

# **Nordic literature for adults and children in the United Kingdom, 1950-2010: a bibliographical survey**

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## **Abstract**

Nordic Noir is now an established British literary genre, fuelled by numerous Nordic TV series shown on terrestrial and internet networks and more recently supplemented by British enthusiasm for Nordic design, food and history. This article examines the extent and depth of Nordic fiction for adults and children published prior to this point of popularity. Firstly, relevant bibliographical sources and extant bibliographical research are both identified. Through detailed analysis of the *British National Bibliography* for the period 1950-2010, the precise parameters of the translated corpus are then revealed, including the distribution of translations within each Nordic country for adult and children's fiction. The most popular authors, titles and series for both genres are highlighted. Also explored across the time frame are the British publishing houses producing Nordic literature in translation as well as the translators themselves. Finally, publishing trends across the sixty year period are identified, with peaks and troughs clearly evident but contrasting sharply when adult and children's fiction are compared.

## **Keywords**

Bibliography, Nordic fiction, Nordic children's literature, publishing history, translation

## Introduction and background

British appetite for Nordic culture has exploded over the last five or so years, with a nation-wide passion for ‘Scandi’ design, food, Christmas traditions and ‘hygge’ showing no sign of waning. Numerous country guides and travel writing are appearing which typically share the experience of the British traveller’s perspectives on living in the Nordic countries, such as that of Booth (2014). Sigurðardóttir (2016) has commented in the *Times Literary Supplement* on the ‘continued rise of Nordic noir’ fiction and TV which in particular have appealed to the British public, and several new studies of Scandinavian crime fiction have appeared (Peacock 2014; Tapper 2014; Stougaard-Nielsen 2017). A two-year Viking exhibition closed in Cornwall in January 2017 (National Maritime Museum Cornwall 2017), a major Tove Jansson retrospective is running in Dulwich during 2017-2018 (Dulwich Picture Gallery 2017) and London’s Southbank Centre is hosting a year-long ‘Nordic Matters’ festival throughout 2017, including a major Moomin exhibition (Moomin 2016; Southbank Centre 2017). But what interest has the British reading public shown for Nordic literature in translation for children and adults prior to the increase in appetite for Scandinavian culture since 2012? What has actually been translated and who published it? There is keen enthusiasm for all things ‘Scandi’ (a term now often used interchangeably with ‘Nordic’) which is clearly apparent in contemporary British popular culture. A recent statistical article by Literature Across Frontiers (Trentacosti and Nicholls 2017: 2) showed that Swedish is the most third translated language (with Italian) into Britain during the period 2013-2015, and that the growth in translations into the UK and Ireland from Scandinavia was one of the ‘major trends observed during the period 2000-2015’. It is however considerably more challenging to quantify this precisely and to define accurately the full extent of British publishers’ actual Scandinavian interests and the resulting output of Nordic fiction for children and adults published in British translation.

This article presents a factual overview of British publishing of Nordic children and adult fiction from 1950 to 2010. It draws primarily on bibliographical data which has been collected from the *British*

*National Bibliography* for the period 1950-2010. Data relating to Nordic children's literature alone for 1950-2000 has been analysed extensively in my own PhD thesis (2013) as well as other publications (Berry 2011, 2014a-d, 2016a-b, forthcoming). By way of further development, this article presents findings from this corpus of data relating specifically to Nordic literature for adults. In the absence of published research in this area to date, it was also felt that analysing children's and adult bibliographical data in tandem (again for the first time) offers valuable opportunities for comparison between two very different parts of the modern British publishing landscape. While Nordic Noir has attracted academic interest within the last decade (for example Nestingen and Arvas 2011; Forshaw 2012; Stougaard-Nielsen 2017), Nordic children's literature remains a topic attracting only very modest British scholarly attention.

The results of this combined bibliographical survey are given briefly in the article that follows in summary format by publisher, author, title/series, translator and genre, as well as indicating some general publishing trends. The purpose of this overview approach is primarily to provide historical and statistical context not readily available elsewhere for researchers working within the publishing history of British-Nordic translations in the post-1950 period. Research questions such as 'What works of adult and children's fiction have been translated from the Nordic languages into the UK between the years 1950-2010?' and 'by which publisher and translator?' can in essence be answered solely through this bibliographical research approach and no other.

Whilst the focal point for this research is modern publishing history, it should be noted that translation theory concepts provide an additional framework within which this bibliographical survey can be viewed from a translation history perspective. Berry (as above), Frank (2007), Thomson-Wohlgemuth (2009), Desmet (2007) and Van Meerbergen (2010) have all demonstrated the value of this approach whilst undertaking bibliographical collation and analysis relating to translated children's literature, as has Sturge (2004) for adult German fiction. In order to identify Toury's preliminary and operational norms of translation (1995) and to define translation policy and strategies through archival and textual analysis as part of broader research

projects into publishing history, literary history and cultural transfer, detailed bibliographical work is necessary as a first stage of research in order to delineate and understand the corpus in question and then to place it within a definable historical context (see Berry 2016a and forthcoming for a fuller description of this methodology). This article seeks to present the findings of such bibliographical research within the Nordic-British context, 1950-2010. Future lines of research will also be highlighted.

### **Bibliographical sources for and studies of Nordic literature in British translation**

As discussed fully in Berry (2013), a range of bibliographical sources are available which can be used to define the corpus of Nordic adult and children's literature in British translation. The principal published data-sets are the national bibliographies and 'Index Translationum' (see Primary Sources for full details). In this study the printed *British National Bibliography (BNB)* has been used as the major source of primary data for the compilation of the corpus in question, primarily for ease of access (the Nordic printed bibliographies are only available at the British Library in the UK). Some issues were identified concerning the accuracy and completeness of the *BNB*'s data, such as occasional omissions or duplications (particularly relating to titles supplied by smaller publishing houses) or difficulty in distinguishing between first editions and subsequent re-issues (Berry 2013: 108-111). Nonetheless this source appears by far to constitute the best available entry point for delineating the corpus and understanding its boundaries and is therefore judged to be the most complete and reliable data source from all those currently available.

The start date (1950) of the corpus identified within this article is conveniently dictated by the start date of the first published volume of the *BNB* in that year. 2010 has similarly been imposed here as a cut-off date, partly because print copies ceased to be made available in that year: this creates a static and easily definable data set for analysis for the period in question, as compared to the online version of the *BNB* which is subject to indeterminate updates. The doctoral research on

which this article is based (Berry 2013) used a cut-off date of 2000 which enabled some temporal distance to be established from the time of data gathering (2010) and subsequent analysis. The period in question within this article has however been extended to include the first full decade of the new millennium up to and including 2010, not least in order to include the current popularity of Nordic Noir publishing but also as sufficient time has now passed in which to gain a more measured perspective on publishing trends.

Other language-, nation- or period-specific bibliographies may also contain relevant bibliographical data. Whilst these have not been used here in order to check the accuracy of the *BNB* or to add entries otherwise missing from the *BNB*, they are nevertheless useful in establishing the levels of existing research interest in this area to date and can help in placing the current study into a wider context of work in historical bibliography. These sources will now be listed briefly here before the remainder of the article focuses on the results of the survey undertaken using the *BNB*.

