Edfeldt, Chatarina.Falk, Erik.Hedberg, Andreas.Lindqvist, Yvonne.Schwartz, Cecilia.Tenngart, Paul. "Introduction: The cosmopolitan, the vernacular and the semi-periphery." *Northern Crossings: Translation, Circulation and the Literary Semi-periphery*. New York,: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. 1–20. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781501374272.ch-1>>.

Downloaded from Bloomsbury Collections, www.bloomsburycollections.com, 26 April 2023, 06:59 UTC.

Copyright © Chatarina Edfeldt, Erik Falk, Andreas Hedberg, Yvonne Lindqvist, Cecilia Schwartz and Paul Tenngart 2022. Released under a CC BY-NC-ND licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>). You may share this work for non-commercial purposes only, provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher, and provide a link to the Creative Commons licence.

Introduction: The cosmopolitan, the vernacular and the semi-periphery

How do literary texts circulate between languages and literary cultures? Well, it depends. The conditions for adapting stories, plays and poems to new audiences show great variety. This is not only due to different relations between languages, cultures and markets, but also to generic differences and particular shifts in status, values and associations involved in the translational process. In this book, we are looking at a specific kind of translational situation: the literary traffic to and from Swedish.

The Swedish literary market is certainly not a central space in the world literary system, but neither is it a distinctly peripheral one. Alongside a few other literary languages – among them Spanish, Italian, Danish and Polish – Swedish can be placed in the so-called literary semi-periphery, a middle position between the very significant and dominant central languages on the one hand and the dominated peripheral languages on the other (Casanova 2004).

Our collective studies show that one effect of this un-dominant and un-dominated position of literary Swedish – as a source language as well as a target language – is a very nuanced and multifaceted relation to the cosmopolitan and the vernacular. Seen as two ends of a dynamic spectrum between, on the one hand, transnational and ostensibly universal tendencies, and on the other hand, firm anchorage in a particular and limited cultural space, the cosmopolitan and the vernacular have proven productive concepts in understanding the semi-peripheral translational position of literary Swedish. Sometimes, literary translations to and from Swedish have cosmopolitanizing effects, but just as often they tend to vernacularize texts, *œuvres* and cultural phenomena.

The two fundamental concepts of our exploration are not to be understood as absolutes. Rather than seeking definitions of what the cosmopolitan and the

vernacular entail, we want to identify and study the processes and strategies of cosmopolitanizing and vernacularizing. Consequently, we would like to distance ourselves from every use of the vernacular as synonymous with a particular political or cultural entity, such as a region or a nation. Instead, we would like to re-interpret them as terms describing processes in the circulation of literature. Cosmopolitanizing and vernacularizing are movements in two different directions on a scale from the most limited circulation of cultural goods to the largest possible one. Crucially, cosmopolitanization and vernacularization can exist alongside one another (e.g. in a text) and can be differently configured on different levels.

Cosmopolitanizing, when it comes to the circulation of literature, means, as we understand it, adapting a text in a generalist way, playing down its source culture particularities. Vernacularizing, on the other hand, means highlighting these very particularities. These processes do not occur only in translation and translation practices, but also in publishing, framing and marketing of translated literature. Consequently, not only translators but also intermediaries of many different types are involved in the shaping of these processes.

Equally important is that we do not intend to identify or analyse the cultural identities of literatures and authors. Of course, every author is rooted in a specific cultural, political and social environment – or, in the case of migrant or exiled authors, several such environments – but these kinds of environment are not the focus of our study. We are not so much concerned with the authors themselves, but rather with the way that authors and works are handled, presented and processed in the practice of cultural transfer.

We have chosen the semi-periphery as our main focus in this volume. While central and peripheral literary spaces have been defined and, at least to some extent, studied, the semi-periphery has not been taken into due consideration by scholars of world literature. We suggest that the semi-periphery is an ideal point of departure to further the understanding of world literature, because this is a place where the cosmopolitan and the vernacular interact in ways that have not yet been thoroughly explored. As a consequence of this continuing negotiation between the cosmopolitan and the vernacular, the semi-periphery is an area of transition in which the concepts of ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ are questioned. This means that our investigation will also offer a discussion of the centre-periphery model as such.

