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Picturing Abortion Opposition in Sweden:

Lennart Nilsson's Early Photographs of Embryos and Fetuses

Solveig Jülich

Summary. This article explores some conditions and effects of the publishing of Lennart Nilsson's photographs of embryos and fetuses in magazines and other media. It looks especially at how these images related to the abortion controversies in Sweden in the wake of the first Abortion Act in 1938 and up to the second and still current legislation in 1974. During the period Nilsson contributed photographs to anti-abortion campaigns led by prominent doctors and supported by editors in the popular press. The embryos and fetuses depicted in the images were increasingly aestheticised and their human traits emphasised. After the 1965 publication of 'Drama of Life before Birth' in *Life* magazine and *A Child is Born*, however, his photo essays started to express a more positive view of abortion on demand. It is suggested that these shifting strategies and visual styles can be connected to the various interests of Nilsson and his collaborators. **Keywords:** Lennart Nilsson 1922–2017; fetal imagery; medicine in media; anti-abortion campaigns; twentieth century; Sweden.

In late 1952 the Swedish magazine *Vecko-Journalen* (*Weekly Record*) published an article on the much-debated abortion issue containing a full-page portrait taken by freelance press photographer Lennart Nilsson (Figure 1). It showed the controversial professor and chief physician Per Wetterdal resting his elbow self-confidently on the gynaecological chair in one of the examination rooms in the Women's clinic at Sabbatsberg Hospital in Stockholm. Nilsson had taken the picture from below, which made the viewer of the picture look up at Wetterdal almost like a worshiper looking up at the priest in the pulpit. The sacrality of the composition was enhanced by the lamp in the background, which had a form suggesting a halo around the physician's head. The accompanying text offered an appreciative description of Wetterdal's fight against the existing law on abortion and how his refusal to carry out 'socio-medical abortions' had been publicly criticised.¹ This was not the first time the gynaecology professor had appeared in the press arguing for his stand against abortions. For Nilsson, however, it was a new departure to place his camera at the disposal of the on-going anti-abortion campaign. It would later turn out to be an assignment with far-reaching consequences for his career as a photographer.

Today Nilsson (1922–2017) is perhaps best known for ‘Drama of Life before Birth’, published in *Life* magazine in 1965. The story of embryonic development sparked so much interest that the entire print run of eight million copies sold out in a few days.² The associated pregnancy advice book *Ett barn blir till* (*A Child is Born*), depicting the whole sequence from conception to birth, was likewise a huge commercial success.³ Less well known is how Nilsson started his professional career in the early 1940s as a freelance press photographer working mainly for Bonnier, the largest media group in Sweden. His early photo essays for *Se* (*See*), modelled on *Life* and *Look*, included everything from portraits of celebrities and statesmen to images of working life and photographs from his travels abroad. At the time of the Wetterdal controversy, he had established himself as a leading Swedish press photographer and some of his pictures had also appeared in international magazines.⁴

As noted in earlier research, Nilsson’s images of embryos and fetuses have come to play a powerful role in debates about women’s reproductive rights and abortion. Feminist scholars especially have pointed out that the photographs from the story in the 1965 *Life* issue were appropriated by anti-abortion movements in the USA and Britain in the 1970s and 1980s. They have also demonstrated how the composition of Nilsson’s images facilitated arguments for fetal personhood put forward by pro-life groups. For instance, the depiction in *Life* of embryos and fetuses as free-floating astronauts helped to justify the view of the fetus as an individual, autonomous of its mother.⁵ More generally, Nilsson’s images have been seen as paving the way for what historian Barbara Duden in the early 1990s described as ‘the public fetus’, the proliferation of embryonic and foetal images in public life.⁶

However, as Nina Lykke and Mette Bryld have indicated, the Nilsson photographs were equally important for reforming sex education in schools. Although this has some relevance for the USA and Britain, it has particular bearing on Sweden, the first country in the world to implement sex education as a compulsory subject in school, beginning in 1956. Severe criticism in the mid-1960s led to calls for a reform of sex education and liberal sex educators welcomed Nilsson’s close-up photographs of developing embryos as inspiring educational material that could replace drawings and specimens. In the 1970s the photographer’s reputation as an advocate of Sweden’s progressive sexual politics was firmly established.⁷ Yet, for all these critical insights, the academic literature still lacks a historical analysis of the particular contexts and circumstances in post-war Sweden that made it possible to circulate the enlarged images of the ‘free-floating fetuses’ in the first place.

Taking this into consideration, the aim of the present article is to investigate some of the conditions and effects of the publishing of Nilsson's early photographs of embryos and fetuses in magazines and other media. It looks at how these images related to the abortion controversies that took place in Sweden in the wake of the first Abortion Act in 1938 and up to the second and still current legislation in 1974. During the period studied, the media context in which Nilsson's photographs were presented changed from fierce opposition to acceptance of the abortion law. In addition, the embryos and fetuses depicted in the images were increasingly aestheticised and their human traits emphasised. It is suggested that these shifting strategies and visual styles can be connected to the various personal, commercial, political, and professional interests of the photographer and his collaborators in medicine and the media. This article will thus contribute to existing research on Nilsson as well as national histories of abortion by showing how his famous photographs of life before birth were shaped by 'the abortion war' in Sweden long before they became controversial in other countries. A detailed historical account of the practical work and concrete creation of these images at women's clinics in 1950s and 1960s Stockholm will, however, be provided elsewhere.⁸

In broader terms, the analysis here contributes to a growing historical literature demonstrating that images of embryos and fetuses were disseminated through various media much earlier than Duden's 'public fetus' appeared.⁹ As Nick Hopwood has explained, it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the embryological view of development took hold, and the portrayal of human pregnancy as a sequence of stages, from smallest to largest, was established in research and education, including the influential 'Developmental Horizons' of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.¹⁰ Most often, such images, made possible by using fetuses obtained following abortions, showed up in medical publications and lecture halls but occasionally also in more publicly accessible settings, for instance art galleries.¹¹ In the 1930s, the first Swedish sex education films that narrated fetal development with the use of animated drawings was produced and other media were also employed for teaching issues relating to sexuality.¹² During the years around the Second World War, popularly written books on the subject of sexuality, pregnancy and childbirth often included images of embryos and fetuses of different ages.¹³ Nilsson's early photographs of human reproduction shared many of the conventions of these earlier images but he also added something new by the use of sophisticated techniques for enhancing the beauty of dead or dying specimens. To be able to understand how these spectacular pictures entered into the early 1950s visual culture and

later became, according to Duden, ‘part of the mental universe of our time’, it is vital to detail the anti-abortion context in which they emerged.¹⁴

A rich international historical literature has shed light on legal, religious, political and medical aspects of abortion and how it was experienced by women who had abortions, their doctors and lay abortionists.¹⁵ Although this scholarship has found some common patterns among Western countries in the history of abortion law reform and its opponents, it has also emphasised substantial national differences and variations.¹⁶ For instance, feminist scholar Rosalind Petchesky has described the rise of a powerful anti-abortion movement as an originally American visual culture. According to her it was only in the 1980s that anti-abortionists turned to medical images of embryos and fetuses.¹⁷ More recently historians have begun to show that this influential analysis has tended to point to Catholicism, Evangelicalism and political conservatism as the exclusive sources of the early American anti-abortion movement, thereby obscuring important links to social activism in the 1960s. Part of the success of the anti-abortion movement after the legalisation of abortion in 1973 was to appropriate the rhetoric, tactics and ideas from the Vietnam anti-war movement. The use of graphic images of motherhood, babies and children to shock people into action provided one such connection between the two movements.¹⁸

But how original was the visual culture of the American anti-abortion movement? Scholars have long noted the difficulties of establishing an opposition against abortion in Sweden, even after 1974. Explanations for this have included factors such as the state’s long involvement in abortion-related decisions and services, the collaboration between the state and medical professionals in abortion, the close links between abortion supporters and the existing political organisations, most prominently the dominant Social Democratic Party, and the secularisation of national life.¹⁹ More recently, however, historians have revealed that the abortion opposition during the decades following the first legislation in 1938, especially among gynaecologists, was more confrontational than has often been implied.²⁰ This article adds to this scholarship by highlighting how physician-led anti-abortion campaigns profited on Nilsson’s fetal imagery in 1950s and 1960s Sweden. In addition, it seeks to demonstrate that the visual tactics of the early American anti-abortion movement had precedents.²¹

This link between Nilsson and abortion opposition in Sweden has not been mentioned in other research or, for that matter, in retrospective books, exhibitions, and films on his work. The

official account provided by Bonnier, his main publisher for more than half a century, and reproduced widely in the media, is that Nilsson's photographic project to document human development began as a routine assignment for a picture magazine at a hospital around 1950 when he coincidentally discovered jars with embryos on a shelf. He is said to have marvelled because they were so well developed despite being only a couple of weeks old and immediately took some pictures. From this point on his scientific interest is reported to have taken over and he dedicated his career to educate and inform people about the wonders of the human body.²² However, something more than fascination was clearly at play when Nilsson photographed embryonic specimens for the first time. The publication of these spectacular images served the interests of attention-seeking picture magazines and doctors campaigning against abortion. The motivation of the photographer himself for participating in these campaigns is difficult to ascertain, not least since he has declared conflicting views on abortion. What he did gain were contacts that would open the closed doors to the Women's clinics in Stockholm.

By interrelating and contextualising the activities of the medical profession and the popular media in Sweden, this essay attempts to understand how and with what implications Nilsson contributed photographs to anti-abortion campaigns. A number of primary sources including archive material, official documents, medical journals, magazines, daily newspapers, debate books, and exhibition catalogues are drawn upon. First, Swedish abortion law and politics are situated in a historical context as a background for understanding the major concerns and issues involved in public debates on abortion. Secondly, the essay highlights anti-abortion campaigns led by well-known doctors such as Wetterdal, Nilsson's photographic contributions and critical responses to these campaigns. Thirdly, it analyses the changing styles and conventions of his photographs of embryos and fetuses and how these images served both the interests of the medical profession and actors in the media industry. It also suggests that the photographer's engagement in the anti-abortion campaigns gave a boost to his career as medical photographer.