Bibliographical studies and surveys of the translation of Swedish literature into British English<sup>1</sup> represent the best coverage of the five Nordic countries (see Afzelius 1951; Holmbäck 1968; Sather and Swanson 1987), although it should be noted here (as for the other countries) that these do not necessarily cover both adult and children's fiction. Of particular note is *Swedish Book Review*, the journal of the Swedish-English Literary Translators' Association. This periodical (currently published by Norvik Press, UCL) has made a very significant contribution to bibliographical understanding of literature and other works relating to Sweden. Tom Geddes (1979a) initially published a bibliographical survey of books in English on Sweden for the period 1963-1968 as a stand-alone volume published by the Swedish Embassy in London. This work was then continued in *Swedish Books* and its successor *Swedish Book Review* by Geddes up to 2005 (eg 1979b) through regular bibliographical summaries of recent Swedish-English publications (too numerous to cite here). Notably, Geddes' bibliographical research included children's literature, which is often omitted in many published bibliographical summaries. Geddes' regular bibliographical contributions were eventually replaced by the column

'Just out and coming up' highlighting recent literary titles published (for example Death 2009; Broomé and Smalley 2013).

Denmark is well covered in bibliographical terms (see Bredsdorff 1950; Bassett 1968; Jacobsen et al 1981; Schroeder 1982; Iovanni 1999; 'Translated Titles') although again not all of these works include both adult and children's fiction. Iceland (McBride 1996), Finland (Aaltonen 1964; Screen 1997; 'Finnish Literature') and Norway (Grönland 1961 and Sather 1986) are less well represented, although one pan-Nordic work is available (Ng and Batts 1978).

To these bibliographical surveys can be added a number of bibliographical studies which have provided useful sources of methodology for the current study. Graves (1975) and Hoyle Nelson (1975) looked at Swedish and Danish in the UK and Danish children's literature in the UK and USA respectively. Frank, Sturge, Desmet and Van Meerbergen (see above) addressed non-Nordic-British language combinations in detail through bibliographical work which identified a particular corpus and then used a range of research methods to analyse publishing trends and factors influencing translation. A number of scholars are now working on projects encompassing some degree of bibliographical research which relate specifically to the modern British-Nordic corpus as part of recent or ongoing doctoral studies at British universities on modern publishing history and translation history, namely Broomé (2014a, 2014b), Giles (2013, 2015, forthcoming) and Kythor ('Corpus', 2016, forthcoming).

I have focused specifically on bibliographical study of Nordic children's literature during the period 1950-2000 in my doctoral research (2013), as well as examining smaller corpora of Nordic children's literature during the period 1950-1975 (2011) and Swedish children's literature 1950-2010 (2014a). I have further extended my bibliographical research into children's literature research into additional author, series and publisher case studies (2014b-d, 2016a-b, forthcoming).<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of the bibliographical research presented within this article is to enable the identification of broad publishing trends over time, within the separate Nordic languages and across publishers, authors, titles, series and translators. My work on children's literature

for the wider period 1950-2010 across the five Nordic countries will be presented in this article for the first time alongside a similar corpus for adult fiction. This new dual-focus research approach will enable a deeper understanding of the authors, publishing houses and translators for both groups of readers, and will permit some basic research questions to be answered across both types of translated literature. What is the size of this entire translated corpus and how does it break down into adult and children's literature and into national literatures for the five Nordic countries? Are there identifiable publishers who actively pursue Nordic literature in translation, and how have these changed over this sixty-year period? What are the popular authors, titles and series? Who are the translators, and do they typically work solely in either adult or children's literature or across both types? Are there clear trends in translated Nordic publishing across this period? And how do these areas of interest compare across adult and children's literature?

### Fiction translation for adults and children, 1950-2010: Some initial findings

The *BNB* identifies a total output of 1,868 translated Nordic fiction titles<sup>3</sup> published between 1950 and 2010 for adults and children. The output for adults is 983 titles and for children is 885 titles, so the output as a whole is relatively evenly weighted. However, comparison between the two data-sets reveals some differences in national emphasis when the source countries of the translations are considered.

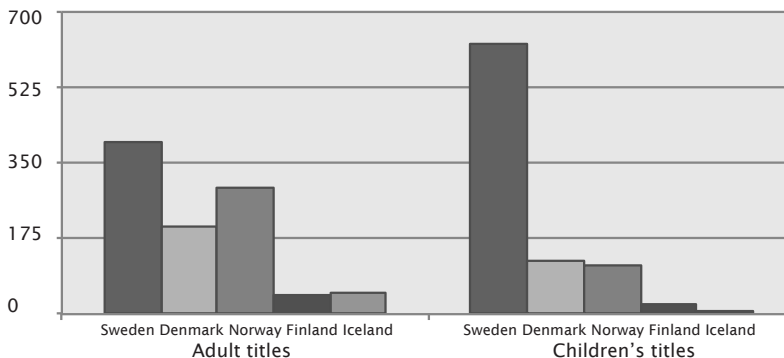


Figure 1: Origin country of Nordic adult and children's literature publishing in the UK, 1950-2010

Sweden's 398 titles<sup>4</sup> for adults are a clear winner in numbers within the adult corpus (40%), but Swedish literature is clearly even more dominant within the children's corpus (625 titles at 70%) (see Fig. 1). Whilst Denmark is reasonably well represented with 201 titles for adults, it can only offer 124 titles for children<sup>5</sup> and there is a similar adult versus children's trend for Norway (293 titles for adults versus 113 for children). The smaller Nordic languages of Icelandic and Finnish are barely represented in the children's corpus (2 and 21 titles respectively). In contrast, there are 47 titles in the adult corpus for Iceland and 43 for Finnish, a significantly stronger national representation.

### **Popular publishing houses**

There seems to be little correlation between adult and children's fiction publishing within the Nordic languages, when the two genres are compared in detail (see Figs. 2 and 3). Whilst Methuen is by far the most prolific publisher for children's literature (133 titles or 15%), Methuen's publishing for adults places it only in equal fifteenth place (13 titles or 1.3%). Instead, Harvill Press takes pole position for adults (83 titles or 8.4%) and is nearly 30 titles ahead of its nearest competitor, although it cannot boast the bigger proportion of the market occupied by Methuen within children's literature. Corgi, Vintage, Peter Owen and Norvik Press account for 52, 41, 34 and 31 titles (or 5.2%-3.2%) respectively. Quartet, Sphere, Penguin and Victor Gollancz all produced between 22 and 20 titles each (2.2%-2.0%), with publishers Chatto & Windus (18), Souvenir (17), Arcadia (15), Phoenix (15) and Pan Books (14) all producing more adult literature titles than Methuen.



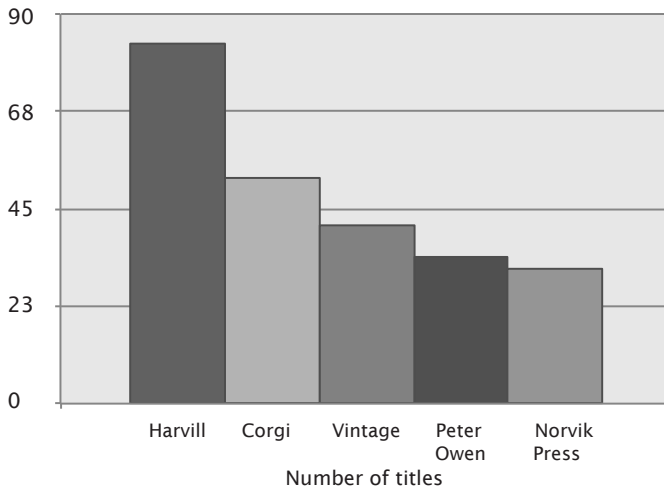


Figure 2: Most prolific British publishers of Nordic adult fiction, 1950-2010

Methuen's first place for Nordic children's literature translation can in some respects be accounted for due to its role as one of the principal publishers for Swedish author Astrid Lindgren over the period 1958-1988.<sup>6</sup> Even taking Methuen's 32 Astrid Lindgren titles into account (plus paperback imprint Magnet's 7 titles), the firm's considerable contribution of 133 Nordic children's literature titles for the period 1950-2010 takes a huge lead over any competitors, at 15% share of the market. It is very unlikely that this output of both original and reprinted titles will be surpassed by any other British publisher in the foreseeable future within the children's literature sector. Methuen is followed by Hodder & Stoughton (52 titles or 5.8%), R & S Books (46 titles or 5.1%) and Puffin Books (41 titles or 4.6%), who all take the next biggest share of the corpus. Brockhampton Press (29), Oxford University Press (29), Floris Books (26), Pelham Books (25), JM Dent (23) and Ernest Benn (21) complete the top ten list of the most prolific publishers of Nordic children's fiction in translation. They are joined by A & C Black (20), Burke (19), Gwasg y Dref Wen (19), Penguin Books (18) and Abelard-Schuman (15) as the top fifteen publishers for children.