The state-of-the-art

Although this volume has been conceived and written with an ambition to broaden the research perspectives on world literature, there are a number of similar works that together have paved the way for our contribution. We would like to especially mention the following.

In some ways analogous with our volume, the anthology *How Peripheral is the Periphery? Translating Portugal Back and Forth* (2015) provides an examination of translation flows in and out of the Portuguese cultural system. The discussion's rationale draws from the assumption that Portugal's cultural system should be regarded as semi-peripheral for its intermediary position of cultural and literary transfer. This position derives, in turn, from the historical (as a colonial power) and sociocultural perspectives in which Portugal has, simultaneously, inhabited a central position within the Portuguese-speaking world and a peripheral position within the European context (Maia et al. 2015: xix). The volume has a twofold aim, as it sets out to reflect upon Portugal's position as a place of translation (of import and export) and to critically and theoretically explore the position of the (semi-)periphery, as posed in the title. The case studies cover a rich variety of literary genres and provide an analysis of, e.g., what is translated in and out of Portugal in different historical periods, as well as illustrative examples of imported translations filling a void in the national production. The analytical approach, in some parts, coincides with ours, although the present volume covers more translation flows, while also placing an emphasis on intermediary agents.

The volume *Doing Double Dutch* (2017) presents a substantial study of the circulation of Dutch literature abroad, with a focus on cultural mediators and reception. The theoretical and methodological framework is largely inspired by theories on cultural transfer and the sociology of translation. Drawing on this common ground, the twelve case studies explore a variety of themes with regard to Dutch literature. The analyses are often intertwined with notions and ideas deriving from the fields of reception studies, intermedial studies, adaptation studies, cultural memory studies, etc. The focus of *Doing Double Dutch* differs, however, from the studies included in the present volume, as we take into consideration translation flows both into and out of Sweden. We also address translation to a greater extent, exploring translation strategies in the actual texts, as we recognize the importance of addressing translation not only as a means of circulation but also as a literary strategy.

The same can be said about an older study with a similar scope, the 2008 *Translatio: Le marché de la traduction en France à l'heure de la mondialisation*. This volume, edited by literary sociologist Gisèle Sapiro, presents results from a collective study of the French publishing landscape, but also sheds light on translations from French. The focus of the different contributions is largely the same as in the present volume, including an analysis of the agents of cultural transfer (publishers, translators, institutions, etc.). In the introduction, Sapiro expresses an ambition similar to ours: to use the sociological study of agents as a way to escape from binary oppositions and to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of cultural transfer. Much like *Doing Double Dutch* though, the authors of *Translatio* largely omit the study of translation strategies. Also, while there are a few passages discussing French as a source language for literary translation, the bulk of the volume specifically deals with the French publishing landscape.

In the introduction to *Translation and World Literature* (2019), Susan Bassnett highlights 'the rocky relationship between translation studies and world literature' and the 'lack of communication' between the two disciplines (2019: 1). By underlining the importance of language skills in the field of translation studies and its links to comparative literature, Bassnett outlines how these studies differ from the scholarly background of world literature studies. The essays included in the book put emphasis on translation, including both close and distant reading. For instance, by focusing on the transnational circulation *and* translation strategies in conventional and popular literature, Martín Gaspar's study criticizes the tendency in both fields to concentrate on either innovative and subversive literature or on consecrated 'masterpieces' and other 'world literature-worthy' literature (2019: 107).