Abortion Law and Politics

During the 1930s the Swedish welfare state emerged under the direction of a strong Social Democratic Party. As in many other countries, the low national birth rate and an alarmingly high incidence of illegal abortions were the focus of political debates. The national solutions

varied, however.²³ In Sweden, this resulted in the Government's establishment of a Population Committee, which between 1935 and 1938 enquired into a number of proposals for reforms aimed at increasing the population by improving the financial situation for families with children. In the following decade, several family policy measures such as subsidised maternity welfare and childcare were introduced.²⁴ But pro-natalist arguments were also used to oppose changes. When in 1938 the Swedish Riksdag passed the first law on abortion, it was less extensive than had been proposed. The law stated that abortion was criminal but exceptions could be made on medical, humanitarian and eugenic grounds. It did not allow abortion for social reasons, which would have increased the number of abortions and affected the pro-natalist population policy.²⁵ Sweden was one of the first countries to pass such a law.²⁶

During the Second World War, Sweden maintained its policy of neutrality and was not attacked or occupied. In 1941 a new committee on the population issue was set up under the leadership of the State Secretary (a principal officer of the government office) at the Ministry of Social Affairs and later Prime Minister Tage Erlander. Part of its assignment was to investigate the motives and reasons for abortions and to suggest actions to prevent them. The resulting proposals concerned various measures to improve information and guidance on sexual matters and contraceptives. Erlander's committee also underlined the need for sex education in schools.²⁷

In the light of the Population Committee's proposals, the government presented a bill in 1946 that entailed a slight revision of the existing Abortion Act. The law still did not allow abortions on social grounds but intended to add a new socio-medical indication that permitted an abortion if a woman's 'bodily or mental powers would be seriously impaired by giving birth to the child or taking care of the child'. Furthermore, a woman who had performed criminal abortion could be freed from punishment in mitigating circumstances.²⁸ Permission for abortion on these grounds could be gained through a certificate signed jointly by two doctors or by application to the State Medical Board. Although this gave the medical profession considerable power over women's lives, it was the state that, in principle, had the last word on abortion decisions.²⁹

An amendment to the law was introduced in 1963 in response to the thalidomide catastrophe when women who had used the drug during pregnancy gave birth to children with

deformities. In 1965 yet another abortion committee was set up and after six years of deliberation it presented its proposal. It then took some years before the Riksdag decided in 1974 on a new abortion law that gave a woman the right to decide herself if she wanted to terminate a pregnancy up until the eighteenth week. For an abortion between 19 and 22 weeks of pregnancy, a permit from the National Board of Health and Welfare was required.³⁰

Throughout this period, the abortion issue was surrounded by a great deal of controversy. In the interwar years, a wide spectrum of groups—sexual reformers, legal scholars, radical women, the labour movement, and Social Democrats—pursued the abortion problem. The most radical demand, complete decriminalisation, was posed by communists on the far left. Opposition often came from the conservatives who resisted almost every proposal for a less restrictive abortion law. However, a critical abortion stance did not always match party-political patterns but could also be a matter of religious belief. These conflicts intensified after the 1946 amendment of the Abortion Act. Many Christians, both members of the dominant Evangelical Lutheran Christian state church and minor Christian Protestant denominations that accepted medical abortion when pregnancy threatened a woman's life as well as eugenic abortion, reacted against the socio-medical indication. Bishops and priests mobilised in the battle against abortion.³¹

Church authorities were joined by prominent doctors, who opposed the state law. Increasingly, these medical professionals armed themselves with photographs and films of aborted fetuses. In contrast, individuals and groups campaigning for abortion reform seem less often to have relied on embryonic and fetal imagery.³²

Doctors' Campaigns Against Abortions

As has been shown in previous research, the anti-abortion stance of gynaecologists and obstetricians can be seen as an attempt to sustain medical authority over pregnant women and to raise the status of these specialities among the medical sciences.³³ Doctors' attitude to abortion was, however, complex. There were, in Sweden and elsewhere, other groups within the medical profession, in particular psychiatrists, who tended to be more sympathetic toward abortion-seeking women.³⁴ This made it difficult to maintain the public façade of unanimity that the Swedish Medical Association otherwise presented. It was sometimes said that a war was being waged between gynaecologists and psychiatrists.³⁵

Per Wetterdal had been one of the experts in the Population Committee of 1941 who had rejected the demand to allow abortion on social grounds.³⁶ In a speech at a meeting of the Swedish Medical Association he claimed that the problematic state of the population was not only due to poor economic conditions, but also to ‘the ethical and cultural ideals’ of young people. Instead of doing their duty and having many children, young women went out to work, he claimed, to be able to afford frivolous consumption. He attacked ‘our shallow weekly press with its complete lack of intellectual content’ and current ‘unprincipled’ films that nurtured unsound ideals and a promiscuous lifestyle.³⁷

In spite of this antipathy, Wetterdal submitted to interviews on the abortion issue several times for magazines. For example, *Svensk Damtidning* (*The Swedish Ladies Magazine*), contained an interview with Wetterdal on this issue at the release of *Den gula kliniken* (*The Yellow Clinic*, Ivar Johansson, 1942), one of several abortion-critical movies during the period. The title of the film referred to the Women’s clinic at Sabbatsberg where women who had been injured by illegal abortions were placed. In the introduction to the interview it was emphasised that this was not a ‘sensational article’ but that it dealt with ‘a frightening problem that every Swedish citizen ought to know about’. Abortions—legal or illegal—constituted ‘a danger to the nation’. Wetterdal, who in 1949 became professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at the medical university in Stockholm, Karolinska institutet, and head of the Sabbatsberg clinic, would return to this issue many times.³⁸

As chief physician at Sabbatsberg Hospital, Wetterdal’s duty was to make room for patients who had been granted a legal abortion. But in spite of the approval of the State Medical Board he refused several times to perform the operation unless the woman’s life or health was health was in serious danger. He had been doing so throughout the 1940s but this was accentuated when the socio-medical indication was introduced.³⁹ According to certain newspapers he had actually refused to perform the operation on a woman who was already lying on the operating-table, and on another occasion he was said to have told a woman who wanted an abortion: ‘then shoot one of your other children’.⁴⁰ The Sabbatsberg Women’s clinic became known for its hostility to abortions and welfare officers at the Stockholm advice bureau on sexual matters, where women seeking abortions had to turn in order to prepare their applications, almost completely stopped sending patients to the hospital.⁴¹

In March 1952 these conditions led the Social Democrat and city councillor Inga Thorsson to raise a question concerning the abortion situation at Sabbatsberg to Harald Mårtens, the City Commissioner for Health in Stockholm.⁴² Thorsson's active interest in the abortion issue was not new: she had been the secretary of the abortion sub-committee of the 1941 Population Committee. In her question to Mårtens she pointed out that there was a shortage of hospital beds for legal abortion cases and that it was therefore unreasonable that the best equipped women's clinic did not consider that it could perform these operations because of the negative attitudes shown by doctors and some of the nursing staff. It was a categorical social imperative, she insisted, for abortion patients to be treated with the same humanity as other patients. Thorsson's question and a subsequent motion led to the establishment of a commission to investigate how abortion cases in Stockholm were handled and how they were allocated to the various clinics. At the same time there was an investigation into possible malpractice by Wetterdal. Several nationwide liberal newspapers demanded his dismissal, including the Bonnier owned *Expressen* (*The Express*).⁴³

Wetterdal answered his critics in public. One of the most spectacular occasions—the one that inspired Nilsson to take the priest-like picture of the professor of gynaecology in the *Weekly Record*—was a speech on the abortion issue he gave in the crowded Matteus Church in Stockholm.⁴⁴ The subject was the Fifth Commandment: 'Thou shalt not kill'. Wetterdal claimed that the *codex ethicus* agreed to by the Swedish Medical Association meant that every doctor was duty-bound 'to endeavour to protect and maintain human life from its creation in the womb'. For him life started, biologically speaking, at conception and therefore the Fifth Commandment should apply from that moment. Abortion was murder, he claimed, although he agreed that it could be acceptable for medical reasons. Importantly, the efforts should be aimed at solving the social ills that lay behind many of the social grounds given for an abortion.⁴⁵

Wetterdal was therefore in an exposed position but he was not alone in his stand against abortion. His fellow-doctors had argued against the application of the new Abortion Act in the medical press and newspapers. Two of these colleagues were a married couple, Mirjam Furuhielm and Axel Ingelman-Sundberg, both gynaecologists at Sabbatsberg and at this time pronounced opponents of abortions on socio-medical grounds. In a series of articles criticising abortion, Furuhielm maintained that it was against a woman's biological nature to terminate a pregnancy. A woman who had an abortion therefore not only ended a new human life but

could also never fulfil herself as a woman. This argument about motherhood was prevalent in the public discourse on abortion.⁴⁶

Ingelman-Sundberg himself became the protagonist in a stormy media debate. The cause was a discussion of the abortion question in Uppsala during autumn 1952 that had been jointly organised by the Christian students' associations and the Social Democrat Students' association Laboremus. The debate, 'Abortion: A danger to society or a necessity?', along with a film, had been advertised on posters and in local newspapers. This attracted about 250 people, mostly students but also one housewife and others. Several reporters were present and one of them represented *The Express*, the Bonnier evening tabloid newspaper that earlier had voiced its support for the abortion-seeking women that Wetterdal had rejected. Ingelman-Sundberg gave an introductory speech, followed by the psychiatrist Börje Löfgren. Both agreed that the Abortion Act was needed but the former was against the socio-medical indication. The theologians present maintained that neither financial nor social reasons were enough to justify taking a human life.⁴⁷

The film was shown in connection with Ingelman-Sundberg's presentation. It was in colour, had a running time of 10–15 minutes and described the whole process of a legal abortion operation from the moment when the woman's uterus was cut open up to when the head of the fetus was split and emptied to make it easier to remove. This abortion procedure, hysterotomy, consisting of a small Caesarean section in which the fetus in the uterus was removed through an incision under the cervix, was the most common from the ninth week of gestation. It appears that this particular abortion, which had been allowed because the mother had tuberculosis, was performed quite late in pregnancy (20 weeks or more), which complicated the operation. The origin of this film was the obstetric-gynaecological department at Lund University Hospital, where it was used for the instruction of future midwives and doctors. Alf Sjövall, professor and chief surgeon at the clinic, had lent the film to Ingelman-Sundberg.⁴⁸

Many sex education films shown in Sweden at the time included spectacular scenes that were conceived of as shocking, for instance images of the effects of syphilis and sequences showing childbirth.⁴⁹ Similar responses were accounted for by the reporter from *The Express* at the showing of the film in Uppsala. According to him the realistic moving pictures aroused violent reactions in the young audience that had gathered in the university's lecture hall.