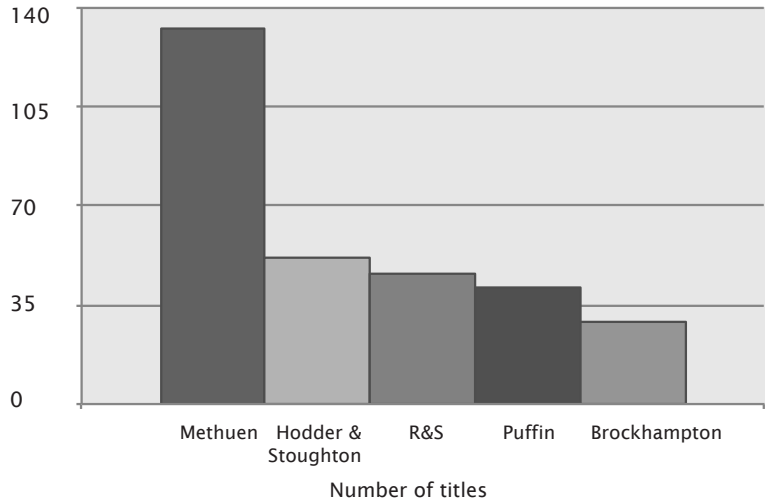


Figure 3: Most prolific British publishers of Nordic children’s literature, 1950-2010

It is notable that many if not most of these children’s publishers represent some of the best known names producing British children’s literature, publishing primarily in hardback (except Puffin Books which was set up as a children’s imprint of paperback publisher Penguin Books) and forming part of some of the most established British publishing houses, many of which were founded in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries (see Rose and Anderson 1991; Anderson and Rose 1991). Also included in the list are the mid-twentieth century small presses Floris Books in Edinburgh (Berry 2012) and Cardiff Welsh-language press Gwasg y Dref Wen (Dref Wen 2017), as well as R & S Books which was the English-language imprint of Swedish publisher Rabén & Sjögren from circa 1992 to circa 2007 (Berry 2013: 115).

By contrast, the adult fiction publishers are more diverse in their type. Whilst established nineteenth and early- to mid-twentieth century names such as Methuen, Victor Gollancz, Chatto & Windus and Peter Owen (Rose and Anderson: 1991) had Nordic translation interests, more recently established publishers and imprints established from the 1930s to the 1990s (including several with a focus on paperbacks)

take a far bigger share of the translated adult Nordic output: this trend perhaps reflects the later interest in adult Nordic titles during the twentieth century, as compared to translated children's titles whose production peaked in the 1950-1975 period (Berry 2011: 92). Harvill Press, Corgi, Vintage Books, Penguin Books, Souvenir Books, Arcadia Books, Phoenix Books, Sphere Books, Quartet Books and Pan Books add to the top fifteen publishers of adult titles. Most of these names now form part of much bigger global publishing conglomerates, although Quartet Books remains independent. Norvik Press is another exception as a small press, founded originally at the Department of Scandinavian Studies at the University of East Anglia in 1986 (Carbone, Fraser and Hansen 2012: 285).<sup>7</sup> The house's presence is not a surprising occurrence in this list since it specialises entirely in translations of titles originating from the Nordic countries as well as in critical literature in English about Nordic literature and culture. Only two significantly large-scale publishers can be said to pursue translations during the period 1950-2010 on an active basis, namely Peter Owen (Rose and Anderson 1991: 243) and Harvill Press (Rose and Anderson 1991: 149). Detailed examination of the catalogues produced by each of the adult publishers would help to identify precisely which type and genre of texts were being translated and published for British readers, not just from the Nordic languages but also across monolingual English and other foreign language publications.

By contrast, the creation of Nordic children's lists at the children's publishers in question is currently far better understood due to recent research in this area. As it is impossible to make judgements of a publisher or a particular editor's decision-making processes when selecting suitable authors and titles for translation purely by looking at the list of titles eventually produced for sale, it is necessary to use a variety of other primary sources. Whilst it can be illuminating to interview relevant editorial and translation staff (when still living), locating and consulting available publishing archives is undoubtedly the most reliable method for establishing how a particular title and/or author fitted into a bigger series or list and for finding out how a particular editor built up their contacts and preferences. This type of

archival and oral history research into the decision-making processes of publishers – such as that carried out by Sturge (2014) and Pearson (2013) working on publishing studies and the history of the book – would help to place the *BNB* corpus into a wider context and would undoubtedly generate some revealing case studies into editorial practice within Nordic translation. Such findings would complement the bibliographical research already undertaken for this particular article, and similar research has already been completed for the Nordic-British children's corpus for the years 1950-2000, as far as a very sporadic and patchy survival rate of original primary sources already permits (Berry 2013, see Chapter Three in particular for an overview of modern publishing archives).

This future research phase will certainly bear research fruit for the British publishers cited above for Nordic adult titles in translation. Unfortunately publishing archives constitute a particularly vulnerable part of the British archival landscape as they remain unprotected by national legislation and are extremely vulnerable to destruction or sale when firms merge and/or move premises (Berry 2013: 162-163). Although it is probable that some if not most of the publishing houses or imprints cited above for adult Nordic fiction have no easily locatable or extant archives available to researchers, rich pickings are to be found in complete runs of correspondence relating to specific translated titles held within editorial files, as well as runs of catalogues, sales figures and publicity and marketing materials.<sup>8</sup> Detailed archival analysis reveals the full decision-making process (as per Berry 2013), from recruiting a reader to undertake reader's reports of potential titles, to commissioning a full translation and then ultimately to editing and fine-tuning the work for the British target reading audience.

## **Popular authors**

Tried and tested authors favoured by a particular publisher (or a small number of houses) are easily identifiable through analysis of the *BNB* although, again, supplementary data gathered through archival and oral history research is needed to establish why certain authors are trialled and become established favourites, and why others are

eventually rejected prior to translation and publication.

My research has investigated in detail the historical background to how some of the most popular authors and characters in Scandinavian children's literature reach a British juvenile audience. A number of common editorial scenarios were identified as a result of consultation of original editorial files relating to a number of publishing houses. A major author such as Astrid Lindgren (herself an editor for Swedish publisher Rabén & Sjögren) could simultaneously publish with a number of houses, for example Methuen, Oxford University Press, Brockhampton Press, Collins, Constable, Floris Books, Gwasg y Dref Wen, Hodder & Stoughton, Penguin, and R & S Books (Berry 2014c). This was a successful strategy as the sheer volume of her output would have been a major challenge for any single British publisher to sustain, given the relatively small numbers of titles being produced in Nordic translation as a whole across the UK. Methuen was at that time well placed to publish many other Nordic children's authors such as Hans-Eric Hellberg, Åke Holmberg, Inger Sandberg, Ester Ringnér-Lindgren, Anne-Catharina Vestly and Mauri Kunnas. Other publishers favoured a more conservative approach and preferred to capitalise on one particular series on which they had taken a financial gamble and which had proved lucrative, such as *Agaton Sax* for Deutsch (Berry 2016a), *Mrs Pepperpot* for Hutchinson (Berry 2014d) and the *Moomins* for Ernest Benn (Berry 2014b). Oxford University Press and Chatto & Windus similarly worked over a number of years to publish some of the works of Finland-Swedish author Irmelin Sandman Lilius and Sweden's Maria Gripe (Berry 2016b). It is likely that similar editorial strategies were utilised for adult authors, and again, systematic and rigorous archival interrogations will reveal the decision-making processes in further clarity.