The recent volume *Translating the Literatures of Small European Nations* (2020) takes into account several issues that are relevant for the present study. As the title indicates, the studies included in the book explore how so-called 'small-nation' European literatures (i.e. Catalan, Czech, Dutch, Greek, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Slovene, etc.) circulate transnationally and how these literatures 'negotiate and seek to overcome the inequality born of these mutual "provincialisms", as expressed in theory, reception and industry practice' (Chitnis and Stougaard-Nielsen 2020: 1). The introduction to the volume reflects on the risk of overestimating the importance of the dominant centre-periphery model but also the opposite risk of underestimating power relations and 'peripheral desires for the centre' (2020: 4). The case studies offer many valuable

contributions to the field of circulation studies and to the present volume, for instance Gunilla Hermansson's and Yvonne Leffler's essay on the transnational circulation of nineteenth-century Swedish women writers, and Ondřej Vimr's study on supply-driven translation which addresses the importance of state support for interperipheral circulation. As in the cases of *Translatio* and *Doing Double Dutch*, the volume avoids taking into consideration the textual dimension of translation as well as the notion of the semi-periphery.

Another recent publication, *Scandinavia through Sunglasses: Spaces of Cultural Exchange between Southern/Southeastern Europe and Nordic Countries* (2019), is an outcome of the research group 'Found in translation: Southern Europe/Norden', based at Oslo University. The volume is divided into three sections, of which the first and most substantial one concerns literature. The seven essays included in the section deal with a variety of issues related to representations of the North and South in authorships, literary texts and translations. However, only three of the essays address similar issues as the ones we explore in the present volume: Ingela Johansson's and Marianna Smaragdi's investigation of Swedish literature in Greece and Spain, Hanne Jansen's study of the selection strategies of contemporary Italian literature translated into Danish and Giorgia D'Aprile Østvær's analysis of how culture-specific items in a Swedish novel are translated into Norwegian, English, Italian and Spanish.

Afropolitan Literature as World Literature (2020), the most recent instalment in Bloomsbury's 'Literatures as World Literature' series, takes as its topic the type of cosmopolitan novel that has been published to international best-selling effect in recent decades. Written by authors such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Teju Cole, Tayie Selasi, Yaa Gyasi and others, the Afropolitan novel, and the ideas associated with it, has been simultaneously acclaimed for presenting alternatives to Afro-pessimism and criticized for its elitism and blindness to African social realities. In his introduction, the editor James Hodapp sets out the terms of the debate and contextualizes the emergence of the genre. Importantly for our purposes in this study, Hodapp suggests that its international success presents 'unique challenges to World Literature systems' (2020: 6). What Hodapp means is that, in what he calls Damrosch's 'model' of world literature (which is Hodapp's point of reference), literary works achieve international recognition *after* national fame. Damrosch's 'world literature', according to this view, is a canon of translated works made up of the best works from various national cultures. As Hodapp rightly points out – and in doing so, reiterates a point made by Graham Huggan, Eileen Julien and others in recent decades – for almost all works that

count as African in transnational literary space, the opposite trajectory is the case. Afropolitan works are 'born global', Hodapp writes in a phrase that echoes Rebecca Walkowitz' 'born-translated', and gain traction 'as literature *of* the continent by achieving *outside* the continent' (2020: 6).

Another conceptually important work for our research is one of the latest volumes in the book series 'Literature and Contemporary Thought', *Literature and the World* (2020) by Stefan Helgesson and Mads Rosendahl Thomsen. The volume consists of seven chapters guided by the ambition to critically present some of the main tendencies in world literature studies today and to identify blind spots and problems in its current phase of development. The seven chapters discuss four approaches in relation to world literature: the seasoned national and comparative schools as well as perspectives from postcolonial and translation studies, the scales of the ecologies of literature (Beecroft 2015) and the concept of significant geographies (Laachir et al. 2018). Furthermore, the impact of the methodology of digitization in the humanities and its significance for world literature are emphasized in the chapter 'Media and Method: The Digitized Babel'. Particularly the chapters 'Geographies: Reading the Oceans' – in the way that it clearly shows how the routes of literature cross with the patterns laid out by historical power relations – and 'Translation: Duration and Cosmopolitan Reading' – in its way of elucidating how the complexity of language and the choices of the translator are central issues for world literature studies – have been crucial for our endeavour.

Together, these works show the potential inherent in our perspective on world literature. In the following section, we will further elaborate on the background and object of the present study.

