

FINLAND-SWEDISH LITERATURE IN THE CZECH FIELD OF LITERARY PRODUCTION

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Abstract

This contribution, theoretically and methodologically inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's concept of a literary field, analyses the case of Finland-Swedish literature translations into Czech. This literature is viewed as Swedish-language minority literature in Finland after 1900. The field of literary production is small, but nevertheless represents a varied Finland-Swedish 'segment' in the Czech field. As such it constitutes a certain publishing field, having two polarities (commercial/intellectual; young/old) and being entered into by publishers and translators who select writers and books from a certain space of possibles. Print runs of the published books and the distribution of publishing grants are explored with a view to the sociological character of the research. The analysis is divided into sections according to genres and their presupposed place in the field. It is found that while the mechanisms in the Czech publishing field of Finland-Swedish literature are fragmentary (many different authors, works, translators and publishers), the Bourdieusian approach is a productive framework through which to view the division between the intellectual and commercial poles. The position of Finland-Swedish modernist poetry and prose – Edith Södergran, Bo Carpelan and Hagar Olsson, published by Práce and Odeon publishers – is especially significant on the intellectual pole, as well as the position of their advocates within the Czech field (e.g. Josef B. Michl). Short stories, extracts and essays, often belonging to the Finland-Swedish classics (e.g. Christer Kihlman, Henrik Tikkanen), were mainly published in cultural reviews. Finland-Swedish prose is the most varied category, encompassing a broad spectrum of authors and works. Finland-Swedish drama is represented by Bo Ahlfors and the translator of his works František Fröhlich, while commercially successful literature is represented by Sally Salminen's books, published by A. Neubert and Tove Jansson's Moomins. Some of them were translated from Swedish by Libor Štukavec and published by Albatros, others were translated from English and published by Argo.

Keywords

Finland-Swedish literature; Finland-Swedish literature abroad; Nordic literatures translations; translations to Czech; Czech translators; Czech publishers; literary sociology; Pierre Bourdieu; field of literary production; commercial/intellectual pole

In my article in *Nya Argus* (see Dlask, 2017) the history of Finland-Swedish literature translations into Czech is described chronologically and on the background of political history. Nevertheless, when studying literary transfers from one (Nordic) country to another (European), would it be possible to use some more theoretical concepts? In my and Lenka Fárová's case study (Dlask & Fárová, 2012), we tried to describe the character of the publishing

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field of Finnish language literature translated into Czech after the year 1990, inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's concept of a literary field and his key work *Les Règles de l'art : genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (1992; in Czech translation see Bourdieu, 2010). We found that even in the case of our limited material, it was possible to speak of a certain publishing field, having two polarities (commercial/intellectual pole; young/old age), being entered into by **publishers** and **translators**, who select **writers** and **books** from a certain space of possibles (Dlask & Fárová, 2012).

Finland-Swedish literature published in Czech is an even smaller "segment" than the material in the aforementioned case study, and it represents a rather different case than that of the slightly "francocentric" Bourdieu, who did not take into consideration e.g. translated literature or literature for children. Nevertheless, the aim of this study will be to try if it is possible to use the same Bourdieusian theoretic-methodological points of departure even here.

The article is divided into chapters according to genres and their presupposed place in the field (see Bourdieu, 2010, 156–189). With a view to the sociological character of my research, I also followed print runs of the published books (during Communism stated obligatorily in imprints) and distribution of publishing grants. To obtain the necessary data, I used Michal Švec's continuously updated bibliography of Finnish books published in Czech (see WS1), the books concerned, the Electronic Catalogue of the National Library of the CR (see WS2), catalogues of the Czech Art Institute-Theatre Institute (see WS3) and information provided by some of the concerned publishing houses. It was not possible to gain all data.¹ Willy Kyrklund and Torsten Pettersson, having Finland-Swedish roots, but having lived in Sweden, are also considered Finland-Swedes, in a parallel way as in *Finlands svenska litteraturhistoria II* (see Zilliacus, 2000, passim). On the other hand, I do not deal with works published in original before 1900,² that are not comprised in the concept of Finland-Swedish **minority** literature (cf. e.g. Wrede, 1999, 12, 17). I quote only Swedish (or other original) and Czech titles of the works.