Bibliographical research and analysis generate useful data about the most popular children's and adult authors translated from the Nordic countries from 1950 to 2010 (see Fig. 4). The most published children's author is Astrid Lindgren, responsible for 121 titles within the total corpus of 885 children's titles (13.7%). She remains far ahead of any competitors, with second and third places occupied by Alf Prøysen (46) and Tove Jansson (44) respectively (5.2% and 4.9%). The other top ten

authors for children are Inger Sandberg (35), Ulf Löfgren (29), Gunilla Wolde (25), Elsa Beskow and Edith Unnerstad (19), Nils-Olof Franzén and Barbro Lindgren (17). Löfgren, Wolde, Beskow and Barbro Lindgren are noted as picture book authors, and a large proportion of the entire corpus for children's literature does indeed include picture books (approx. 49.7 %). The most popular authors tally in with the overall statistics for the corpus as a whole for children's literature, with mainly Swedish authors represented. No Danish, Finnish or Icelandic authors are found in this top ten group.

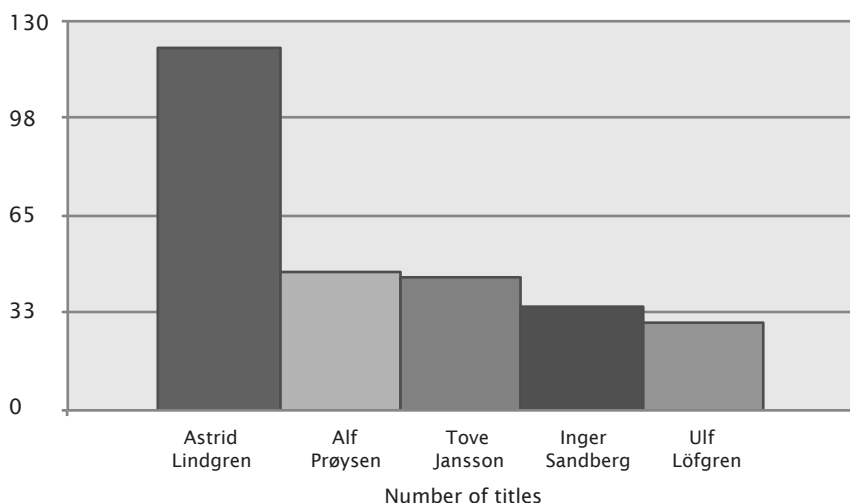


Figure 4: Most popular Nordic children's literature authors in British translation, 1950-2010

The most popular adult authors are represented in Fig. 5. For Nordic adult fiction, the forerunner is Sven Hassel (41 titles or 3.9% of the adult corpus), who is followed closely by Henning Mankell (39), Louis Masterson (36) and Maj Sjöwall (33). The second tier consists of Knut Hamsun (25), Arnaldur Indriðason (18), Pär Lagerkvist and Cora Sandel (16), Mika Waltari (15) and Isak Dinesen and Jostein Gaarder (13). It can be noted that the adult fiction corpus is significantly less dominated by popular or frequently published authors or series, with Hassel accounting for only 3.9% of the adult output, compared to Astrid Lindgren's 13.7% share within the children's literature corpus.

Hassel's portion of the adult translated corpus is also less significant when compared to the other authors represented within it. This would suggest that the adult fiction landscape is much more diverse, more experimental and less fixed on staple long-established favourites than within the children's corpus. The top eleven adult authors represent all countries of the Nordic source languages, in stark contrast to the equivalent authors within children's literature, where Swedish and Finland-Swedish authors are in the considerable majority. Prøysen remains the sole representative of Norway, with no Danish, Icelandic or Finnish authors included in the top ten children's authors.

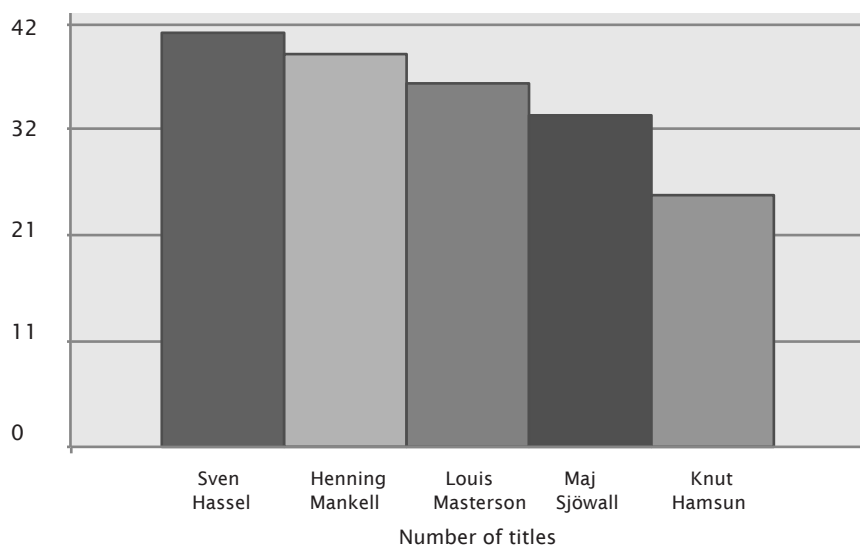
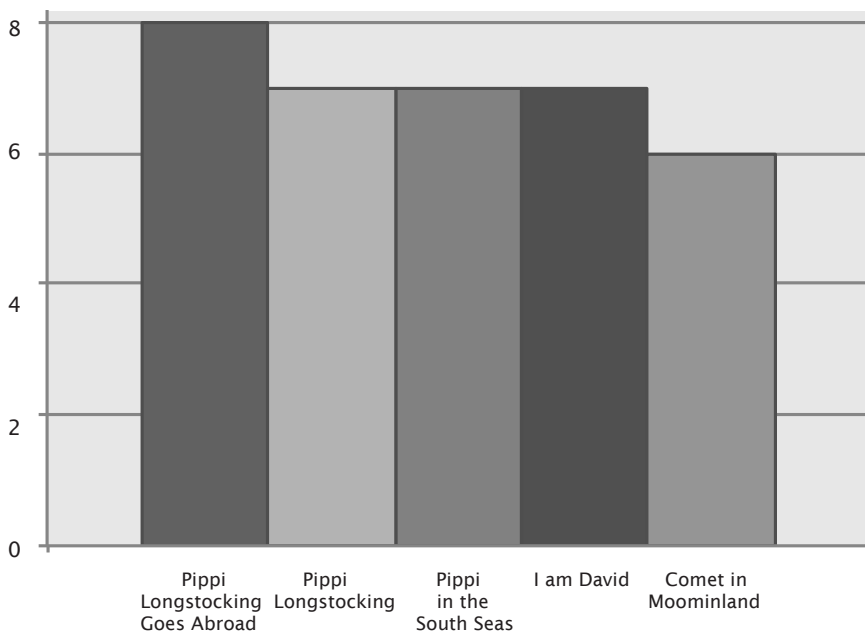