Several felt sick and had to leave the hall while others fainted: 'Debate audience shocked by abortion film in colour' was the headline on the paper's front page, which also had a close-up of Ingelman-Sundberg.⁵⁰ Although this view of the event was contradicted by other journalists who had been present, most newspapers agreed that the doctor had made an error of judgement in showing the film to a non-medical audience.⁵¹ Several individuals also raised the question of whether the screening had broken the law, since it was not permitted to show uncensored films in public.⁵² At the request of the State Medical Board the police carried out an investigation but it did not lead to any action.⁵³

Although there were doctors with differing opinions, the Swedish Medical Association stood behind Wetterdal and his collaborators. In May 1952 the organisation issued a press release containing a statement of principle that a doctor could not be forced to perform an operation against his scientific and ethical convictions.⁵⁴ Even stronger wording was found in the opening speech by the Uppsala professor Erik Ask-Upmark at the association's annual meeting at the end of the same year. He equated abortions with murder and wanted to abolish the socio-medical indication.⁵⁵

The inquiries instigated by the Stockholm City Council into Wetterdal's behaviour towards abortion patients resulted in a report to the State Medical Board. According to this, there was no obligation for a doctor to perform operations against his convictions. This declaration was thus wholly in line with the Swedish Medical Association's standpoint.⁵⁶ However, Thorsson's initial question continued to be debated in the Stockholm City council several years after Wetterdal had retired and been succeeded by Ingelman-Sundberg.⁵⁷ It was Ingelman-Sundberg who, together with Furuhielm, would later become Nilsson's co-authors of the pregnancy advice book *A Child is Born*.

Thus, at the beginning of the 1950s well-known Swedish doctors campaigned publicly against the Abortion Act and, in particular, the socio-medical indication. Interestingly, these kinds of anti-abortion activities emerged much earlier than has been suggested in international research. According to Petchesky's analysis it was only in the 1980s that anti-abortionists in the USA and Britain turned to moving pictures as a medium of propaganda. In the 1984 film *The Silent Scream*, former abortion provider and physician Bernard Nathanson claimed to demonstrate an ultrasound sequence of a 12-week-old fetus in pain during an abortion.⁵⁸ Slightly earlier, as the recent study by Nicolson and Fleming has shown, the Scottish

physician Ian Donald, who pioneered the diagnostic use of obstetric ultrasound, produced a film of a real-time ultrasound scan of a healthy pregnancy that he regularly showed at anti-abortion meetings in the late 1970s. Both Nathanson's and Donald's films were broadcast on national television.⁵⁹ Although the Swedish abortion film of 1952 was screened in a smaller setting it too had, through the reporting in the press, national repercussions. This chain of events provoked the magazines to feature photographs of embryos and fetuses, still designed to shock spectators but less gory, instead emphasising beauty and wonder.

Nilsson's First Photographs of Embryos and Fetuses

During the decades around the Second World War various aspects of human reproduction were emphasised as a recurring theme in the picture magazines, in Sweden and elsewhere. One of the very first issues of *See*, following *Life*, had a spread showing scenes from a delivery and the first hours of the baby.⁶⁰ Articles discussed the reasons behind the low birth rate and what measures should be taken to prevent 'national suicide'. Photographs of healthy babies and children crowded the pages.⁶¹ Evidently, these debates and images relating to the 'population issue' were thought to attract the readers.

Less clear are the ideological investments of the Swedish press in the abortion issue. During this 'golden age of magazines', Åhlén & Åkerlund Publishers, a Bonnier subsidiary, led the market with a circulation over 200,000 for *See* and, at best, 80,000, for *Weekly Record* (later *Idun Weekly Record*). While the former was profiled as candid and unconventional, oriented towards a broad and increasingly male audience, the latter was a magazine for the educated bourgeoisie. The chief editors had relatively large manoeuvring space in relation to the owners as long as the sales went well.⁶² Since there is no evidence that the Bonnier management either supported or worked against the abortion policy it seems likely that it was the chief editors of *See* and *Weekly Record* who estimated that their quite different groups of readers would take an interest in, even sympathise with, the doctors' campaigns against abortion. Equally important, the magazine editors were generally anxious not to endanger relations with the medical professionals, which could make it difficult to obtain medical stories. After several complaints filed by individual doctors to the Swedish Press Council, a self-disciplinary body governed by the print media, the practice of letting a medical expert review the copy before a story on medicine was published had been established. Magazine

reports about abortion at this time can thus be assumed to often be in line with the official mainstream position of the medical profession.⁶³

It was during the bitter disputes in 1952 that Nilsson was commissioned to report on Wetterdal's controversial views on abortion for the press. His visit to Sabbatsberg resulted not only in the priest-like portrait of Wetterdal already discussed but also in a series of pictures of embryos and fetuses. According to contemporary sources it was not uncommon that doctors kept human specimens in jars in their consulting rooms to persuade abortion-seeking women who came to see them to reconsider their choices (as Ian Donald showed ultrasound images to deter women from abortions in the late 1960s). In all events Nilsson's eyes caught some specimens in bottles when he was introduced to Wetterdal, which he photographed and sold to the press. After a couple of years Nilsson, still freelancing, had the opportunity to return to the clinic and started a collaboration with several doctors and researchers, which led to new and more extensive photographic material. Whereas the embryos and fetuses in the first photographs came from the hospital's collection of human specimens, these images from the late 1950s and early 1960s were made in connection with operations on women who underwent miscarriages, extra-uterine pregnancies and legal abortions. *See* magazine and *Weekly Record* supported the project financially.⁶⁴

The first article in *See*, published in 1952 and resulting from Nilsson's encounter with Wetterdal was outspokenly critical of the Abortion Act. Below the heading 'Varför måste fostret dödas?' ('Why Must the Fetus be Killed?') a five-month-old fetus was shown in a picture taken after a legal abortion (Figure 2). The first part of the article consisted of an interview with the gynaecologist Erik Klintskog, one of Wetterdal's colleagues at Sabbatsberg, who 'pleaded the cause of the unborn': the fetuses that 'are now killed in legal abortions'. It was against the professional ethos of doctors to deprive 'the expectant child' of life, he claimed. The argument as a whole was characterised by a paternalistic attitude to women seeking abortion but lacked the religious overtones of Wetterdal's campaign. This was followed by a spread with four pictures of embryos and fetuses (the youngest two and the oldest five months old) taken by Nilsson, intended to illustrate 'The development of the fetus up to the point of viable life'.⁶⁵

It is interesting to note that this 1952 *See* photo essay drew upon earlier conventions of representing human reproduction (Figure 3). Nilsson's photographs, similar to some images

that had been published in *Life* two years earlier, resembled the visual materials in embryological textbooks.⁶⁶ In both cases the embryos and the fetuses had been set against a black, empty background and ordered sequentially from smaller to larger. These were, if not completely ‘free-floating astronauts’, disconnected from the bodies of pregnant women.⁶⁷ Yet there were also important dissimilarities that must be viewed in light of the anti-abortion opposition in Sweden at the time. Strikingly, the word ‘abortion’ was absent in the story in *Life* (as in Nilsson’s contribution of a picture of a six-week-old embryo to this American magazine in 1953).⁶⁸

While in *Life* in 1950 the term ‘embryo’ was employed consistently in the description of the photographs, *See* used the terms ‘embryo’ and ‘fetus’ interchangeably (for instance as when describing the six-week-old ‘fetus’). The specimens in *See* were arranged not only, as in *Life*, head up but in profile and ‘natural size’. Moreover, even though the captions in both magazines described development during the month of pregnancy in question with an emphasis on human characteristics, the legends in *See* also stressed the individual qualities of the particular fetuses shown in the photographs. For instance, the description of the three-month-old ‘embryo’ underlined that this was ‘a 5.5 centimetre long creature with noticeably human traits’ and that it was a girl. The caption under the photograph of the four-month-old fetus claimed that the face was already well developed and that ‘fetuses at this stage show individual characteristics’. Under the captions, at the bottom of the pages, there were little boxes that stated how many of 1,000 legal abortions in Sweden were performed when the fetus was at this stage.⁶⁹ Texts, pictures and numbers thus cooperated to make dead, aborted specimens simulate human growth and life, and encourage the readers to see connections between embryos, fetuses and babies. This way of representing embryos and fetuses offered a persuasive anti-abortionist tool but there was also the danger that the images could be perceived as too powerful or even sensational.⁷⁰

To stall criticism, and state his opinion, the chief editor of *See*, Rune Moberg, explained in an editorial how he had at first reacted with loathing to Wetterdal’s refusal to perform abortions but had then realised that the professor ‘wanted to save a living creature that to the mother was so far just an idea and a sickness, but to him a human being in the making, a human being with fingers and toes and little ears, a human body that he would have to reduce to pulp’. Moberg defended Nilsson’s photographs: ‘The pictures use language that shocks. Do not look at them in disgust. Nor in search of the sensational. But there are big, strong men who have

cried over them. If you do the same, their pleas have reached you'.⁷¹ To emphasise this point, one of the photographer's images had been inserted in the text, which by showing an embryo with a placenta in a jar suggested that abortion was 'killing help', that is to say, helping the woman but killing the unborn.