Sweden, a particular case of the possible

In order to analyse the role that translation plays in the semi-periphery and to describe the conditions under which literature travels to and from that position (as well as studying the cosmopolitanizing and vernacularizing processes included in that transition), we have chosen to work with what in Bourdieusian terms might be called a particular case of the possible. The purpose of this volume, then, is to describe and analyse the role of the *Swedish* semi-peripheral position in world literature from different perspectives and on different levels, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, and with an emphasis on the

period 1980–2018. Our aim is twofold: to analyse the role that translation plays in the semi-periphery and to describe the conditions under which literature travels to and from that position.

The existing studies of semi-peripheral literary spaces, some of which have been mentioned above, tend to focus on one language or one nation. The scope of the present volume is wider. Sweden, Swedish literature and the Swedish publishing field are used as recurring examples, even though the focus is not on Sweden as such, but rather on the semi-peripheral transitional space as exemplified by the Swedish case. In order to describe the dynamics of this semi-peripheral space, we study literature moving both in and out of Sweden.

In other words, our analysis of a particular case does not mean that we give up the ambition to make generalizable propositions. Rather the opposite, since the comparative method, which treats its object as ‘a particular case of the possible’, prevents us from unjustifiably universalizing the conclusions. Furthermore, Sweden presents an especially productive case, since its status as a semi-peripheral literary sphere has proven to be remarkably consistent, compared to other languages that have been moving in and out of the semi-peripheral position, e.g. Russian, Japanese, Danish, Polish and Czech.

This understanding of the semi-periphery gives our volume a broad perspective as it involves very different literatures that share a similar position in the literary field and/or interact in different ways with literatures in that same position. The literatures studied are, on the one hand, Swedish literature translated into English and French and, on the other, Caribbean (in Spanish, French and English), Lusophone, Italian and Anglophone African literature translated into Swedish. In the following paragraphs, we will give an introductory overview of these translation flows.

Translations from Swedish to English have lived through some distinct changes since the 1970s. Early in this period, classics and children’s literature were dominant categories. Whereas children’s literature has kept its central position until today, the extent to which Swedish classics have been translated has fallen significantly compared to other kinds of literature. In the 1980s and the 1990s, there was an increase of contemporary, high prestige Swedish fiction in English, but around the turn of the millennium this genre was overshadowed by suspense fiction. Since 2000, crime novels have been central in the presence of Swedish literature on Anglophone markets. Some of the best-known authors and titles have, of course, been published by big and powerful American and British publishers, but English translations of Swedish literature have

predominantly been published by a wide range of small agents, not only based in many different parts of the USA and the UK, but also in India, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland. In recent years, there has also been a distinct increase of English translations published by small Swedish publishers.

Swedish literature translated and published in France is characterized by a large proportion of high prestige literature, by both older canonized authors and contemporary consecrated ones. This can be partly explained by the French literary field occupying such a central position in the world literary space, urging Swedish authors and publishers to put in extra work in order to accomplish translations of high prestige literature. French publishers were also quick to catch on during the boom-like success of Scandinavian crime fiction in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Swedish children's books, on the other hand, saw a somewhat later breakthrough on the French book market than on other comparable markets. Translations play an important role in France, where prestigious publishers market their translations in special series, such as Gallimard's *Du monde entier* and Le Seuil's *Cadre vert*. Especially since the 1980s, translations – both from and to French – have enjoyed state support in what has been described as a conscious counter-strategy, in the face of a rising anglo-globalization.

Italian is a rather small language in comparison to other Romance languages such as Spanish and Portuguese, and yet its literature enjoys a prominent position internationally, including in Sweden. To a large extent, Italian literature translated into Swedish consists of older classical works from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, modern classics from the twentieth century and contemporary literature which has been consecrated by national institutions. Even though literature with a high commercial potential is less represented, translations originating from the Italian language area are available in almost every literary and non-literary genre. The Swedish import from Italian includes mainly novels but also poetry, theatre, graphic novels and children's literature as well as a considerable proportion of non-fiction, such as reportage, religious literature, philosophy, cookbooks and gardening books. Postcolonial writing, which emerged in Italy in the 1990s, has to date left very few traces on the Swedish book market.