Figure 5: Most popular Nordic adult fiction's authors in British translation, 1950-2010

## Popular titles and series

The most popular titles within the children's literature corpus come from a similarly narrow baseline, as shown in Fig. 6. The most published top ten titles (factoring in both first editions and subsequent re-issues) are dominated by titles from Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking* trilogy and

*The Brothers Lionheart*, as well as one *Moomin* and one *Mrs Pepperpot* title. The most published title within the children's corpus as a whole is *Pippi Goes Aboard*, followed closely by *Pippi Longstocking*, *Pippi in the South Seas* and Anne Holm's *I am David*. *Comet in Moominland* comes next, with *Finn Family Moomintroll* and *Mrs Pepperpot's Busy Day* just behind. Astrid Lindgren's *The Brothers Lionheart*, Anne Holm's *The Hostage* and Allan Rune Pettersson's *Frankenstein's Aunt* make up the rest of the top ten list. When analysed as a whole corpus, popular children's series are those already cited (*Pippi Longstocking*, the *Moomins*, *Mrs Pepperpot* and *Agaton Sax*), as well as those of Anna (Martha Sandwall-Bergström), *Emil*, *Lotta*, *Karlson* and *Bullerby* (Astrid Lindgren), *Tam Sventon* (Åke Holmberg) and *Aurora* and *Eight Children* (Anne-Catharina Vestly). Popular picture book series include those by Inger Sandberg (*Daniel*, *Kate*, *Little Spook* and *Anna*), *Thomas and*



Top 10 titles from left to right

Figure 6: Most popular Nordic children's titles in British translation, 1950-2010



*Emma* (Gunilla Wolde), *Alfie* (Gunilla Bergström), *Olly* (Monica Gydal), *Albin* (Ulf Löfgren), *Sam* (Barbro Lindgren) and *Annie* (Kristiina Louhi). The adult corpus again demonstrates more variation and breadth although the adult titles claiming the highest two numbers of first editions and re-issues are very closely matched and more evenly spread in popularity ratings across the adult corpus.<sup>9</sup> No fewer than nine titles share the top spot, namely *Comrades of War*, *Hunger*, *Kristin Lavransdatter*, *Liquidate in Paris*, *Monte Cassino*, *Roseanne*, *The Draining Lake*, *The Ice Princess* and *The Laughing Policeman*. The next most published titles, again equally represented across the source languages (except Finnish), are *Arctic Chill*, *Barabbas*, *Firewall*, *Let the Right One In*, *Out Stealing Horses*, *Sophie's World*, *The Pyramid*, *The Road to Jerusalem*, *The Wanderer* and *Voices*. Except Finnish, all the Nordic source languages are represented here.

Popular series within the adult corpus include several crime sequences, including those of detectives Erlendur Sveinsson (Arnaldur Indriðason), Harry Hole (Jo Nesbø/Nesbo), Van Veeteren (Håkan Nesser), Martin Beck (Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö) and Anders Knutas (Mari Jungstedt). Non-crime examples include Louis Masterson's prolific *Morgan Kane* series about the late-nineteenth century Texan ranger and anti-hero, Margit Sandemo's historical fantasy series *The Legend of the Ice People* and Sven Hassel's lengthy series about the exploits of a Second World War Panzer regiment.

Space does not permit here a detailed analysis of the genres included within the adult and children's literature corpora, although some preliminary bibliographical work has already been completed for children's titles for the period 1950-2000 (Berry 2013: 127ff). Here it was found that selected titles, authors and series fulfilled one of two publishing functions, namely i) filling a gap in genre where this did not already exist within the British market or ii) complementing an already well established and popular genre. Bringing in innovative genres seems to be a less common publishing strategy within the Nordic translated corpus, with a preference demonstrated instead for bringing in authors and titles conforming to economically viable and proven genres already in use within the British marketplace. In particular, fantasy and adventure series were particularly common as

preferred choices for Nordic children's titles, fitting in with a juvenile readership already established by British juvenile authors such as Enid Blyton, Arthur Ransome and C. S. Lewis. Similarly detailed analysis of the genres contained within the adult corpus for 1950-2010 will prove time-consuming but will generate some much needed research data within this area which will help to identify gender-specific publishing trends for adult fiction.<sup>10</sup>

### **Popular translators**

Identifying trends in the selection of translators can be problematic, particularly when many publishers fail to identify translators either on the title page or in extant copyright information. Whilst this is sometimes a deliberate strategy in children's literature (particularly in picture books), where children's editors were often keen to render a translator invisible in order to market a book more readily as a British product, this is a surprising finding within the adult corpus. 173 titles have no attributed translators within the adult corpus (17.6%), compared to 282 within the children's corpus (31.8%). This corpus inevitably includes some non-UK based translators, particularly when British publishers produced co-editions with American counterparts or purchased American-sourced translations from American firms. This practice would explain, for example, the inclusion of Gerry Bothmer, Steven Murray and Tiina Nunnally in the list of translators published in the UK. Scandinavian-based translators were also used on occasion by British-based houses, for example Tove Jansson's *Moomin* translators Thomas Warburton, Elizabeth Portch and Kingsley Hart.

Given the relatively small pool of Nordic literary translators (compared to other languages), it was anticipated that there would be some cross-over in choice of translators who worked across adult and children's fiction within the Nordic languages. On closer analysis this has not particularly proved to be the case. However, it is possible to identify the lead translators within each corpus without difficulty. Joan Tate and Patricia Crampton were the most prolific Nordic children's literature translators (62 and 61 titles apiece) with a big lead over those following (see Fig. 7). The second tier comprises Marianne

Helweg (32), Evelyn Ramsden (30), Alison Winn (27), Marianne Turner (25) and Lilian Seaton (23). Gerry Bothmer (15), Elisabeth Dyssegaard (14) and Thomas Warburton (11) form a third rank within the top ten translators for children's literature. These figures are mainly British-based, with the exceptions of Bothmer, Warburton and Dyssegaard, and the majority of these ten also worked to some extent within adult fiction.

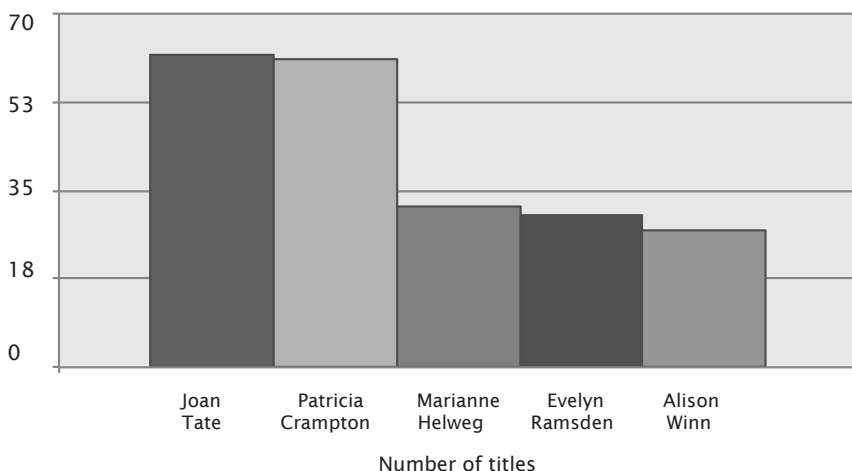


Figure 7: Most popular Nordic children's translators, 1950-2010

Joan Tate is again the most published translator of adult literature (66 titles) with a comparably dominant portion of that market (see Fig. 8). She is followed by Elizabeth Rokkan (30), Naomi Walford (28), Laurie Thompson (27), Anne Born (26) and a third tier of Tiina Nunnally and Bernard Scudder (20), Steven Murray (19) and finally Don Bartlett, Alan Blair and Ebba Segerberg (18). As already noted, there is little overlap and duplication in translators from children's literature within the adult genre. Far fewer of these names for adult fiction have also translated titles from the children's literature corpus, and it can be observed as a result of this bibliographical analysis that only Joan Tate translated simultaneously across children's, young adult and adult fiction to any great extent.

