will lead up to several problems and exposes serious limitations for children's right to spiritual development. Since she focuses on the devotion of the individual, it makes adap-

tation of Christianity and its demand on community hard to realize. Religious freedom does not, according to Key's vision, include the possibility to follow the mainstream state Christianity. Still, Ellen Key argues from the individual need of the child. Her focus is the respect for every single child and the freedom for everybody to study along their own needs. The argumentation is clearly pro liberation in the limit or liberation dichotomy.

Key bans the dogmatic structure of Christian education. Christianity creates a conflict between itself and the new Natural Sciences – in one classroom the children are taught creationism, in the other evolutionism. Her argumentation starts in a scientific and contemporary view of society. She adds the child's experience and concludes that the dogmatic structure of education doesn't even reach the simplest demands for source criticism. If the schools force the outdated dogmatic Christian instruction onto the child it will unavoidably lead to serious confusion and violate the child's sense of justice.

The first of the two chapters, "Religious instruction", is built on Ellen Keys profound experience of the children's "misreading and misunderstandings of terms" (Key, 1912, p. 100). She argues that the concept of God in connection with ambitions of building a strong national body and related ambitions of military forces, collide when brought together in the children's direct thinking. The ulterior motives are obvious to the child on an emotional level.

In the second chapter, "Soul murders in school", Ellen Key reflects over spiritual "digestion". This is, according to Key, a must for development. Here as well freedom is the key factor. She stresses that the children's ability for "digestion" of spiritual nourishment (sw. *andliga matlusten*) (Key, 1912, p. 110) had been wrecked as a consequence of the contradictory mixture of educational components in schools, and must be re-evaluated and cared for.

Key argues that the educational components have been repeated over and over again and finally lost from their original shape and content. As an analogy she describes the practice in homeopathic medicine of diluting substances in several steps. The conclusion is that the components will lose their power. All of this contributes negatively on the children's incorporation of the educational substance, which is interrelated with the "digestion of spiritual nourishment" (Key, 1912, p. 111). In the same argumentation she takes her reflection further with an example of the autodidact girl, studying in an irregular way, which eventually develops her into an outstanding personality. She exemplifies the story with the first female professor in Mathematics in Sweden, Sonja Kovalesky, a close friend of Key's and she points out the "unbroken personal power" which prevailed in Kovalevsky's life (Key, 1912, p.111).

Furthermore, Key stresses the idea of co-education. She rules out exams and marks, and emphasizes the importance of spiritual enjoyment in learning. The “murder” mentioned in the chapter title is the “murder” of individuals, or more specifically, the wasting of the raw material of personalities. In Key’s interpretation society of her time is in need of and demanding powerful individuals, and the schools must meet this demand.

Ellen Key writes, as we have seen, potently and with strong determination in *The Century of the Child* about the education in Swedish schools. She is extremely critical of the deep-rooted connections between school and religion in a power positions. These bounds, she concludes, insults the right of the children to make his or her own choices. According to her understanding this is essential in the formative process of children. She has a strong focus on the individual rights of every single child. A few of her key arguments in the chapter “Religious instruction” defines this ideal, following below.

Self defence (sw. Självförsvär)

“Self-defense, personal or national, will be imprinted on the child as the first of duties, not as it is represented in the commands of Christianity. Or to speak more accurately the child has this instinctive feeling; all that need be done is not to confuse this instinct” (Key, 1909, p. 314). The argumentation of Ellen Key is built on a consequential thinking. She claims that the child will understand, by instinct and natural forces, that if evil is not fought, evil will become conqueror over the good. Resistance (against evil) is the core the social feeling of righteousness. To underline the argument, Key adds a quotation from a 10 year young boy: “I do not believe any of this, but I hope, when men are some day wise enough, each person may have his own belief, just as each one has his own face” (Key, 1909, p. 314). This statement from the boy, Key notes, was pronounced after three years of studies in Christianity.