To balance this view, however, Moberg included some anonymous critical letters-to-the-editor in the following issue. For instance, 'Mother of a son' accused the magazine of sensationalism and said that Nilsson's 'disgusting pictures' would not reduce the number of abortions and that the only thing that would help was to discuss contraception and birth control. 'Monsieur X' wrote quite simply that the article 'was the scariest thing that had been seen in years. Of course the creation of a human being is a miracle, but save us from these loathsome full-page pictures.'⁷² These negative reactions were similar to the 'shock' reportedly experienced by the audience shown Ingelman-Sundberg's film in Uppsala in the same year. The readers' revulsion to the photographs of embryos and fetuses published in *See* suggest that there were no established visual conventions of seeing those images as 'babies'.

In 1958 Nilsson presented a new set of photographs of embryos. This time it was in connection with *See*'s announcement that 'Lennart Nilsson's most astounding report' would soon reach the readers: a photo essay on life before birth (Figure 4). A spread gave a sample of the coming series and this signalled a somewhat new direction from his previous more embryological way of setting the developing fetus against an empty, black background. Instead, the largest picture showed a 35-day-old embryo, surrounded by the placenta, which had been back-lit and appeared to be floating inside the darkness of the womb.⁷³ A smaller picture showed a close-up of an embryo of the same age accompanied by a schematic drawing, indicating the various organs. Still emphasising conception as the defining moment, and omnisciently narrating the experience of passing through 'new, wonderful developmental stages', there was however no mention of abortion, or even of dead embryos:

It is you—Man! The picture story about the great mystery, about your life before your birth, about your sheltered, safe existence in the warmth of the womb free from shocks, about your mysterious development in silent darkness—from the frenzied dance of the sperms around the egg up to the first hungry cry into the sterile whiteness of the delivery room.⁷⁴

In comparison to the 1952 report, then, the announcement of Nilsson's coming photo essay did not explicitly argue against abortion but it was rather presented as a secular miracle. Prenatal life was portrayed as at once a unique experience for every individual and a universal human experience. This way of promoting the story of embryological development had become increasingly popular in American culture, following the publication of George Washington Corner's *Ourselves Unborn: An Embryologist's Essay on Man* as well as a growing genre of children's books about human reproduction.⁷⁵ A number of these books were translated into Swedish and printed into several editions.⁷⁶ There was thus a rising market for Nilsson's photographs which did not have to exclude that they were also seen as a way of supporting the opposition against abortion in Sweden.⁷⁷

Time passed, but no picture story about 'Man' was published. In December 1960 *See* once more advertised an 'absolutely unique series of pictures' by Nilsson that would soon appear. This time the series of pictures would be called 'Så börjar livet' ('How Life Begins') and as a preview the magazine offered a picture of a back-lit four-month-old fetus, encapsulated in its amniotic sac, and surrounded by almost darkness.⁷⁸ Like anatomists and embryologists had done long before him, Nilsson selected and enhanced the beauty of normal embryos and fetuses, inviting viewers to marvel at their formal perfection.⁷⁹ Even if there was no explicit reference to abortion, this photographic portrayal of fetal life fitted well into the anti-abortion rhetoric of Rune Moberg, the chief editor of *See*. In a subsequent article he likened an image by Nilsson, depicting a four-month-old male fetus, to a precious artwork with high economic value.⁸⁰

With the announcement of 'How Life Begins' *See* also desired to link Nilsson to the Karolinska Institutet by promoting his contribution to the exhibition *Läkaren och livet* (*The Doctor and Life*) that was arranged in connection with the 150-year jubilee of this medical university in Stockholm. Conveniently enough, the exhibition opened at Ostermans Marmorhallar in Stockholm in the autumn of 1960, coinciding with the national medical congress attracting 3,000 participants and the annual award of the Nobel Prize in medicine.⁸¹ Nilsson's pictures had been placed in one corner of the section dedicated to reproduction and pregnancy. An enormously enlarged colour photograph displayed an embryo a couple of weeks old. In a manner reminiscent of the famous 'Transparent Man', the transparent model of the human body that was first displayed at the German Hygiene Museum in 1930, different buttons could be pressed so that lamps were lit up behind the picture showing where the heart

and other organs were situated. Close to this installation were pictures of an embryo that was not quite two months old and of a fetus that was described by a newspaper reporter as ‘a child 4 months before delivery, fully formed and with hair all over the body’.⁸² As medical and science museums had done previously in an international context, this exhibition thus showed dead specimens that appeared to depict living bodies but the jars had been replaced by greatly enlarged and interactive photographs in colour, thereby emphasising the visitor’s engagement.⁸³

This exhibition, which was visited by the whole Swedish elite, gave legitimacy and status to Nilsson’s work. *See* was not slow to exploit this success. An advertisement, to attract new subscribers, published the week after the opening of the exhibition, presented a series of pictures of King Gustaf VI Adolf and Queen Louise in front of Nilsson’s photographs of embryos and fetuses (Figure 5). Another picture showed the photographer talking to the Prime Minister Tage Erlander. The advertisement proclaimed that subscribers to the magazine could experience Nilsson’s outstanding photographs just as these celebrities had.⁸⁴ But it was not until 1965 that the promised picture story was published in the magazine. By then the material had already been compiled by *Life* in the form of ‘Drama of Life before Birth’, and *A Child is Born* was in the process of being published.⁸⁵

During the 1950s Nilsson’s spectacular photographs were therefore introduced in magazines, exhibitions and other media. As I have shown, the earliest set of these more conventional embryological images was published in articles that supported Wetterdal’s morally and religiously motivated anti-abortion campaign. In comparison, the photographs from the latter part of the decade emphasised the beauty and mysterious lives of (dead) embryos and fetuses and they were justified by scientific and educational aims. The commercial interests, already at play in the publication of the first photo essay in *See* in 1952 became more pronounced as demonstrated in the announcements and advertisements for ‘How Life Begins’.

These shifting strategies and visual styles can be related to the abortion debate in the late 1950s. After the introduction of the socio-medical indication in 1946 the number of legal abortions had increased. This is when Nilsson contributed to Wetterdal’s campaign and it was followed by a period when the State Medical Board grew more restrictive in granting abortion permissions.⁸⁶ Equally significant was that concern for the low birth rate ceased to be an important factor in the abortion debate as fears of global overpopulation had started to

become prominent.⁸⁷ Consequently there was less incentive for anti-abortion campaigns and shocking pictures. On the other hand, as feminist scholars discussing more recent history have noticed, the portrayal of embryos and fetuses as the main actors in the miraculous journey from conception to birth has often been used to support arguments against abortion.⁸⁸ As will be shown in the following, when abortion on demand was placed on the public agenda in the early 1960s, Nilsson once again became involved in an anti-abortion campaign organised by a conservative magazine.

Fetal Photography and the Free Abortion Movement

The abortion debate in Sweden flared again in 1963 when the liberal and social-democratic youth and student organisations advocated free abortion. They demanded that the indications should be abandoned and that women themselves should make the decision. Women's movements remained cautious about these demands, while Christian groups as well as doctors and nursing staff were firmly opposed.⁸⁹

Two events that gave rise to massive media coverage are usually cited as important explanations of the liberalisation process. The first was the journey to Sweden in 1962 by the American television presenter Sherri Finkbine to have an abortion. Finkbine had taken the drug Thalidomide during her pregnancy and had applied for an abortion since she feared that the fetus had been harmed. The American authorities rejected her application and so she travelled to Sweden, where the State Medical Board gave its approval. The second event was the Poland affair of February 1965. It became known that the Prosecutor-General had decided to prosecute Swedish women who had not been granted permission for abortions but had instead gone to Poland where abortions were legal. Criticism in liberal and social-democratic newspapers such as *The Express* and *Aftonbladet* (*The Evening Paper*) was massive and the government finally decided on a *nolle prosequi*, so that the charges against the women and their helpers were withdrawn.⁹⁰

But before the Poland affair exploded, there was another event that triggered a storm of reactions. Early in 1964 the Ministry of Education and Ecclesiastical Affairs received a letter from a group of doctors, many of them gynaecologists, who wanted to augment character-building activities in schools to counteract 'over-sexualisation and social promiscuity'. They were particularly worried about a relaxation of the abortion law and also maintained that

Christian values should be the foundation of social life.⁹¹ This appeal quickly became known as ‘The 140 doctors’ and was followed by a number of protests in the editorials of liberal and social-democratic newspapers. Even though the doctors’ appeal did not arouse the positive reactions they had hoped for, it would stimulate yet another action: the foundation of the political party Kristen Demokratisk Samling (KDS; ‘Christian Democratic Coalition’) in the spring of 1964.⁹²

In response to these events the association ‘Save the Fetus’ was founded, and Nilsson agreed to contribute to a story in the conservative magazine *Idun Veckojournalen* (*Idun Weekly Record*), owned by Bonnier. The headings stated that ‘a shock’ was needed to arouse the public: ‘This is a report on abortion. Read it—you will understand the doctors who refuse to do it, you will be indignant at the thoughtless cruelty of society. But you will get a chance to save our unborn.’ The article was written by Per Uddén, then a district medical officer in the northern part of Sweden. Nilsson was introduced as ‘our foremost scientific photographer’ and his current project was mentioned as a ‘large illustrated work on the development of fetuses in collaboration with doctors’.⁹³