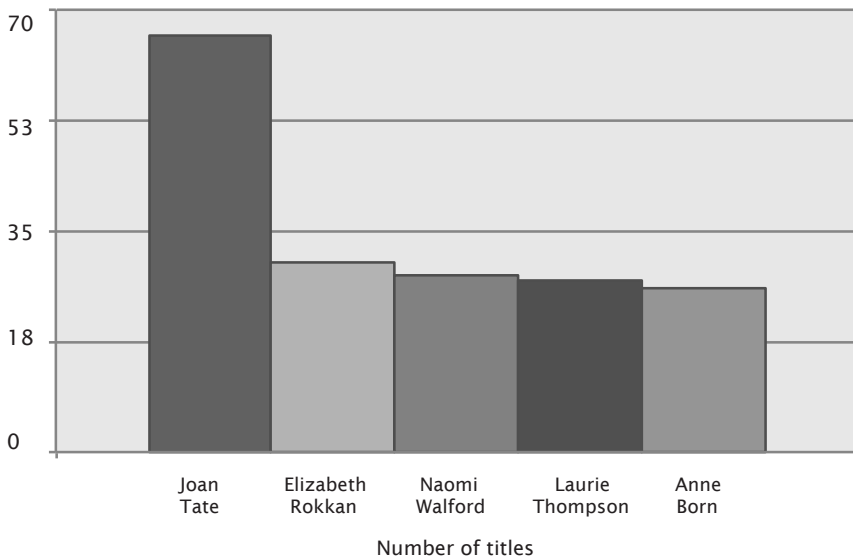


Figure 8: Most popular translators of Nordic adult fiction, 1950-2010

Women are extremely strongly represented as translators for children's fiction, contributing 493 titles compared to 117 for male translators (some titles have two translators cited). These figures correspond to female translators forming some 40% of the children's literature corpus, compared to 9.8% for male translators. In 16 titles, the translator's gender was not apparent (for example, through use of initials instead of a forename) and a further 282 titles had no translator's name stated at all (see Fig. 9). For adult fiction, the situation is slightly different. The translators of 173 titles are unattributed and 29 are of unspecified gender. However, male translators are this time in a slight majority, with 425 titles (41% of the corpus). Conversely 408 adult fiction titles have cited female translators which corresponds to 39.4% of the corpus. These figures indicate clearly that whilst there is an obvious female dominance within the translators of Nordic children's fiction, the gender division for adult fiction translators is much more balanced and equal in its proportions.

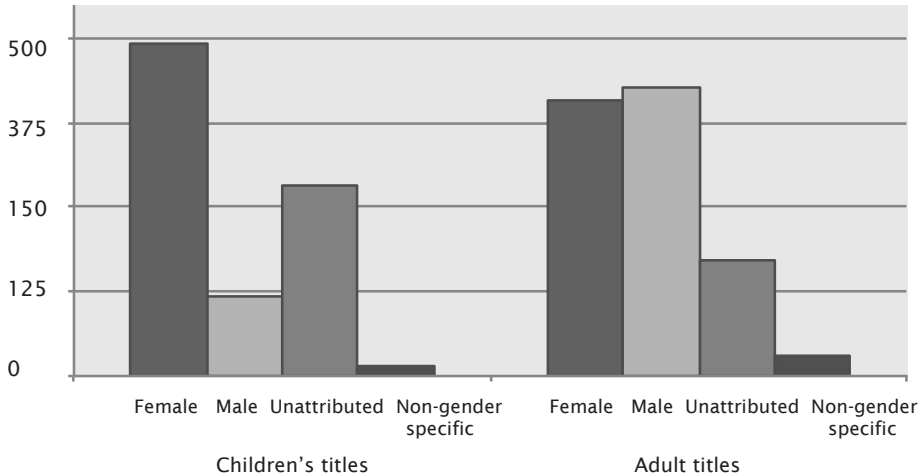


Figure 9: Gender of translators of Nordic fiction, 1950-2010

Huge variety is found in the choice of translator. It does not seem the case that publishing houses, authors or even series tend to favour one particular translator for a language, despite the relatively small professional pool available. Instead, selection appears to be a more fluid editorial process dependent largely on professional contacts and personal preferences, and whether a translator is available for a commission or not within the required time frame. It is nonetheless possible to identify some clear cases of author-translator allegiance and loyalty across both children's and adult fiction, although this appears to be a practice more associated with adult than children's literature. For adult fiction, Don Bartlett has translated all of Jo Nesbø's published titles and Thomas Teal has translated all of Tove Jansson's adult fiction, predominantly for Sort Of Books. Similarly, Laurie Thompson translated Håkan Nesser's entire output, as did Joan Tate for Per Wahlöo and Elizabeth Rokkan for Cora Sandel. On a similar basis, Anne Born translated the majority of Per Petterson's titles, as did Magnus Magnusson for Halldór Laxness and Naomi Walford for Mika Waltari. For children's literature, Marianne Helweg worked on most of the *Mrs Pepperpot* translations, Lilian Seaton on most of the works of Edith Unnerstad and all those of Åke Holmberg, and Joan Tate translated the entire *Anna* series by Martha Sandwall-Bergström for Blackie.

Other authors were translated by a wide range of translators, even within the same publisher, such as Kingsley Hart, Elizabeth Portch and Thomas Warburton for the *Moomin* series for Ernest Benn, and Paul Britten Austin, Kersti French, Sheila La Farge and Gerry Bothmer for the works of Swedish children's author Maria Gripe at Chatto & Windus. In particular, Astrid Lindgren was published by numerous translators (at least ten) across various children's publishers over the entire period from *Pippi Longstocking's* first UK appearance in 1954. Similarly Phil Newth and Jeffrey M Wallmann, and Tim Bowie and Sverre Lyngstad undertook, respectively, the numerous works of Louis Masterson and Sven Hassel for paperback publisher Corgi in the 1970s. At Harvill, Henning Mankell's large output has been variously translated by Laurie Thompson, Ebba Segerberg, Tiina Nunnally and Steven Murray, and Torgny Lindgren's list at the same publisher has been translated by Tom Geddes, Mary Sandback and Ebba Segerberg.

Use of the same translators for the same author across different publishers was uncommon. Instead different publishers would use their own preferred translators, even when the same author was being translated and published elsewhere. For example, Patricia Crampton translated Anne-Catharina Vestly's *Eight Children* series for Methuen, whereas Eileen Amos translated Vestly's *Aurora* series for a range of British children's publishers. Per Olov Enquist and Leif Davidsen have similarly both been published by a range of firms and translators between the 1970s or 1980s respectively and the 2000s.

Whilst some of these translators are highly visible within the world of Nordic literature and publishing, other translators are less prominent (especially those working in the earlier part of the period 1950-2010). For example, it has proved difficult to find out any biographical details about productive translators such as Evelyn Ramsden, Marianne Turner and Lilian Seaton (children's literature) or for Naomi Walford and Alan Blair (adult literature). Biographical research through archival and other sources is clearly needed in order to shed further light here. How did British-based translators acquire their proficiency in the Nordic languages and become active translators, and how were Nordic native speakers recruited as translators into British English?