Conversion ambition (sw. Omvändelsenit)

Stemming from Ellen Keys high evaluation of freedom as instinctual drive, the concept of individual freedom is a must for development. Therefore religious pressure on children must be prohibited. The consequence is otherwise that children will have no other choice than to submit to the notion of the Christian God as omnipotent creator and ruler. Since there are no alternatives presented no other active choices are possible. This undercurrent conversion ambition was, according to Key, a permeating factor in the educational system of her time.

“Within the child there is a feeling that man’s obligations are very complex and of moral nature: yet instead one teaches it that the foremost obligation consists of blind faith; of prayer; of expressing certain words at certain occasions, in

the consummation of wine and bread, which is supposed to represent God's flesh and blood" (Key 1912, p. 95)¹⁰.

To underline the intertwinement between State and Church authorities Key expresses her radical criticism of society, and in certain aspects her anti-authoritarian and anarchistic point of view. "And still the implementation of these teachings – which we call religious instruction – is the biggest crime, one can imagine! Governments and the ruling classes have a need of this lie; it is what supports their power. And therefore the ruling classes will always insist that it shall be implemented in the children and in this way exercise its hypnotizing influence even on the adults" (Key, 1912, pp. 96-97)¹¹.

Misunderstandings (sw. Missförstånd)

From the child's natural talent of self-defense, especially when it comes to the ambitions of authoritarian influences, Key turns to the aspect of double moral and conflicting world views presented in school: "The worst is [...] that in [senior] high schools [and universities] the theory of development is now taught as scientific truth, while in the common schools, built and maintained by the same government, the myth of the Mosaic story of creation continues to be taught, in the sharpest contrast with what science and living nature teach the child. This is an immoral and dishonest state of affairs that must be brought to an end" (Key, 1909, p. 296).

The education of Key's time consisted of subjects giving contradictory information about the world and humanity. Natural Science embracing, more or less, the research of Darwin and other evolutionists, as well as new discoveries in Biology, Physics and Chemistry had been established as natural parts of education. At the same time Christian instruction taught the wonders of creation in 6 days and other Biblical statements. These contradictions offended, according to Key, the child's logical mind, and she includes a few examples on reactions, or "misunderstandings", probably from her own teaching experience. Several examples show the child's struggle to overcome the understanding of nature and rationality and Christian education. "A child thought his brother could not be in heaven, because he would have to climb a ladder, and so would be disobedient, for he had been forbidden to climb one. A girl asked, when she heard that her grandmother was in heaven, whether God was sitting there and holding her from falling out" (Key, 1909, p. 303). In another of Keys many examples she quotes a young boy: "Would you like to be born again" the teacher asked. "No, it could happen that I become a girl" (Key, 1909, p. 301). Ellen Key comments: "The child with sharp sighted simplicity does not allow himself to be deceived. If we do not wish to speak the truth then let us not speak to children about life at all [...]" (Key, 1909, p. 300).

Analysis

The child in Key's classroom is a human being fully capable to choose the taylorian "incarnated" stand-point if he wishes. The task awaiting school authorities is to provide the milieu for as much freedom for the child as possible. Only by incorporating religion as something vibrant, essential and embodied (by the teacher's example and by the presentation of the multi-faceted religiosity of the world) the child shall, by his own free will, choose the context that will give him, what Taylor calls, "fullness" in life.

Key's theory of the mature and responsible child is therefore also in line with Taylor's vision of the "new believer". The secular society and "excarnated" world will according to Taylor make "fullness" in life harder to achieve. But it can be reached in new ways. Thanks to the education and maturity of the individual the experience of "fullness" will be an informed knowledge, nurtured by insights in science, poetry, philosophy and religions. The individual becomes aware and engages in making the idea and experience of transcendence sensible. In Key's case the divine remains within the world, more in a pantheistic and immanent way, reproduced in literature and art, while for Taylor the "incarnation" includes the embodied relation to the transcendent.

Applied to Ellen Key's embodied life philosophy the divine might seem to be excluded all together, and therefore secular, but it is essential to remember both Key's and Taylor's joint indebtedness to German Romanticism with its incorporation of spirit into matter. For both Key and Taylor the body was inseparable from the process of achieving "fullness" of life and it could even be argued that they aimed for the same goal: an "incarnated", inclusive and therefore in a sense monistic world, where the bodily experience also became the natural moral compass, and lived divinity.