In the article Uddén described an incident that was said to have happened. A chief surgeon at a major hospital had asked a high school student, ‘Eva’, working as a trainee with the welfare officers at the hospital, to be present at a late induced abortion to cure her of her ‘radical ideas about abortion’. But during the operation, a hysterotomy, there were complications and when the surgeon tried to lift the fetus out of the incision in the patient’s uterus its neck broke and the head flew ‘through the operating room, rolled a metre or two and turned eye-slits never opened towards Eva’. Nilsson’s enlarged picture of an aborted fetus in the fifth month was placed on the same spread as this description (Figure 6). The caption referred to Uddén’s story but it was the beauty of the fetus that was emphasised rather than the bloody operation: ‘Eyes never opened. ... A quiet gravity, not unlike an ancient sculpture, characterises the unborn.’ The article ended with a proposal to form a new association—Save the Fetus—and those readers who wanted to support the initiative were invited to turn directly to the magazine with their interests.⁹⁴

The contents of the article gave rise to a heated debate.⁹⁵ Gustaf von Platen, chief editor of *Idun Weekly Record*, defended its publication by saying that the report introduced ‘a little bit of reality, the reality of the operating theatre to the debate’.⁹⁶ Some of those who wrote to the

magazine were very critical, however. A letter from Lis Asklund, who had earlier been working as a welfare officer, accused Uddén of scaremongering which reminded her of those distant times when ‘Professor Wetterdal was standing in the pulpits preaching about the Fifth Commandment’, and claimed that the district medical officer lacked empathy with those patients who had for different reasons been forced to have an abortion:

Have you no feelings at all for those thousands of women who now, through your horrible descriptions and through the disgusting, enlarged and tendentious illustration with its suggestive words below, have had their worlds torn apart? How many of them after having read your article are now lying crying in despair you will never get to know about!⁹⁷

Uddén dismissed her criticism and emphasised that Nilsson’s photographs helped to make the article ‘particularly heart-rending’. It was only natural for women who had had abortions to have nightmares after having seen ‘the picture of the dead boy fetus in *Idun Weekly Record*’.⁹⁸

It has not been possible to determine what happened to ‘Save the Fetus’ but it is not unlikely that the initiative was subsumed into the Christian Democrat party, which came to embrace various activities against abortion.⁹⁹ The role of the photographer in this campaign is also not altogether clear. He himself did not explicitly comment on his contribution to *Idun Weekly Record*. Yet in an interview in the daily press, he declared in more general terms that he wished his photographic work would make women abstain from abortions: ‘Women often have a hazy view of what a fetus looks like at different stages and I think that many of them will be surprised by how well-developed, indeed, beautiful a fetus already is when it is two months old.’ Viewing his photographs could, he hoped, ‘prompt reflection and thereby prevent many unnecessary abortions’.¹⁰⁰ By this phrasing Nilsson implied that necessity had to do with saving the mother’s life and health whereas other grounds for abortion were not justifiable.

In Nilsson’s book *A Child is Born*, published by Bonnier a year later, the abortion issue was not the focus although it was not wholly absent either. His co-author, Ingelman-Sundberg, declared in the preface that Nilsson’s photographs gave ‘both an artistic and at the same time complete and realistic picture’ of human development. The aim of presenting these pictures was first of all to dispel the public’s ignorance about sexuality and reproduction. According to the doctor, many women harboured the erroneous belief that the fetus was not alive until mid-

pregnancy, when actually it 'is a living creature from the moment of conception'. Ingelman-Sundberg's paternalistic attitude and his insistence that life starts at conception were reminiscent of earlier debates against abortion but the argument was put forward less aggressively.¹⁰¹ This framing of the photographs can also be interpreted as a desire of the Bonnier publishers for the book not to be associated with the anti-abortion and morally conservative groups. Instead they chose, for commercial reasons, to launch *A Child is Born* as pregnancy advice and sex education, a market that had recently expanded. Only a few critical opinions were voiced, arguing that despite their new package the images of fetuses that looked alive but in reality showed dead specimens, were still anti-abortion propaganda.¹⁰²

Nor were arguments against abortion (or any talk about how the images had been produced) particularly noticeable in other articles and books published by Nilsson during the latter half of the 1960s. This fits well with the general tendency that the abortion issue played a less prominent role in public debate from roughly the same point of time as the government abortion commission was set up in 1965 to consider alternatives for future legislation.¹⁰³ But it nevertheless kept engaging many individuals and groups, although with somewhat new overtones. What often reappeared in discussions in the latter part of the 1960s was the problem of late abortions, which were largely the result of delays in reaching decisions about abortion applications.¹⁰⁴ In the early 1970s the Swedish Medical Association finally reached consensus for free abortion up to the eighteenth week as a way of overcoming the problems, while the gynaecologists' association argued for a more restrictive procedure after the twelfth week.¹⁰⁵ Church representatives continued to resist abortion reform and cited *A Child is Born* and its depiction of embryological 'facts' to justify their religious belief that human life began at conception and should be protected.¹⁰⁶

When Nilsson returned to the theme in a more explicit way in 1974, when it was clear that the new law allowing free abortion would be passed, he conveyed a view of abortion that was in accordance with the new legislation. In the story 'Människans okända tid' ('Man's Unknown Time'), published in four issues of the magazine *Damernas Värld* (*Ladies' World*), narratives about four imaginary women faced with difficult choices were woven together round one about the development of an embryo at micro-level, told with the help of a selection of Nilsson's recent pictures taken with a scanning electron microscope.¹⁰⁷

The four women were said to be of different ages and in different family and career situations, but what they had in common was that they had been told they were pregnant (Figure 7). In parallel with the narratives about these women up until their decisions (the young girl and the career woman had abortions), a ‘drama’ was enacted in the micro-world in which the embryo was the ‘protagonist’. In this micro-world there was said to be no ‘doubt’, the embryo, ‘[un]disturbed by the deliberations in the macro-world’, had already passed through the first stages of development. A little further on the story presented a ‘[p]ortrait of an anonymous public person’, an embryo five-weeks-old, and in other parts of the magazine there were close-ups of the hands, feet, arms, eyes and brains of embryos of the same age. With the help of a picture of a six-week-old embryo taken with a scanning electron microscope and a macro-photograph of a thumb-sucking eighteen-week-old fetus, both in colour, one spread demonstrated ‘why an early abortion is better than a late one’ (Figure 8). Thus the pictures, claiming not only that the embryos and fetuses were alive but also independent ‘persons’, were not linked to arguments against all kinds of abortions, yet there was still a clear ambition to take the restrictive attitude of the new law towards late abortions as a starting point in order to try to influence women when choosing abortion.¹⁰⁸

Between ‘Why Must the Fetus be Killed?’, Nilsson’s first article about abortion, and ‘Man’s Unknown Time’ there is a span of almost 25 years. It comes as no great surprise that the stories have shifted from a paternalistic attitude to an emphasis on personal choice and women’s power over their own lives. But at the same time it would be possible to argue for continuity in Nilsson’s photographs. Although the images for the 1950s and the 1970s stories were published in different historical contexts, there is a similarity in their aestheticisation and humanisation of developing embryos and fetuses. By employing various and increasingly sophisticated techniques such as magnification, back-light and colour, the viewers were encouraged to see fetuses as persons. In addition, the accompanying texts helped to personalise the specimens by making reference to various parts of the fetal body and pointing out the sex. This approach was used to affect readers to take a stand against (late) abortions.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, feminist scholars have contributed important insights into Nilsson’s photographs of human development and their links to anti-abortion movements in the USA and Britain. However, from a historical perspective some of these analyses have to be nuanced. In relation to the existent imagery in embryological textbooks, the innovative feature of Nilsson’s early pictures was the inclusion and aesthetic arrangement

of traces of the mother's body such as the placenta. This also became a characteristic trait of 'Spaceman' that was published in the 1965 *Life* story as well as many others of his later photographs in the various editions of *A Child is Born*. It is thus misleading to claim, as Carol Stabile did in her influential essay, that the disappearance of the mother in Nilsson's 1990s photo essay in *Life* was a direct effect of the increasing hostility against abortion rights in the USA at the time.¹⁰⁹ While this may be correct in terms of what kind of photographs the editors of *Life* chose to publish and how they presented them to the readers, it does not provide a fair account of Nilsson's work. Furthermore, Stabile's argument fails to grasp the significance of the national context in which these pictures emerged. Many interests and motives were intermingled in the publishing of Nilsson's early photographs of embryos and fetuses in Sweden: personal, commercial, political and professional.

Conclusions

Over the years, as Nilsson established himself as Sweden's leading medical photographer with international acclaim, stories of the formative years of his career began to proliferate in the media. It was increasingly emphasised that the ambition to educate the general public in biology and medicine had been a driving force for his photographic interest in fetal life from the very beginning. As this article has demonstrated, however, the history of how his professional career took off was more complex than has often been suggested. Nilsson's pictures of embryos and fetuses were created in a historical situation when prominent doctors in Sweden ran aggressive campaigns against the liberalisation of abortion law and sexual morals. The reports to which the photographer contributed set themselves up as spokespersons for this anti-abortion and morally conservative view. The paternalistic attitude to women seeking abortions that permeated the earlier stories was, when the new abortion law was imminent in 1974, replaced with a greater emphasis on individual choice. This shift was significant for Nilsson, who always followed the trends within the medical profession.

Several conclusions can be drawn about the medical and media interests involved in these changed scenarios. One insight is that both the magazines owned by Bonnier and the doctors profited from Nilsson's photographs. On one hand, the chief editors of *See* and *Idun Weekly Record* had access to and could publish sensational photographs of life before birth. Moberg and von Platen were active in establishing the collaboration between Nilsson and the doctors that resulted in the best-selling picture stories. They chose to present the pictures as

‘shocking’ testimony to the effects of abortion and then followed up the stories with editorials, articles and letters from their readers. The anti-abortion gynaecologists, in contrast, saw the pictures as a possibility of arousing and influencing public opinion. Nilsson’s tendency to humanise the embryos and fetuses in the photographs may be seen in light of the interplay between these commercial and ideological interests. As a press photographer, he had great knowledge of various techniques that could be used to give vividness and beauty to the motifs. This aestheticisation of the material fitted in well with Wetterdal’s and Ingelman-Sundberg’s conviction that at an early stage of development the fetus could already be regarded as an independent individual.