## **Trends in Nordic literature in translation for adults and children**

The final section of this article looks at trends in activity for children's and adult translation across the full 1950-2010 date-span of this corpus. Publishing levels of translation outputs inevitably ebb and flow over time and although no attempts will be made within this short article to produce a detailed analysis of reasons for these fluctuations, peaks and troughs, some basic conclusions can nevertheless be drawn from the bibliographical data collated. A brief comparison of the numbers of texts produced by decade is extremely revealing, as Fig. 10 demonstrates.

For adult fiction, only 55 entries appear for the 1950s. This more than doubles to 117 during the 1960s and there is a slight peak at 169 entries for the 1970s. The output then dips to a steady 145 (1980s) and 142 (1990s), before exploding to 355 entries for the 2000s up to and including 2010. This sharp increase can in part be accounted for by the popularity of Nordic Noir crime fiction from 2000-2010, and it is anticipated that detailed item-level genre analysis of the corpus would confirm this trend.

The emergence of specific Nordic adult authors over this period is straightforward to pinpoint. Classic authors such as August Strindberg, Knut Hamsun and Halldór Laxness were already established in British print in the period prior to 1950 and therefore appear from the very outset of the corpus period. These three authors continue to be published into the 2000s. Mika Waltari is also present in this decade (covering 1951-1973), alongside Johannes Allen (1958-1971) and Pär Lagerkvist (1952-1989). Cora Sandel appears for the first time in 1960 and is published regularly until the late 1980s. Other authors also appear for the first time and then disappear again from the corpus (Stig Dagerman, 1960-1991 and Per Wahlöö, 1965-1979). Tarjei Vesaas makes an appearance in the late 1960s and continues to be printed into the 2000s, as do Sven Hassel and Maj Sjöwall. In the 1970s, Per Olov Enquist features from 1975 and continues in popularity into the 2000s, as does Tove Jansson. Louis Masterson features strongly only between 1971 and 1979, but with significant success over that short

period. The 1980s is a quieter period, consolidating the popularity of Knut Hamsun and Pär Lagerkvist, but also introducing Bo Carpelan and Henrik Stangerup. Leif Davidsen and Torgny Lindgren both debut at this time and remain published into the 2000s. In the 1990s, several new authors emerge and remain successful into the 2000s, including Peter Høeg, Marianne Frederiksson, Per Pettersson and Kerstin Ekman. By contrast Lars Gustafsson only features during the 1990s. Several names of Nordic crime fiction still popular at the time of writing in 2017 emerge in the 2000s, including Henning Mankell, Stieg Larsson, Karin Fossum, Jo Nesbø, Arnaldur Indriðason, Liza Marklund and Camilla Läckberg, while Sjöwall's and Hassel's popularity during the 2000s indicates a strong resurgence due to the revived popularity of the crime genre. Other authors such as Hamsun, Gaarder, Frederiksson and Laxness continue in print into the 2000s, and newcomer Lars Saabye Christensen makes his debut.

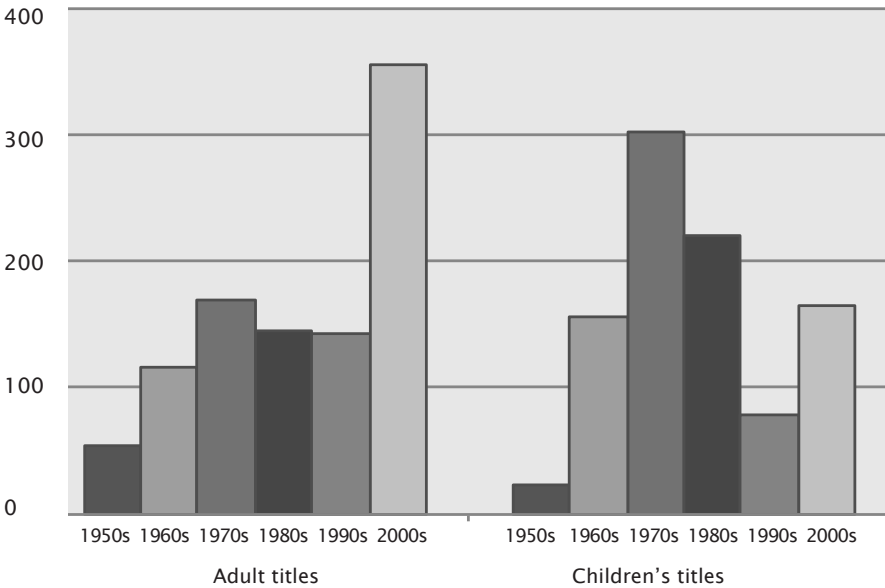


Figure 10: Decade trends for Nordic literature in British translation, 1950-2010



Author debuts and sustained successes for Nordic children's authors are also identifiable from the bibliographical data collated although these take a very different journey to the steady increase and subsequent explosion in production for adult literature. The figures for children's literature have already been considered in detail for the period 1950-2000 (Berry 2013: 126-127) and for the period 1950-1975 (Berry 2011), but will be considered here briefly in order to provide some terms of comparison for the adult market (see again Fig. 10). Levels of translation in the 1950s were modest (23 items) but rise steeply during the 1960s (157) and 1970s (302). A drop to 221 titles in the 1980s follows, and declines rapidly to a mere 78 titles in the 1990s. This climbs back to 166 entries in the 2000s up to 2010. Within this corpus, picture books peak at 160 instances during the 1980s. Astrid Lindgren, Tove Jansson and Alf Prøysen are undoubtedly the most popular children's authors during the 1950s, and are joined by Edith Unnerstad and Hans Peterson in the 1960s. Lindgren dominates unquestionably during the 1970s and continues to do so right through into the 2000s in sheer numbers of her titles appearing. Jansson and Prøysen also remain popular into the 2000s. However, the picture is more complex than it appears on first glance, with the majority of other Nordic children's authors proving popular only for a short period and then being superseded by other writers. Unnerstad goes out of print in 1978 and another popular favourite from the 1950s to the 1980s, Inger Sandberg, is not published after 1983. Similarly, Leif Hamre, Berit Brænne, Jørgen Clevin, Maria Gripe, Aimée Sommerfelt, Åke Holmberg and Hans Peterson remain popular only during the 1960s and 1970s. Exceptions are the 1960s new arrivals Irmelin Sandman Lilius, Gunnel Linde and Nils-Olof Franzén who all sustain their appeal and popularity until the 1980s.

New children's authors emerge during the 1970s but again these disappear during the following decade, such as Ulf Löfgren, Gunilla Wolde, Hans-Eric Hellberg, Svend Otto S and Anne-Catharina Vestly. Monica Gydal and Martha Sandwall-Bergström fall out of favour almost as soon as they emerge in the late 1970s, whereas Gunilla Bergström and Eva Eriksson both continue from the 1970s into the 2000s, as do Elsa Beskow, Jan Mogensen and Barbro Lindgren who debut in

the 1980s. Kristiina Louhi and Ulf Nilsson are less successful in the 1980s, going rapidly out of print and are joined by Mauri Kunnas who is published only until 1993. Very little of interest in terms of new translation occurs during the 1990s which is a period of stagnation and repetition for children's fiction, with Jansson, Lagerlöf, Astrid Lindgren and Prøysen continuing to be reprinted on a regular basis with occasional new editions also appearing. However, Jostein Gaarder's popularity as a writer is established at this time and encompasses both adult and children's literature with world-wide success. Lene Kaaberbøl and Ulf Stark make their appearance for the first time in the 2000s, as does Henning Mankell (again as a popular cross-over author).