Anglophone African literature exemplifies a literary culture that is at once smaller than a language and larger – indeed, much larger – than a nation. Within the segmented thinking common in the publishing world, 'African' – in whatever language – constitutes a significant category for the selection and

the marketing of books (Thompson; Huggan). ‘African literature’ is a niche for publishers, comparable to other niches, and the existence of literary festivals, literary prizes, specialized publishers and book series devoted to this literature are examples of its existence (e.g. Ducourneau). This is the case even when the category is sometimes part of broader labels such as ‘postcolonial literature’ or ‘world literature’ (Brouillette; Huggan).

Historically, the discourse of ‘African’ literature is in significant ways an effect of colonial print culture. From the establishment of the first missionary presses to more developed cultural fields – literary production in what at the time were colonies was imperially structured. One of the lasting effects of this colonial history is that, with the exception of countries such as South Africa and Nigeria, which have large culture sectors, literary fields, at least when it comes to printed matter, are in many places highly transnational – or, as other critics have labelled it: extroverted (Julien 2006; see also Suhr-Sytsma 2018). Two effects of this characteristic relevant for the present study may be noted. First, international writing careers do not develop, as in the case of some of the other literatures investigated here, through national recognition *first* and translation and/or foreign publication *second*. In practical terms, with one single exception – the author Elieshi Lema from Tanzania – all the works included in the material studied here were published first in the UK or the USA. Second (though a related point), in what appears almost an inversion of European authors reaching international fame, acknowledgement in African markets *follows* international fame (Hodapp).

The category ‘Anglophone African’ as used in this study is, then, intended to combine two ambitions, one analytical and one discursive: on the one hand to capture the number and the rate of Anglophone writers from the African continent who are published in Sweden, and on the other, to discuss the extent to which books by African authors are published and marketed *as* ‘African’ – that is, whether they are cosmopolitanized or vernacularized.

Like Wendy Griswold in her study of the ‘Nigerian literary complex’ (2000), we use birth or a prolonged stay in an African country (or the colonies that preceded the independent country) as the selective criteria. This means that Doris Lessing and Alexander McCall Smith, both of whom were born in what was Southern Rhodesia and later became Zimbabwe, and lived longer periods outside the African continent, are defined as ‘African’ authors – and as a consequence novels by Lessing with no African content or theme are included in the category. For most of the authors, it remains the case that they live in

places such as the USA or UK (or like Nuruddin Farah in South Africa or J. M. Coetzee in Australia) or live between continents.

Translated literatures from Portuguese into Swedish, referred to in the present volume as Lusophone literatures, originate from a variety of geographical locations: Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, East Timor, Mozambique and Portugal. Consequently, this literature also constitutes a non-national literary flow and a culture much larger and more diversified than a single nation. The notion of 'Lusophone' will be used in this volume, strictly as an adjective, when referring to all these literatures written in the Portuguese language (for practical reasons such as not having to constantly list the source cultures). Yet it should be stated that the use of the term here by no means suggests a notion of homogeneity for these diverse cultural expressions, blind to the internal cultural power structures and uneven circulation conditions that clearly exist between these different literary flows in a global perspective. On the contrary, as many researchers have rightly pointed out, an unpolitical and unified cultural conception of 'lusophony' as representing a larger cultural Portuguese-speaking community still needs to be questioned and decolonized (see Almeida 2004, Martins 2012).

For the translations into Swedish, the common denominator of the Portuguese language functions as a predominant organizing factor for how these literatures come to be translated and published. However, a single focus on language cannot present the whole picture of the migration paths of these translations. On the one hand, an approach to the Lusophone literature as an entity is justified because these literatures, to a high degree, share the same limited pole of translators and small-scale niche publishers, as well as enthusiastic cultural mediators promoting its dissemination. On the other hand, African, Brazilian and Portuguese literatures all contain specific interrelations of cultural exchange and historical connections with the Swedish cultural environment, which influence and guide their translational pathways.