Intellectual pole: Finland-Swedish poetry

The genre of poetry tends in Bourdieu's concept to the left side of the diagramme (see Bourdieu, 2010, 167), the intellectual pole, where the number of readers and print runs are quite low and where the field is most autonomous. Newly published poetry is often read only by other poets, and it can take whole decades, before it becomes canonised, starts to be read in schools and sold in larger and commercially more interesting print runs (Ibid, 156–189).

The interest of the Czech literary field in Finland-Swedish poetry, represented by the well-known motion of Finland-Swedish modernism, started in late 1930's, when a famous poem by the key figure of the motion, Edith Södergran, named *Dagen svalnar* (Den chladne), was published in Czech in two periodicals (1938, 1939). Its translator was František Branislav, a Czech poet, librarian and lecturer of Nordic literatures at the university in Prague. Another poem by Södergran, *Månen* (Je vše, co mrtvo, tolik podivné) was published in 1943, translated by Dagmar Pallasová.

¹ Mainly for the indifference of some publishers to communicate with literary scholars, although they are contacted by them repeatedly.

² E.g. by Franzén, Runeberg, Topelius, Wecksell and Tavaststjerna.

Branislav showed his interest in Finland-Swedish modernist poetry again in 1959. In a newly founded revue, called *Světová literatura* (World Literature; hereinafter *SL*), published since 1956 by the Odeon publishing house (first named Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění), he and Karel Tahal, an academic and a translator from Swedish during 1960's (WS4), translated selected poems by Finland-Swedish poets.³ The translation was accompanied by a presentation of Swedish-language lyrical poetry in Finland.

In 1970's and 1980's, Branislav's mission was taken up by Josef B. Michl, a university teacher and academic connected to the university in Brno and a translator from/to Swedish and Norwegian (WS5). In the frame of the anthology of Nordic poetry, called *Severské léto* (The Nordic Summer), he translated twenty-five poems from four different collections by Bo Carpelan.⁴ The anthology was published in 1977 by the Práce publishers, the print run being 2000 copies. Michl's activities continued in 1987, when he translated a collection of Södergran's poems from all of her collected works, *Samlade dikter*, named after her last collection *Landet, som icke är* (*Země, která není*). It was published by the above mentioned Odeon publishers. The print run was 1300 copies; a new one, comprising 1000 copies, was published in 1990.

The only representative of Finland-Swedish socially committed poetry in Czech is an anthology of poems written by Claes Andersson, called after one of his collections *Šťastlivec* (*En lycklig mänska*), translated by Ivo Železný and published in his own publishing house in 1997 (cf. Dlask & Fárová, 2012, 62). The anthology was sponsored by FILI – Finnish Literature Exchange.

Especially the case of Södergran in Czech can be interpreted as a gradual canonisation, typical for the intellectual pole, as a rise from single poems in different newspapers to the whole poem collection, comprising a scholarly preface by the translator, published twice. In general, the print runs of poetry were quite small compared with prose (see below).

Intellectual pole: stories, essays and extracts in periodicals

The first Finland-Swedish short story in Czech, written by Jarl Hemmer, named *Dopis mrtvé přítelkyni*, was published in 1932 in J. Pavel's translation in the periodical *Venkov*. Between 1956 and 1996, the periodical *SL* (see above) published translations of short Finland-Swedish texts as well as presentations of their authors. The successor of *SL* nowadays is *PLAV* (hereinafter *P*) which started to come out regularly in 2005. The list of Finland-Swedish texts published in these two periodicals is presented in Table 1.

As a student, the author of this article also translated a story named *Då Manja tillfrisknade* (orig. 1949; *Když se Manja uzdravila*) by Mirjam Tuominen; it was published in *Almanach severských literatur* (Almanac of Nordic Literatures; 2000), a project comprising Nordic short stories translated by Prague students of Nordic languages. The publisher was the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. In 2016/4 of *Souvislosti – revue pro literaturu a kulturu* (Contexts – Revue for Literature and Culture), a periodical founded in 1990, J. Dlask published two

³ Edith Södergran, Elmer Diktonius, Ragnar Rudolf Ekelund, Kerstin Söderholm, Thomas Warburton, Henry Parland, Peter Sandelin and Christer Kihlman.

⁴ *Objekt för ord, Landskapets förvandlingar, Den svala dagen and Källan.*

extracts, from Kihlman's novel *Den blå modern* (1963) and from Henrik Tikkanen's autobiography *Brändövägen 8 Brändö. Tel. 35.* (1975).