## Conclusion

This article has sought to address the question of which works of Nordic adult and children's fiction have been published in the UK during the period 1950-2010. This information is not readily available elsewhere other than through detailed bibliographical research which here has been undertaken through analysis of the *British National Bibliography*. This article has presented for the first time a summary of the data contained within the adult fiction corpus and additionally compared it with the corresponding children's fiction corpus for the same period as already identified and analysed by Berry (2013). The major available printed bibliographical sources for Nordic literature in British translation were also identified, in addition to the somewhat limited research outputs in this area at the current time, although it was noted that scholarly activity within Nordic-British translation is now increasing in its intensity.

The remainder of the article focused on presenting the results of the bibliographical survey, identifying a corpus of 1,868 works in total. Sweden accounted for the largest proportion of translated works for both adult and children's fiction, but the national distribution of source literatures did not correlate otherwise across the two genres. There was little overlap in publishers producing adult and children's titles in Nordic translation, and there seemed also to be a partial trend of well-established companies publishing children's titles in contrast

to more recently founded (and often paperback) firms publishing adult titles. The most popular children's and adult authors were identified respectively as Astrid Lindgren and Sven Hassel. Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking* trilogy and *Brothers Lionheart* dominated the children's literature corpus, but the adult corpus demonstrated far more breadth with nine titles sharing the top title spot.

Little cross-over was found between Nordic translators working in adult and children's literature, with the exception of Joan Tate who translated across both genres. Translator selection was found to be somewhat haphazard, with less loyalty shown for a particular author, series or publishing house than anticipated. Finally, bibliographical analysis over a sixty-year period enabled some clear publishing trends to be identified. Whereas adult fiction in Nordic translation initially peaked in the 1970s and then dipped slightly, it has since then continued to climb strongly up to 2010 and most likely beyond. The emergence of key adult Nordic authors was easily pinpointed, with authors such as Cora Sandel and Stig Dagerman proving popular only for short periods, whereas other names such as Knut Hamsun and Halldór Laxness remained in print throughout. By contrast, translations of children's literature peaked strongly in the 1970s and then dipped sharply during the 1990s. Although this level of output is now on an upward slant again, the most recently published titles typically include reprints of popular titles rather than new commissions: authors such as Astrid Lindgren, Alf Prøysen and Tove Jansson fall into this group and have remained enduringly popular since their British debuts in the 1950s.

Bibliographical research inevitably poses as many questions as it answers, and this article is no exception to this rule. Several fruitful areas of research have been identified which will help to link this scholarship into Nordic-British publishing and translation history to broader narratives about UK publishing markets and translation in a wider context. One key challenge would be to extend the existing corpus of *BNB* data (1950-2010) for both children's and adult titles from 2011 up to the current day. Are the trends during the 2000s for a decline in original translation for children compared to a boom in original translation for adults repeated or not during this later period?

Another tempting research topic is the role of the publishing house in commissioning original translations and issuing later reprints for adult literature. Addressing this issue would be entirely dependent on detailed archival and oral history research (equivalent to Berry 2013) into Nordic adult fiction. Whilst subject to available source materials, this project would immediately shed light on aspects of publisher decision-making processes such as the role of the editor and the selection of texts, authors, readers and translators, as well as enabling more rigorous comparisons to be drawn between the adult and children's fiction genres than within the bibliographical parameters of this article.

There are numerous allied areas of research which support this focus of scholarship, such as analysis of the published print catalogues of firms and their imprints publishing Nordic adult fiction. This analysis would be required in order to ascertain the wider publishing interests of key editors and firms alike, and would reveal whether Nordic translation occurred in isolation or was the result of a specific strategy accompanying successful translations from other languages at a particular firm. Placing adult Nordic-British translation within a broader British publishing context for the period onwards from 1950 is also another essential research question still to be fully addressed: this would ideally examine longer time-spans than the existing research of, for example, Broomé (covering 1998-2013) and Kythor (covering 1990-2015) and here it can also be noted that the thesis of Giles (forthcoming) for the period 1917-2017 will add significantly to this field.

Full identification and analysis of the genre of each adult title contained within the period 1950-2010 is also necessary for enabling comparisons firstly with the equivalent Nordic-British children's literature genre, secondly with corresponding publishing trends within British monolingual fiction publishing and thirdly with trends for British translations from other major source languages such as French, German, Italian, Spanish and Dutch. Primary source-based research into adult Nordic fiction translations would also address the question of the invisibility of many (if not most) of the translators identified within the corpus: how did British translators become proficient in their

chosen Nordic languages and then active in their careers, and how were Nordic native-speakers recruited to translate into British English? This area of translation history and publishing strategy remains very little understood within the Nordic language group. And finally, while some research has already been undertaken into translations of children's literature (Berry, Goodwin-Andersson and Stuttaford), little attention has been given to the rationale for publishing such large quantities of Nordic picture books (almost half the total published output for the period 1950-2010). Additional analysis of bibliographical, oral history and archival sources would broaden current understanding of this successful publishing trend which forms such a large part of translated Nordic children's literature within the United Kingdom.

With appetites for Nordic Noir strongly evident amongst the contemporary British reading public, newcomer publishers such as Pushkin Press and Nordisk Books are demonstrating strong interests in Nordic translation (Onwuemezi 2016). Sort Of Books combines an interest in the works of Tove Jansson with a diverse publishing portfolio which encompasses adult and children's fiction as well as picture books and comic strips. More established presses such as Dedalus Books, Harvill Secker, Norvik Press, Hawthorne Books and Floris Books are also building on their well-established Nordic lists.

This article has identified and analysed the ebb and flow of Nordic-British fiction publishing for adults and children over a sixty year period. It remains to be seen when the continuing rise in Nordic titles will slow and perhaps diminish at some point in the future. Time will tell whether Nordic children's and adult fiction authors and titles are now so firmly established as part of the British literary canon that their continued presence in our publishing landscape can be viewed as a fixed and durable cultural trend.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Titles published solely in the UK are included in this study, as well as UK and US co-editions. Translations published only in the USA have been excluded.

<sup>2</sup> Goodwin-Andersson (2015) and Stuttaford (forthcoming) complement Berry's

research into Nordic children's literature through their analysis of translations of Astrid Lindgren.

<sup>3</sup> The use of 'title' here and throughout the remainder of the article denotes an entry in the *BNB*. It can therefore be used both to refer to a first edition or to any subsequent re-issues.

<sup>4</sup> Finland-Swedish titles are included with Swedish titles.

<sup>5</sup> These figures do not include the works of Hans Christian Andersen. Whilst it is recognised that this will under-represent Denmark in this analysis, this methodology follows that of Hoyle Nelson (1975) and Berry (2013) in avoiding this complex and confusing part of the children's literature corpus, due to the high number of adaptations and re-writings of Andersen's works. As a result, it is currently difficult to define the precise boundaries of his corpus within the scope of the *BNB*.

<sup>6</sup> This is no longer the case, partly as Methuen no longer exists as a publisher and also as Oxford University Press have been proactively publishing reprints and new translations of Lindgren since circa 2007 (see Berry 2014c).

<sup>7</sup> Norvik Press now publishes the journal *Scandinavica* which was first published in 1962 by Academic Press.

<sup>8</sup> See for example the extensive archives of publishers such as Chatto & Windus at the University of Reading, Penguin Books at the University of Bristol, and Hodder & Stoughton at London Metropolitan Archives.

<sup>9</sup> No figure is provided here, given the large number of titles occupying only the two most popular positions.

<sup>10</sup> As well as carrying out preliminary research via library catalogues and second-hand book outlets, it is in many cases it is necessary to consult a print copy of each title in order to attribute its genre beyond reasonable doubt. Such research is entirely dependent on obliging librarians retrieving large quantities of books for a very short consultation time, but the resulting genre-based findings will undoubtedly identify publishing trends as well as helping to inform points of entry for future archival research.

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