With historical roots in colonialism, the Portuguese language is today one of the most spoken and geographically widespread languages worldwide. Nevertheless, when it comes to the Swedish literary market, there is still a modest translation flow. During the period 1980–2018, most of the Lusophone translated authors are men (79 per cent) and belong to the category of contemporary award-winning and highly consecrated authors in their source cultures, as well as in the inner Lusophone market. The novel is by far the most translated genre, although some poetry and children's literature are also published. There is a predominance of translations from Brazilian authors (58 per cent), over Portuguese authors

(28 per cent) and African authors (13 per cent). A tendency that has increased constantly and which has allowed literature from Brazil to be more diversified, in terms of published popular authors, women writers and biographies.

Much as in the preceding sections considering Anglophone African and Lusophone literature, what is considered Caribbean literature written in French, Spanish and English is on the one hand determined geographically by the use of the adjective 'Caribbean', and on the other by the way that the authors are presented to the Swedish readers – as Caribbean authors, which is an important marketing and framing strategy shown to appeal to northern minds. The literatures stemming from this part of the world are homogeneous neither when it comes to languages, genres and literary themes nor when it comes to patterns in bibliomigration (Mani 2014, 2017) to peripheral or semi-peripheral positions in the global translation field. What they have in common is their colonial history of oppression, the use of the colonial languages (sometimes mixed with local varieties as in the case of Maryse Condé, Edwidge Danticat and Junot Díaz) and the fact that the overwhelming majority of the works translated into Swedish are contemporary novels, written by notable writers and translated by highly consecrated translators, whether American or Swedish. Another common feature of Caribbean literatures is that they do not constitute an important literary flow to Sweden in numbers during the examined time span. The importance of French and Spanish as source languages in translation into Swedish has decreased constantly during the last decades, presently not even reaching 3 per cent of the published translations, and Caribbean Spanish and French literature represent a tiny fraction of that percentage. English as a source language for translations into Swedish, on the contrary, covers more than 70 per cent of all translated fiction today and has constantly – compared to French and Spanish – increased during the same time.

However, Caribbean literature in the three different languages represents in fact three different literary consecration cultures, where the French language Caribbean literature can be described as mono-centric, the English language as duo-centric and the Spanish language Caribbean literature as pluri-centric, which means that vernacularizing translation processes differ substantially from one language group to the other (Lindqvist 2019). French and Spanish novels often need to be consecrated within the Anglo-American literary culture before being considered for translation into Swedish. These bibliomigration patterns are formed by double consecration processes, firstly within the centre(s) of the former colonial power (Paris, Madrid, Barcelona) and secondly within the centres of the

Anglo-American literary culture (New York, London). Few Swedish publishers will undertake the costly enterprise of publishing a Caribbean author who has not previously been consecrated by international literary prizes or awards.

An approach to world systems theory

World literature is a system of interconnected literatures; that is the basic realization governing this study. Unlike scholars who have seen 'world literature' as a global canon or mode of reading (Damrosch), or a particular type of literature (Walkowitz, Parks), our approach fits well in a tradition of scholars from the American sociologist and economic historian Immanuel Wallerstein and the Dutch sociologist Abram de Swaan, the Italian-American literary scholar Franco Moretti and the French literary sociologists Pascale Casanova and Gisèle Sapiro (the latter two heavily inspired by Pierre Bourdieu). Wallerstein's 'world systems theory' (1974), a macro-scale approach to world history and social change designed to analyse the division of labour between core, semi-peripheral and peripheral countries, was further developed by de Swaan (2001) into a theory of a global language system, consisting of a hierarchy of languages on four different levels: peripheral, central, super-central and hyper-central. Marxist dialectics is a key ingredient in both Wallerstein's and de Swaan's system: social relations and/or language positions are dependent on economic and political structures.

The thought of a 'world system' was of great importance for the revitalization of the study of world literature, which occurred around the turn of the millennium. In a move that both extended and critiqued postcolonial and comparative literary studies as they had previously been practised, Moretti claimed that world literature should not be regarded as a set of works or a canon; according to him, world literature is not even 'an object, it's a problem, and a problem that asks for a new critical method'. Like world capitalism, Moretti claimed (echoing Wallerstein's Marxist approach) world literature is 'one, and unequal: with a core, and a periphery (and a semi-periphery) that are bound together in a relationship of growing inequality' (Moretti 2000).