Table 1

Periodical, year, issue	Author, original text and year, genre	In Czech	Translator
<i>SL</i> , 1988/1	Tom Sandell: Monika A. (1967), short story	Monika A.	Otakar Franczyk
<i>SL</i> , 1992/4	Johannes Salminen: Suomi idän ja lännen välissä (1984), essay	Finsko mezi Východem a Západem	Markéta Hejkalová (from Finnish)
<i>SL</i> , 1992/4	Göran Schildt: Inhimillinen tekijä (1991), extract from a biography (A. Aalto)	Svět nelze spásit slovy	Markéta Hejkalová (from Finnish)
<i>P</i> , 2006/7-8	Willy Kyrklund: En privilegierads äventyr (1982), short story	Dobrodružství privilegovaného člověka	Anežka Kuzmičová
<i>P</i> , 2006/7-8	Christer Kihlman: <i>Gerdt Bladhs undergång</i> (1987), extract from a novel	Pád Gerda Bladha	Jan Dlask

The position of the above-mentioned periodicals near the intellectual pole is due to their need of sponsorship, either from abroad (the almanac was sponsored by The Nordic Council of Ministers) or from Czech institutions or persons (*P* is subsidized by the State Cultural Fund and the Ministry of Culture, *Souvislosti* by Mr. Jakub Krč and the Ministry of Culture). They are often published in cooperation with the academic sphere (the above-mentioned Faculty of Arts in Prague in case of both the almanac and *P*) and their print runs are low (200 copies for the almanac, 400 for *P* and 800 for *Souvislosti*).

A bit from the intellectual pole: prose

Finland-Swedish prose started to be translated into Czech in the interwar period. The Czech publishing field returned to it only in the late 1970's, i.e. during Communism, and published more prose books during 1980's. After a short intermezzo, caused by economic changes in the country after 1989 (see Dlask & Fárová, 2012, 62), the publishing activities started again after the year 2000, concentrating on fewer authors and more books written by each of them. Publishing houses Argo and Kniha Zlín (see below) specialise only on one author. The list of the published works follows in Table 2, compiled according to the Czech edition of the work in question (no statement for genre means a novel).

Table 2

Author, orig. title, year, genre	In Czech, year	Translation	Publisher	Print run
Hagar Olsson: <i>Det blåser upp till storm</i> (1930)	<i>Schyluje se k bouři</i> (1936)	O. Heidrich	L. Mazáč	
Jarl Hemmer: <i>Morgongåvan</i> (1934) ⁵	<i>Jitřní dar</i> (1937)	Jiřina Vrtišová	Jos. R. Vilímek	
Christer Kihlman: <i>Dyre prins</i> (1975)	<i>Drahý princ</i> (1979)	Dagmar Černohorská	Svoboda	18 000
Willy Kyrklund: <i>Tvåsam, Solange, Mästaren Ma</i> (1949, -51, -52), prose – shorter format	1 volume – <i>Mistr Ma</i> (1979)	František Fröhlich	Odeon	5000
Walentin Chorell: <i>Äggskalet, Knappen, Livstycket</i> (1972, -74, -76), prose – shorter format	1 volume – <i>Ze skořápky ven</i> (1980)	Ivo Železný	Lidové nakladatelství	60 000
Robert Alftan: <i>Våra gossar på Cypern</i> (1974), satirical reportage	<i>Naši hoši na Kypru</i> (1983)	Jaroslav Kaňa	Naše vojsko	30 000
Hagar Olsson: <i>Danserskan</i> (1966), novella	<i>Tanečnice</i> (1987) ⁶	Josef Michl	Práce	21 000
Märta Tikkanen: <i>Århundradets kärlekssaga</i> (1978), novel written in verse	<i>Příběh lásky století</i> (2000)	Dagmar Hartlová ⁷	OWP	2000 (ca.)
Tove Jansson: <i>Bildhuggarens dotter</i> (1968), autobiography	<i>Dcera sochaře</i> (2002)	Naďa Bilincová	Argo	
TJ: <i>Sommarboken</i> (1972)	<i>Kniha léta</i> (2011)	Helena Chvojková	Plus ⁸	
Torsten Pettersson: <i>Ge mig dina ögon</i> (2008), detective novel	<i>Dej mi své oči</i> (2011)	Irena Kunovská	Argo	
TP: <i>Göm mig i ditt hjärta</i> (2010), DN	<i>Skryj mě ve svém srdci</i> (2012)	Čeněk Matocha	Argo	
TP: <i>Hitlers fiender: Berlin oktober 1938 – januari 1939</i> (2013), DN	<i>Hitlerovi nepřátelé</i> (2014)	Helena Matochová	Argo	
Johanna Holmström: <i>Asfaltänglar</i> (2013)	<i>Asfaltoví andělé</i> (2014)	Ondřej Vimr	Kniha Zlín	2000
JH: <i>Hush Baby</i> (2015), psychological thriller	<i>Hush Baby</i> (2016)	Helena Matochová	Kniha Zlín	2000