Taking the key words from Key's argument mentioned above it is without doubt a question of "re-incarnating" the world of the individual once more. But in Key's vision the "incarnation" does not lead back to a "archaic/religious" time, but to a fully incorporated religiosity, based on facts and reason, within each person in the modern time. In this sense Key represents a vision of a world both "excarnated" and "incarnated". As Key perceives the child, it has its own and natural capacity to distinguish right from wrong, and Christian or godly guidance is for this reason not necessary. A sense of natural and inherited and strong "self-defence" leads the child to the right conclusions. This belief in the individual is of course the specific characteristic of Key's ideology¹².

In the same way an "incarnated" world must be consequent. Therefore the child, with its natural instinct and demand for consequentiality will re-formulate

and unify the world view, “Weltanschauung”, presented to her or him. It will not tolerate the dichotomy seemingly taken for granted in education or society. That the norm is all but satisfactory for the adults as well is lifted by Key: “Nothing shows better how imperfect is the real belief of modern thinkers, than the fact that they always teach their children a system which they do not wish to live by spiritually themselves, but which they hold as indispensable for the moral and social future of the child” (Key, 1909, pp. 300-301).

The child's need of seamlessness and the ability of the adult to harbour the dissonances between perceptions, that is, not to use the adult's perspective on the child, becomes the main goal. The perspective of the child is immediate; often black-and-white, emotional, not nuanced, merciless and ruthless, and it would be devastating to put an adult norm on the child's world, because the child senses automatically what is “true”.

Thirdly the need for broadened educational content is stressed by Key since it is only by these means that the child will have the opportunity to choose freely according to his or her own disposition. Leaving out other alternatives also creates a disintegrated world, offering no opportunities for humans to develop fully. And the individual's full “incarnation” is, as we have seen - and using Taylors concept liberally - Key's ambition.

Key argues that a non-religious education and society is not an option. She stresses the critical point: “It is my deepest conviction that man, without religion in the emotional element of his nature, can pursue no ideal ends, cannot see beyond his own personal interest, cannot realize great purposes, cannot be ready to sacrifice himself” (Key, 1909, p. 298). The collective level in Ellen Keys pedagogical ideal could be regarded as “excarinated” and the ambition on the individual's level as “incarnated”. But is this a correct analysis?

Key's vision is certainly a “re-incarnation” of the individual and the term could be applied to society as a whole, but without Christian means. In this sense she is not the forerunner to the secular modern society, and her critique of a dualistic “Weltanschauung” could well be paired with Taylors. A non-religious life is not an alternative for neither of them. The non-religious society would limit the individual since it would not acknowledge the full human potential of the person. This is the reason Key argues for religious instruction as a nave in education, since it guarantees the full evaluation of the child. It will guarantee at least an accessibility to “fullness” and meaningfulness in the individual's life.

Freedom to know all religions, preferably presented by a teacher, her- or himself deeply committed to a cause or a faith, would represent and embodied belief, both with respect towards the child as well as include higher values, without which society would die out. This would mean to promote an “incarnated” indi-

vidualism. In short, and again using Taylors terms liberally: the limit could be concluded as caused by “excarnation”, while the liberation will come with “incarnation”, but only by a society promoting primarily the development of the individual, on all levels in life.

Conclusion

The analysis of Ellen Keys texts have shown that her message have several layers. Not only was the idea of a non-religious society incomprehensible to her, she also emphasized the necessity to see to the individual child's need for “spiritual nourishment”, and promote his or her growth into an “incarnated” personality. To be able to include the “incarnated” individual and allow it to develop into a full human being the school (and society as a whole) needed to allow for “incarnating” tendencies, also in public life and society.

What is the relevance of Ellen Keys critique today? How does religious discourse express itself as a contemporary phenomena? What can we learn?