The purpose has, however, not been to ascribe to the Bonnier media group a common strategy in the abortion debates of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. *The Express* supported liberalisation in contrast to *See* and *Idun Weekly Record*. Rather, it has been suggested that Nilsson’s publishers and editors were guided by commercial motives and therefore sensitive to the shifting mainstream opinion on abortion. When Bonnier’s book division decided to repack his magazine photographs of embryos and fetuses into *A Child is Born*, the demand for free abortion was increasing. Consequently, the abortion issue was toned down and instead it was promoted as sex education and pregnancy advice. Although it may appear awkward, Swedish sex liberals quite willingly accepted this rebranded material. Evidently, the rising stardom of Nilsson overshadowed his reputation as an anti-abortion campaigner and they did not see the images in themselves as inherently anti-abortion propaganda.¹¹⁰

Nilsson also clearly had an interest in producing and selling the images of human development. As a freelance press photographer in his early career he perhaps was not expected to decline an assignment. On the other hand, by the mid-1960s he was foremost in his field, courted by editors of Bonnier-owned magazines and their rivals, and the decision to work with those behind the ‘Save the Fetus’ was hardly economically motivated. Was his involvement in anti-abortion campaigns grounded in a personal stance? Apart from the vague comments that I have referred to, little material has been preserved from the period that can shed light on this issue. From the 1970s onwards, Nilsson has provided a variety of answers to journalists (eager to pigeonhole him as pro-life or pro-choice); he may even have changed his opinion several times during his life.¹¹¹ What is nevertheless clear is that, as a result of his anti-abortion assignments, he was able to establish a network of medical contacts that enabled him to gain access to resources, legitimacy and status. It was through his engagement in the

abortion debate that he could advance to a medical photographer associated with the prestigious Nobel-awarding medical university, Karolinska Institutet. This was not something that happened by sheer coincidence as doctors tended to look down on reporters working for the ‘sensationalist’ press.¹¹²

In Sweden during the 1950s and 1960s close-ups of enlarged aborted fetuses together with descriptions of abortion surgery and scientific data were designed to shock viewers into opposing abortion. Compared to Ingelman-Sundberg’s film screening of the gruesome details of an abortion operation, these photographs emphasised the beauty of embryos and fetuses. It is impossible to know with certainty what effects Nilsson’s photographs had on their viewers. There is no evidence to show whether they persuaded women to forgo abortions or made doctors reject their applications and so contribute to the low abortion rates in the 1950s. Still it might be argued that these early images trained viewers to see embryos and fetuses as persons. Significantly, in the 1974 story ‘Man’s Unknown Time’ the language of shocks had disappeared and the five-week-old embryo was presented as an anonymous person that the readers, and the mother, would get familiar with as the pregnancy progressed.

The case presented in this article complicates the notion of a dramatic shift in the justificatory language and visual tools of groups opposing abortion during the 1970s and 1980s. First, it demonstrates that photographs and films were already being employed for anti-abortion propaganda in the early 1950s in Sweden, a long time before the advent of the abortion wars in the USA and Britain. Secondly, it suggests that there was no simple move from a religious to a technoscientific mode in Swedish anti-abortion rhetoric. Rather, Nilsson’s images were presented as secular miracles, narrating the story of embryological development in the language of religion and mystery. Thirdly, it indicates that there was no clear-cut opposition between anti-abortion propaganda and sex education with regard to the fetal imagery that was used. The context rather than the images themselves determined their meanings. In both instances, however, they were helped by the portrayal of fetuses as figures of beauty and wonder.

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Figures [not included because of copyright issues]

Fig. 1. Professor and chief physician Per Wetterdal at the Women's clinic of Sabbatsberg in Stockholm. From Lars Öhngren, 'Han försvarar de ofödda', *Vecko-Journalen*, 1952, 50. Lennart Nilsson/TT News Agency.

Fig. 2. 'Why Must the Fetus Be Killed?'. Photograph of five-month-old fetus obtained through legal abortion. From Karl E. Hillgren and Lennart Nilsson, 'Varför måste fostret dödas?', *Se*, 1952, 28. Lennart Nilsson/TT News Agency.

Fig. 3. Photographs intended to demonstrate 'The development of the fetus up to the point of viable life'. From Karl E. Hillgren and Lennart Nilsson, 'Varför måste fostret dödas?', *Se*, 1952, 28. Lennart Nilsson/TT News Agency.

Fig. 4. The image of the embryo surrounded by the placenta was presented as a secular miracle. From Lennart Nilsson, 'Det är du själv!' ('It is You!'), *Se*, 1958, 51. Lennart Nilsson/TT News Agency.

Fig. 5. The Swedish elite in front of Nilsson's photographs. From 'SE-bilden som kungen stannade för' ('The See-Picture that the King Stopped In Front'), *Se*, 1960, 49. Lennart Nilsson/TT News Agency.

Fig. 6. 'Why wasn't he allowed to live?'. From Per Uddén and Lennart Nilsson, 'Rädda våra ofödda' ('Save Our Unborn'), *Idun Veckojournalen*, 1964, 46. Lennart Nilsson/TT News Agency.

Fig. 7. 'Four women, four situations'. From Lennart Nilsson and Stig Nordfeldt, 'Människans okända tid' ('Man's Unknown Time'), *Damernas värld*, 1974, 35. Lennart Nilsson/TT News Agency.

Fig. 8. 'Here you can see for yourself why early abortion is better than late'. From Lennart Nilsson and Stig Nordfeldt, 'Människans okända tid' ('Man's Unknown Time'), *Damernas värld*, 1974, 38. Lennart Nilsson/TT News Agency.

¹ Lars Öhngren, 'Han försvarar de ofödda', *Vecko-Journalen*, 1952, 50, 30–1, 41. All translations from Swedish are mine. The viewing position from below was common in the composition of photographs of medical figures in *Life*, see Bert Hansen, *Picturing Medical Progress from Pasteur to Polio: A History of Mass Media Images and Popular Attitudes in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 212. Nilsson has often mentioned *Life* as a major source of inspiration during his formative years as photographer, see Lennart Nilsson, *Lennart Nilsson: Images of His Life* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 2002), 22.

² Lennart Nilsson and Albert Rosenfeld, 'Drama of Life before Birth', *Life*, 30 April 1965, 54–72A. The number of prints is indicated in Mark Holborn, 'Lennart Nilsson and Photography', in Lennart Nilsson, *Life* (London: Random House, 2006), 285.

³ Lennart Nilsson, Axel Ingelman-Sundberg and Claes Wirsén, *Ett barn blir till: En bildskildring av de nio månaderna före födelsen: En praktisk rådgivare för den blivande mamman* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1965). For two recent studies, see Solveig Jülich, 'The Making of a Best-Selling Book on Reproduction: Lennart Nilsson's *A Child is Born*', *Bulletin*

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⁴ A presentation of the photographer's career is given by Petter Karlsson in Nilsson, *Lennart Nilsson*, 6–20.

⁵ See, for instance, Sarah Franklin, ‘Fetal Fascinations: New Dimensions to the Medical-Scientific Construction of Fetal Personhood’, in Sarah Franklin, Celia Lury and Jackie Stacey, eds, *Off-Centre: Feminism and Cultural Studies* (London: HarperCollins Academic, 1991), 190–205; Sandra Matthews and Laura Wexler, *Pregnant Pictures* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 195–8; Carol A. Stabile, ‘Shooting the Mother: Fetal Photography and the Politics of Disappearance’, *Camera Obscura*, 1992, 10, no. 28, 179–205.

⁶ Barbara Duden, *Disembodying Women: Perspectives on Pregnancy and the Unborn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 14.

⁷ Nina Lykke and Mette Bryld, ‘Bevisets teater: Videnskabsdokumentargenren og læsninger af Lennart Nilsson’, *Polhem*, 2004, 90–108. See also Solveig Jülich, ‘Fetal Photography in the Age of Cool Media’, in Anders Ekström *et al.*, *History of Participatory Media: Politics and Publics, 1750–2000* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 125–41.

⁸ For an analysis, including a discussion on how the sources and methods of the images were publicly presented, see Solveig Jülich, ‘Photographing Life before Birth: Lennart Nilsson and Reproductive Research in Post-War Sweden’ (paper manuscript, in progress).

⁹ To be fair, Duden herself argued for a longer visual history of ‘the unborn’. More recent historical work includes, in particular, Nick Hopwood, *Haeckel's Embryos: Images, Evolution, and Fraud* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); and together with Tatjana Buklijas, Making Visible Embryos, <<http://www.hps.cam.ac.uk/visibleembryos/>>, 2008. See also Sara Dubow, *Ourselves Unborn: A History of the Fetus in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Lynn M. Morgan, *Icons of Life: A Cultural History of Human Embryos* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

¹⁰ Nick Hopwood, ‘Producing Development: The Anatomy of Human Embryos and the Norms of Wilhelm His’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 2000, 74, 29–79; Nick Hopwood, ‘Visual Standards and Disciplinary Change: Normal Plates, Tables and Stages in Embryology’, *History of Science*, 2005, 43, 239–303.

¹¹ Nick Hopwood, ‘A Marble Embryo: Meanings of a Portrait from 1900’, *History Workshop Journal*, 2012, 73, 5–36, 19.

¹² Elisabet Björklund, *The Most Delicate Subject: A History of Sex Education Films in Sweden* (dissertation, Lund University, 2012), 47. For films, radio and television in the USA

from this and a later period, see Manon Parry, *Broadcasting Birth Control: Mass Media and Family Planning* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013).

¹³ Jülich, 'The Making of a Best-Selling Book on Reproduction'.

¹⁴ Duden, *Disembodying Women*, 14.

¹⁵ For a recent historiographic discussion, see Cornelia Usborne, *Cultures of Abortion in Weimar Germany* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2007), 8–19.