⁵ An extract from this novel published in the newspaper *Národní práce* in 1945.

⁶ In the collection *Sedm životů. Antologie severských novel* (Seven lives. Anthology of Nordic novellas).

⁷ Her maiden name Černohorská, see above.

⁸ Member of the Albatros publisher group, see below.

Most of the authors and books translated are relatively current; only Kyrklund, Olsson, Tikkanen and Jansson represent works more than twenty years old and already more or less canonised in the Finland-Swedish literary field. The single authors of different generations are usually represented by one work, only Jansson, Olsson and Holmström by two, and Pettersson by three. Pettersson's and Holmström's books represent favourite contemporary genres.

The translations were made by many different translators of several generations. Even in case of Pettersson, each of the three books was translated by a different person. Only Černohorská-Hartlová and Matochová translated more than one book, the former having translated two Finland-Swedish socially committed works, the latter being a specialist in noir. The publishing houses are also different. Only Argo is more active with its four Finland-Swedish books (see below – Tove Jansson).

As to print runs, it is necessary to point out that a large print run in this case does not automatically indicate high sales. It is often an administrative decision caused by the deformed economy as well as publishing conditions during the era of Communism 1948–1990, when the economy was state and not a market one (cf. Dlask & Fárová, 2012, 62). Although the print runs are much larger than in the case of poetry (see above), the character of works differs even here (cf. the more intellectual character of Kyrklund's short format and its much smaller print run). Tikkanen's book, two of Pettersson's books (2011, 2012) (sic!) and Holmström's book from 2014 obtained subventions from FILI.

The field centre: bourgeois theatre

In Bourdieu's diagram, the bourgeois theatre is situated in the centre (see Bourdieu, 2010, 167).

In 1965, the Dilia publishers, specialising in drama, published a play named *Kattorna* (orig. in 1961, in Czech *Kočky*) by Walentin Chorell. It was translated by the above-mentioned Karel Tahal and staged in 1982 in Gottwaldov (now Zlín). Nevertheless, the best-known Finland-Swedish playwright in the Czech Republic is Bengt Ahlfors. Five of his plays (see below) have been staged since 1987 by twelve Czech professional theatres, eight in Prague and others in Kladno, Ostrava, Karlovy Vary and Uherské Hradiště (WS1, 3, 8, 9).

Table 3

Original	Czech	Translated by
<i>Finns det tigrar i Kongo</i> (1986) (BA together with Johan Bargum)	<i>Hic sunt leones, Zde jsou lvi</i>	Monika Pajarová
<i>En teaterkomedi</i> (1983)	<i>Divadelní komedie</i>	František Fröhlich (prose and drama translator from English and North Germanic languages, e.g. Henrik Ibsen) (WS6)
<i>Aska och akvavit</i> (1999)	<i>Popel a pálenka / Paní plukovníková</i>	
<i>Den sista cigarren</i> (2004)	<i>Poslední doutník</i>	
<i>Illusionisterna</i> (2001)	<i>Iluzionisté</i>	

Commercial pole

The criteria of the commercial pole (many readers, large print runs, economic profit) (See Bourdieu, 2010, 156–189) can be found in several cases at different times of the explored period.