If the debate on how to teach Christian Humanism, as specifically expressed by the School law in Sweden, in a multi-cultural society has been up for discussion in present day Swedish society, the more urgent discussion will now be how to include children from societies with cultures with a strong tradition of “incarnation” of both society and individuals. Perhaps following Ellen Keys demand for the full respect of the individual can be a guideline in this challenge.

To use the terms in a broader sense: the development from limit to liberation requires the school, as promoted by Key, to include both intellectual “excarnation” and embodied “incarnation” to let the child develop in freedom. To incorporate a variety of aspects of the personality an “incarnating” ideal is necessary.

In the 1800's, school was employed in the struggle to raise the country out of poverty. In the dawning democracy it was divided between the old allegiance to the state church and the new secular political movements, especially promoted by the Social Democrats. The “excarnating” and diversifying approach of our time is deeply¹³ rooted in history from the early modern time, during which Key worked and is based on a materialistic philosophy, not uncommonly connected to Ellen Key and her anti-Christian fellow radicals of her time. But as we have seen, Key's vision included a much deeper message than this, with a demand still valid today.

Notes

¹ *Barnets Århundrade* was published in 1900. In only two years it was published in Germany, with a division of chapters, from which further translations into French, Italian and several other languages were made. The first English edition was published by Putnam's in New York in 1909. The second edition in Swedish in 1912 followed the German disposition and is for this reason used consequently throughout this article.

² For a full discussion on the concept of "Weltanschauung" see Todd H. Weir (2012).

³ Eckerdal uses the polarity in a powerful way to grasp the often misunderstood theory of Peoples Church (sw. folkkyrka) as a special Christian understanding deriving from the occasionally abstract thinking of Einar Billing.

⁴ "kontrastera den mot ett tidigare vad han kallar arkaiskt/religiöst samhälle, där den enskilda personen på ett tydligare sätt var omsluten av, eller inbäddad i, ett större socialt och religiöst sammanhang". Translated by the author. See also Taylor (2007, p. 146).

⁵ The analysis in this text does unfortunately not admit space to include discussion on Taylor's understanding of incarnation and ethics, or for that matter Taylor's indebtedness to for example Augustinus.

⁶ For further analysis of the development of Christian and religious education in Sweden see: Pahlm (2007).

⁷ In the end of 1880 a young news paper editor, Hjalmar Branting, was sent to jail for three months due to an article published in *Social-Demokraten*, which was considered blasphemous. Branting later became one of the most prominent Social Democratic leaders and Prime Minister of Sweden in the 1920's.

⁸ "Det i denna stund mest demoraliserande momentet av uppfostran är kristendomsundervisningen". Translated by the author.

⁹ I will in the following focus on chapters "Religionsundervisningen" ("Religious instruction") (Key, 1912, pp. 84-108) and "Själamorden i skolorna" ("Soul murders in school") (Key, 1912, pp. 109-122) which are most relevant for the discussion. Unless otherwise stated the quotation are from the Swedish 1912 edition.

¹⁰ "Hos barnet finnes en känsla av att människans skyldigheter äro mycket sammansatta och av moralisk natur: i stället lär man det att den förnämsta skyldigheten består i den blinda tron; i böner, i uttalandet av vissa ord vid ett visst tillfälle, i förtärandet av vin och bröd, som skall föreställa Guds kött och blod". Translated by the author. This quotation is not included in the English version from 1909, together with other critical parts against the judeo-christian tradition and dogmas in general, and Christian faith in particular.

¹¹ "Och likväl är inplantandet av dessa läror — vilket vi kalla religionsundervisning — det största brott mot barnet, som man över huvud kan tänka sig! Regeringarna och de styrande klasserna ha behov av denna lögn; det är den som stöder deras makt. Och det är därför de härskande klasserna alltid fordra att den måtte inplantas i barnen och sålunda öva sitt hypnotiserande inflytande även på de vuxna". Translated by the author. Not included in the English 1909 publication.

¹² Taylor emphasizes in a higher degree than Key the individual's dependence on community and that our lives are construed in and by a narrative identity, which is in common with others. Taylor's conclusion is "one cannot understand one's life while in the same time deny one's past and ignore one's current time" (Roeflaers, 2002).

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