¹⁶ Dorothy McBride Stetson, ed., *Abortion Politics, Women's Movements, and the Democratic State: A Comparative Study of State Feminism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹⁷ Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, 'Foetal Images: The Power of Visual Culture in the Politics of Reproduction', *Feminist Studies*, 1987, 13, 263–92.

¹⁸ Richard L. Hughes, 'Burning Birth Certificates and Atomic Tupperware Parties: Creating the Antiabortion Movement in the Shadow of the Vietnam War', *The Historian*, 2006, 68, 541–58. Nilsson's *Life*-photographs are discussed on 552–3. See also Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith: A Frontline History of the Abortion Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), especially 101–5.

¹⁹ Research on Swedish abortion history is not extensive, most studies dating from the period after the passing of the new law in 1974, but see Annulla Linders, 'Victory and Beyond: A Historical Comparison of the Outcomes of the Abortion Movements in Sweden and the United States', *Sociological Forum*, 2004, 19, 371–404, 381.

²⁰ See especially Lena Lennerhed, *Historier om ett brott: Illegala aborter i Sverige på 1900-talet* (Stockholm: Atlas, 2008).

²¹ Obviously there are also American examples. As early as 1910 a doctor who gave a lecture to women at a St Louis settlement house incorporated an image of a six-week embryo to deter them from abortion. See Leslie J. Reagan, *When Abortion Was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and Law in the United States, 1867–1973* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 85.

²² For a recent retelling of this, see Björn Axel Johansson, 'Förord', in Lennart Nilsson, *Jag vill göra det osynliga synligt* (Stockholm: Bonnier Fakta, 2010), ix.

²³ On the debates preceding the first Swedish law on abortion, see Ann-Katrin Hatje, *Befolkningsfrågan och välfärden: Debatten om familjepolitik och nativitetsökning under 1930- och 1940-talen* (Stockholm: Allmänna förlaget, 1974), 15–27. For a comparison with the USA, see Annulla Linders, 'Abortion as a Social Problem: The Construction of "Opposite" Solutions in Sweden and the United States', *Social Problems*, 1998, 45, 488–509.

²⁴ On the policies and reforms of the Swedish welfare state, see Ronny Ambjörnsson, ed., *I framtidens tjänst: Ur folkhemmets idéhistoria* (Stockholm: Gidlund, 1986); Yvonne Hirdman, *Att lägga livet tillrätta: Studier i svensk folkhemspolitik* (1989), 2nd edn (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2000).

²⁵ Hatje, *Befolkningsfrågan och välfärden*, 119–38. According to the law eugenic abortions should be combined with sterilisations.

²⁶ In 1920, the Soviet Union became the first country to allow abortion but a ban was enacted again from 1936 to 1955. A few other European countries, including Denmark, Iceland and Poland, legalised abortion on some grounds in the late 1930s. After the Soviet Union repealed the restrictions in 1955 most of the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe passed similar legislation. Abortion was illegal in Britain until 1967 but through the decision in *Rex v Bourne* in 1938 it was established that abortion may be performed if the pregnancy would result in the woman becoming a ‘physical or mental wreck’. In the USA abortion was decriminalised in the mid-1960s and early 1970s. See Henry P. David, ‘Abortion in Europe, 1920–91: A Public Health Perspective’, *Studies in Family Planning*, 1992, 23, 1–22; Martha MacDonald, ‘Abortion’, in Dale Spender and Cheris Kramarae, eds, *Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women’s Issues and Knowledge. Vol. 1, Ability to Education: Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 2–5; Reagan, *When Abortion Was a Crime*, 13.

²⁷ 1941 års befolkningsutredning, *Betänkande i abortfrågan* (Stockholm: Statens offentliga utredningar, 1944).

²⁸ Hatje, *Befolkningsfrågan och välfärden*, 152–3.

²⁹ Eva Palmblad, *Den disciplinerade reproduktionen: Abort- och steriliseringspolitikens dolda dagordning* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2000), 61–4.

³⁰ Stefan Swärd, *Varför Sverige fick fri abort: Ett studium av en policyprocess* (dissertation, Stockholm University, 1984), 35, 38, 46.

³¹ Hatje, *Befolkningsfrågan och välfärden*, 160–2. On the clergy’s campaign see, *Ett brev i en folkets livsfråga* (Stockholm: Diakonistyrelsen, 1951), 8–10.

³² Research on the Swedish context is lacking but German scholarship has emphasised the featuring of women’s bodies, rather than the life of the fetus, in campaigns for abortion rights in the early 1930s and mid-1970s, see Andrea Wuerth and Janice Monger, ‘The Body as Battleground: Images of the German Abortion Debate’, in Hilary Collier Sy-Quia and Susanne Baackmann, eds, *Conquering Women: Women and War in the German Cultural Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California, 2000), 12–39. See also the discussion of

American pro-Choice images in Celeste Michelle Condit, *Decoding Abortion Rhetoric: Communicating Social Change* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 92–4.

³³ Reagan, *When Abortion Was a Crime*, 3–4, 82; Palmblad, *Den disciplinerade reproduktionen*, 37–9.

³⁴ Reagan, *When Abortion Was a Crime*, 218; Lennerhed, *Historier om ett brott*, 166.

³⁵ A review of this ‘war’ was presented in the journal *Sexualfrågan*, 1947, 3, 8–11. The publicity strategies of the Swedish Medical Association are discussed in Solveig Jülich, ‘Lennart Nilssons tidiga fosterfotografier: Från abortdebatt till sexualundervisning’, in Torbjörn Gustafsson Chorell and Maja Bondestam, eds, *In på bara huden: Medicinhistoriska studier tillägnade Karin Johannisson* (Nora: Nya Doxa, 2010), 173–94, 175–7.

³⁶ Hatje, *Befolkningsfrågan och välfärden*, 146.

³⁷ *Vårt lands befolkningsfråga: Inledningsföredrag i Svenska läkaresällskapet den 20 maj 1941* (Stockholm: Nordiska bokhandeln, 1941).

³⁸ This interview was published in ‘Aborten en fara för nationen’, *Svensk Damtidning*, 1942, 35, 20–1, 30. *Den gula kliniken* and other Swedish movies from the 1940s and 1950s dealing with illegal—never legal—abortion are analysed in Björklund, *The Most Delicate Subject*, 126–52. For a discussion of earlier German movies, see Osborne, *Cultures of Abortion in Weimar Germany*, 31–9.

³⁹ This was stated by Wetterdal in an interview in *Aftontidningen*, 11 April 1947.

⁴⁰ ‘Abortmentaliteten farlig, menar erfaren läkare’, *Dagens Nyheter*, 3 April 1952.

⁴¹ Letter from J. Asplund to Björn Holmgren, 13 September 1952. Stockholms läns sjukvårdsområdes arkiv, Mentalvårdsbyrån: Box 1:1. Dossier 125. Sjukhusplatser för operation (abort och sterilisering), 1948–72.

⁴² Interpellation angående fördelningen av de legala abortfallen på stadens olika sjukhus den 29 april 1952’, *Stockholms stadsfullmäktiges handlingar: Protokoll jämte yttranden*, Stockholm, 1952.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, and ‘Motion no. 19 om utredning rörande abortvården vid Sabbatsbergs sjukhus’, *Stockholms stadsfullmäktiges handlingar: Protokoll jämte yttranden*, Stockholm, 1952. The debates in the newspapers were reviewed in the journal of the Swedish Medical Association, see, for instance, ‘Konflikter i abortfrågan’, *Svenska läkartidningen*, 1952, 49, 1274–6.

⁴⁴ The occasion when Wetterdal delivered his speech in the Matteus Church was introduced as a background for the *Weekly Record* article on the physician's anti-abortion campaign in which Nilsson's portrait was featured. See Öhngren, ‘Han försvarar de ofödda’.

⁴⁵ Per Wetterdal, “‘Du skall inte utsläcka liv’”, *Svenska Morgonbladet*, 24 and 25 November 1952; ‘Per Wetterdal’, *Svenska Morgonbladet*, 26 November 1952; ‘Abortprofessor om “Du skall icke dräpa”’, *Expressen*, 20 November 1952.

⁴⁶ See, for instance, Miriam Furuholm, ‘Vi äro inte ensamma’, *Svenska läkartidningen*, 1947, 44, 1337. Arguments about motherhood in abortion debates in Sweden have been highlighted by Lennerhed, *Historier om ett brott*, 151. For a discussion on emergent debates of psychological effects of abortion, see Ellie Lee, *Abortion, Motherhood, and Mental Health: Medicalizing Reproduction in the United States and Great Britain* (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 2003), 152–9.

⁴⁷ This description is based on a police report in the The Regional State Archive in Uppsala: Polisen i Uppsala: EVb:132. Kriminalpolisens rapporter, Rapport, 6 November 1952. See also ‘Ekonomisk hjälp och sexualkunskap medel mot abort’, *Upsala Nya Tidning*, 15 October 1952.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* According to a report on abortion methods by Alf Sjövall, dilation followed by curettage to empty the uterus was used up to the eighth week of pregnancy and after that vaginal hysterotomy was the normal procedure. Abdominal hysterectomy was normally the case if a sterilisation was performed in conjunction with abortion. See Alf Sjövall, ‘Operationsteknik vid havandeskapsavbrytande’, *Svenska läkartidningen*, 1948, 45, 753–7. For a historical perspective on the development of techniques for terminating second-trimester pregnancies, see Malcolm Potts, Peter Diggory and John Peel, *Abortion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 185–8.

⁴⁹ Björklund, *The Most Delicate Subject*, 87.

⁵⁰ Elon Mallmin, ‘Skräckfilm om abort inför chockad ungdom’, and the front page of *Expressen*, 15 October 1952.

⁵¹ ‘Sensationsmakeri kring abortfilm röner mothugg’, *Upsala Nya Tidning*, 16 October 1952; ‘Protester mot abortfilm vid Uppsaladiskussion’, *Dagens Nyheter*, 15 October 1952.