During 1930's, the most visible Finland-Swedish debut was made by Sally Salminen, who became internationally known and translated into many languages. She was also translated into Czech and published only one year after the original:

Table 4

Titel and year in orig., Czech title	Translator	Edition years	Publisher
<i>Katrina</i> (1936), <i>Katrina</i>	Marie Lesná-Krausová	1937, -40, -41, -48	A. Neubert
<i>Den långa våren</i> (1939), <i>Dlouhé jaro</i>	J. Vrtišová	1940, -41	

Besides Tove Jansson's works for adults (see above), her books for children were published in Czech – by Albatros publishing house, a specialist in literature for children. All of them were translated by Libor Štukavec, an academic affiliated with the university in Brno, and specializing in Swedish language, Scandinavian literatures, as well as translating from Swedish (WS7). The list of these books ordered according to the Czech edition of the work in question is in Table 5 (PR – print run in thousands; 1st–5th edition in Czech):

Table 5

Original title and publishing year ⁹	1 st ed./PR	2 nd ed./PR	3 rd ed.	4 th ed.	5 th ed.
<i>Trollvinter</i> (1957)	1977 (20)	1990 (25)	1996	2005	2012
<i>Trollkarlens hatt</i> (1948)	1984 (80)	1996	2000	2010	
<i>Muminpappans memoarer</i> (1968)	1985 (30)	1995	2004	2016	
<i>Farlig midsommar</i> (1954)	1994	2003	2011		
<i>Kometen kommer</i> (1968)	1995	2002	2010		
<i>Sent i november</i> (1970)	1997				
<i>Det osynliga barnet</i> (1962)	1997	2007			
<i>Pappan och havet</i> (1965)	1998	2014			
<i>Småtrollen och den stora översvämningen</i> (1945)	1999				
<i>Allting som är trevligt är bra för magen – Tänkt och sagt i Mumindalen</i> (2005)	2006				

⁹The Czech titles: *Čarovná zima*, *Čarodějův klobouk*, *Tatínek píše paměti*, *Bláznivé léto*, *Kometa*, *Pozdě v listopadu*, *Neviditelné dítě a jiné příběhy*, *Tatínek a moře*, *Cesta za tatínkem*, *Muminí moudra: Nápady a průpovědky z mumínho údolí*.

The first five of seven comic strips named *Mumin* (1977–1981) by Tove and Lars Jansson were published in Czech (*Muminek 1–5*) by Argo publishers (1–2: 2009, 3: 2010, 4–5: 2011), translated from the English version (*Moomin*) by Luboš and Libuše Trávníček. In 2011, Argo published three other books by Tove Jansson, all of them translated from English by Dominika Křest'ánová.¹⁰

A mechanical use of Bourdieusian methodology would say that next edition of a book means its canonisation, which could apply to both Salminen and Jansson. On the other hand, this process should take decades, which is not relevant for Salminen. It can be supposed that the reason for the repeated editions was a short-term commercial success. The breaks between editions of Jansson's books are longer, but the character of literature for children does not imply traditional canonisation process as in the case of poetry as specific fights in the literary field. It is more likely that when an edition was sold out, a new one was made.

Discussion and Conclusion

In contrast to Finnish literature published in Czech after 1989 (see Dlask & Fárová, 2012), the mechanisms within the Czech publishing field of Finland-Swedish literature are much more fragmentary. It has been translated by many different persons specializing in Swedish or other Nordic languages. Some translators even used Finnish or other translations (e.g. English, especially on the commercial pole) of Finland-Swedish texts for their work. Many different Finland-Swedish authors and works have been translated and published by many different publishing houses, Finland-Swedish prose being the most varied category as to the spectrum of authors and works.

Nevertheless, as it has been shown, the division between the intellectual and commercial pole confirms that the use of Bourdieusian approach is productive. The intellectual pole especially showed the significance of two publishing houses, Práce and Odeon, the position of Finland-Swedish modernist poetry and prose (Södergran, Carpelan, Olsson) and its introducers to the Czech field (Branislav, Michl). Short stories, extracts and essays (similar to poetry – not necessarily recent but belonging to the classics of the Finland-Swedish canon) are especially published in cultural revues. The selection of works translated by the author of this article is connected with his research interests (see Biographical note).

The theatre segment, represented by Ahlfors and his translator Fröhlich, is also strong. Commercially successful literature was/is represented by Salminen's books published by A. Neubert (1937–48) and Moomins, translated especially by Štukavec. The publishing houses Albatros and Argo have played an active role since 1977, respectively 2002. Grants and subventions, whether from FILI or the Czech authorities, have been used only since 1997.

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¹⁰ *Moomin and the birthday button – Muminek a narozeniny; Moomin and moonlight adventure – Muminek a noční dobrodružství; Moomin and winter snow – Muminek a snh.*

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