⁵² ‘Polisutredning om abortfilmen’, *Upsala Nya Tidning*, 20 October 1952.

⁵³ The Regional State Archive in Uppsala: Polisen i Uppsala: CIIIb:7, Dossierdiarier 1952, ärende 1108, 1109, 1110; CIVa:19, Kriminalpolisens diarium 1952, ärende 1931; EVb:132. Kriminalpolisens rapporter, Rapport, 6 November 1952.

⁵⁴ ‘Läkarens rätt att vägra abortingrepp’, *Svenska läkartidningen*, 1952, 49, 1422–4.

⁵⁵ Erik Ask-Upmark, ‘Medicinska abortindikationer’, *Svenska läkartidningen*, 1953, 50, 457–72.

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- ⁵⁶ ‘Organisatoriska spörsmål rörande abortvården vid stadens sjukhus m.m.’, *Stockholms stadsfullmäktiges handlingar: Protokoll jämte yttranden*, Bihang no. 52, Stockholm, 1955.
- ⁵⁷ ‘Utlåtande med anledning av motion om utredning rörande abortvården vid Sabbatsbergs sjukhus’, *Stockholms stadsfullmäktiges handlingar: Protokoll jämte yttranden*, Utlåtande no. 85, Stockholm, 1963.
- ⁵⁸ Petchesky, ‘Foetal Images’, 264.
- ⁵⁹ Malcolm Nicolson and John E. E., Fleming, *Imaging and Imagining the Fetus: The Development of Obstetric Ultrasound* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 242–3.
- ⁶⁰ ‘Det nya livets första timmar’, *Se*, 1938, 4, 11–12; ‘Life Begins’, *Life*, 23 November 1936, 2.
- ⁶¹ See, for example, A. Fbg, ‘Vi dör inte ut’, *Vecko-Journalen*, 1939, 19, 14–15; Gustaf Cassel, ‘En sista varning’, *Vecko-Journalen*, 1943, 13, 1.
- ⁶² Mats Larsson, *Bonniers—en mediefamilj. Å & Å-drömfabriken: Från fiction till fakta 1906–1990* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 2003), 19–26, 72–5, 141–4.
- ⁶³ Jülich, ‘Lennart Nilssons tidiga fosterfotografier’, 175–7. According to Hansen this ‘striking departure from normal journalistic practices’ was also adopted at *Life*, see *Picturing Medical Progress from Pasteur to Polio*, 252.
- ⁶⁴ The circumstances of the production of these photographs are analysed in Jülich, ‘Photographing Life before Birth’. On Donald, see Nicolson and Fleming, *Imaging and Imagining the Fetus*, 239–40.
- ⁶⁵ Karl E. Hillgren and Lennart Nilsson, ‘Varför måste fostret dödas?’, *Se*, 1952, 28, 13–17.
- ⁶⁶ ‘The Human Embryo’, *Life*, 3 July 1950, 79–81.
- ⁶⁷ For an early analysis of the configuration of the fetus as astronaut, see Zoe Sofia, ‘Exterminating fetuses: Abortion, Disarmament, and the Sexo-semiotics of Extraterrestrialism’, *Diacritics*, 1984, 14, 47–59.
- ⁶⁸ Lennart Nilsson, ‘Embryo’s Face’, *Life*, 30 March 1953, 115.
- ⁶⁹ Hillgren and Nilsson, ‘Varför måste fostret dödas?’.
- ⁷⁰ For a feminist analysis of anti-abortion images from more recent times, see Condit, *Decoding Abortion Rhetoric*, 81–92; Petchesky, ‘Foetal Images’.
- ⁷¹ Rune Moberg, ‘Dödande hjälp’, *Se*, 1952, 28, 5.
- ⁷² ‘Folkets röst om SE: Varför måste fostret dödas?’, *Se*, 1952, 31, 2.
- ⁷³ Lennart Nilsson, ‘Det är du själv!’, *Se*, 1958, 51, 26–8.
- ⁷⁴ Nilsson, ‘Det är du själv!’, 26.

⁷⁵ George Washington Corner, *Ourselves Unborn: An Embryologist's Essay on Man* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1944). For a recent discussion on Corner's book and contemporary best-selling children books, see Dubow, *Ourselves Unborn*, 49–51.

⁷⁶ For instance Frances Bruce Strain, *Being Born* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1937; first Swedish edition in 1946).

⁷⁷ Jülich, 'The Making of a Best-Selling Book on Reproduction'.

⁷⁸ 'Så börjar livet', *Se*, 1960, 47, 36.

⁷⁹ As discussed by Nathan Stormer, beautification of the unborn has long been an avenue to the wondrous, see his 'Looking in Wonder: Prenatal Sublimity and the Commonplace "Life"', *Signs*, 2008, 33, 647–73. Also see Morgan, *Icons of Life*, 218–19.

⁸⁰ Rune Moberg, 'Den nyfödde och den ofödde', *Se*, 1961, no. 52, 4–5.

⁸¹ Karolinska institutet, *Katalog över jubileumsutställningen Läkaren och livet* (Stockholm: Karolinska institutet, 1960).

⁸² Madeleine Kats, 'Miljonutställning om "Läkaren och livet"', *Expressen*, 29 November 1960. See also Klaus Vogel, 'The Transparent Man: Some Comments on the History of a Symbol', Robert Bud, Bernard Finn and Helmuth Trischler, eds, *Manifesting Medicine: Bodies and Machines* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 1999), 31–61.

⁸³ For an analysis of the exhibit of human specimens at the 1933 Century of Progress World's Fair in Chicago, see Catherine Cole, 'Sex and Death on Display: Women, Reproduction, and Fetuses at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry', *Drama Review*, 1993, 37, 43–60.

⁸⁴ 'SE-bilden som kungen stannade för', *Se*, 1960, 49, 36.

⁸⁵ Reasons for this delay is discussed in Jülich, 'The Making of a Best-Selling Book on Reproduction'.

⁸⁶ Svärd, *Varför Sverige fick fri abort*, 32–4.

⁸⁷ Christer Nordlund, *Hormones of Life: Endocrinology, the Pharmaceutical Industry, and the Dream of a Remedy for Sterility, 1930–1970* (Sagamore Beach: Science History Publications, 2011), 179.

⁸⁸ Donna Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 178–9; Morgan, *Icons of Life*, 12–13.

⁸⁹ Svärd, 36–37, 43.

⁹⁰ Lena Lennerhed, 'Sherri Finkbine's choice: Abortion, Sex-Liberalism and Feminism in Sweden in the 1960s and 1970s', *Women's History Magazine*, 2013, 73, autumn, 13–18. On Finkbine, see also Leslie J. Reagan, *Dangerous Pregnancies: Mothers, Disabilities, and*

Abortion in Modern America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), especially 58–9, 85–8.

⁹¹ *140 läkares hemställan till konungen* (Stockholm: Skoglund, 1964).

⁹² ‘Läkare fördömer sexaktionen: “Reaktionär och orealistisk”’, *Dagens Nyheter*, 3 February 1964.

⁹³ Per Uddén and Lennart Nilsson, ‘Rädda våra ofödda’, *Idun Veckojournalen*, 1964, 46, 19–23.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ See, for instance, ‘Aborterna’, *Svenska Dagbladet*, 18 November 1964.

⁹⁶ Gustaf von Platen, ‘Aldrig född’, *Idun Veckojournalen*, 1964, 48, 5.

⁹⁷ Lis Asklund, ‘Jag kan inte tåga’, *Idun Veckojournalen*, 1964, 48, 28–9.

⁹⁸ Per Uddén, ‘Får vi döma efter tårar’, *Idun Veckojournalen*, 1964, 48, 28–9, 59–60.

⁹⁹ Cecilia Hjorth Attefall, ed., *Partiet som lyfte: 40 år med svensk kristdemokrati: 1964–2004* (Stockholm: Samhällsgemenskaps förlags AB, 2004), 32.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Kungafonden delar ut 208 480 kronor till kultur’, *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 27 October 1964.

¹⁰¹ Axel Ingelman-Sundberg, ‘Förord’, in Nilsson, Ingelman-Sundberg and Wirsén, *Ett barn blir till*, [7].

¹⁰² Jülich, ‘The Making of a Best-Selling Book on Reproduction’.

¹⁰³ Lennerhed, *Frihet att njuta*, 140.

¹⁰⁴ See, for instance, Bernt Bernholm, ‘Stoppa sena aborter’, *Expressen*, 6 November 1965.

¹⁰⁵ Swärd, *Varför Sverige fick fri abort*, 96–7.

¹⁰⁶ Landstingsarkivet i Stockholm, Överläkarnas vid Sabbatsbergs kvinnokliniks handlingar, F1: 1.

¹⁰⁷ Lennart Nilsson and Stig Nordfeldt, ‘Människans okända tid’, no. 35, 28–35; no. 36, 30–3; no. 37, 32–7; no. 38, 36–41. All published in 1974 in *Damernas värld*.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Stabile, ‘Shooting the Mother’, 186–7.

¹¹⁰ For a more detailed discussion on the rebranding of Nilsson’s pictures, see Jülich, ‘Images of Life and Death: The Lennart Nilsson Industry, 1940–2010’ (working title for book manuscript, in progress).

¹¹¹ See, for instance, the interview by Emily von Sydow, ‘Jag räknar livets start från 20:e dagen’, *Svenska Dagbladet*, 25 March 1987, and Nilsson’s statement at the website of the

Swedish public service broadcaster: ‘Lennart Nilsson om “Ett barn blir till”’, svt.se (accessed 20 May 2010).

¹¹² On Nilsson and Karolinska Institutet, see Solveig Jülich, ‘Colouring the Human Landscapes: Lennart Nilsson and the Spectacular World of Scanning Electron Micrographs’, *Nuncius*, 2014, 29, 464–97.