The theory of a 'global literary space' was also at the centre of Pascale Casanova's seminal book *La république mondiale des lettres* (1999; *The World Republic of Letters* 2004). Wallerstein's binary opposition between core and periphery is still present in Casanova's work, where dominating literatures

are separated from dominated ones and where the state of literature today is the result of a constant fight for symbolic literary power, acquired with the help of aesthetic originality. On the other hand, in *La république mondiale des lettres* there is a strong emphasis on the independence of the literary world: 'its boundaries, its capitals, its highways and its forms of communication do not completely coincide with those of the political or economic world'. Clinging on to this relative independence of literature, Casanova has been described as too idealistic, and her model conspicuously ignores the popular dimensions of literary production and circulation, which are more firmly tied to economic incentives and logics. Several of her colleagues – among them Sapiro – have tried to integrate her vision of the literary world with the practice of literary sociology, including an analysis of the politics of publishing, marketing and framing. For Casanova, the introduction of a literary work in translation is first and foremost an act of aesthetic warfare; for Sapiro, it is also – and perhaps simply – the result of a marketing strategy. Casanova has introduced the overarching vision of how the global literary space works (dominating and dominated literatures, the struggle to define *the literary now*, etc.); Sapiro points to the empirical methods that may be used to analyse these processes.

However, these thinkers' tendency to construct models in terms of binary oppositions, such as dominant and dominated, or distinct categories such as core and periphery (including, but less clearly, the semi-periphery), prove unsatisfying both in terms of description and explanation, and our focus on the semi-periphery (rather than the much more studied centre and periphery) is a way to question this theorization. How, for instance, is translation into Swedish of an Italian literary work – the transfer between two literary languages which both belong to the semi-periphery – best described in terms of the centre-periphery model? And in Casanova's terms: which language (or literary culture) consecrates which through such an act? Or, to take a different example: is the translation of an Anglophone African author's writing appropriately described as the transfer from a 'hyper-central' into a peripheral or semi-peripheral language? Or, again in Casanovan terms: what literary cultures do Anglophone or Lusophone African writers belong to, or Caribbean authors writing in English, Spanish or French?

As these examples – all drawn from the literary translation flows examined in this book – indicate, our quarrel with world systems theory lies on two points. The first concerns the bounding of literatures involved in cultural exchange, the second concerns the relevant scale of comparison.

In world-scale comparisons of translation flows, such as Johan Heilbron's for instance, language is used as the analytical unit. On this basis, languages are grouped with respect to their centrality and their role in the global exchange of literature. English, as stated, is 'hyper-central' due to the proportion of translations, and central languages function as mediators for translation:

the communication between peripheral [language] groups often passes via a centre ... the more central a language is in the language system, the more it has the capacity to function as an intermediary of *vehicular language*, that is, as a means of communication between language groups which are themselves peripheral or semi-peripheral.

(Heilbron 2000: 15)

We do not question Heilbron's description of the overall dynamics of global translation flows, but his general postulation ignores, and therefore fails to provide the tools to explain, translations that occur without passing through more central languages. In the Swedish literary semi-periphery, as will become clear in the chapters that follow, such literary exchanges make up a significant part of the total volume of translations. An additional drawback of the model is that it leaves uncommented the fact that languages and literatures do not always overlap, as the cases of Anglophone African, Lusophone Brazilian and African literatures and Caribbean literatures in this study exemplify.

From this perspective, Pascale Casanova's modelling of a world literary space, which combines language and territory, is a more flexible approach. Casanova's examples may appear somewhat ambivalent on the centrality of national space but her use of the term 'linguistico-literary capital' ('capital linguistico-littéraire') – that is, the combination of language and what she calls literary resources – indicates there is in principle nothing national about it (2002: 9). And, as Anna Boschetti has emphasized, the Bourdieusian concept of the 'field' itself is not inherently nationalist, even if Bourdieu's own analyses was centred on nationally circumscribed fields (Boschetti 2012: 19–20).

A further indication that language and literary tradition may exist as a fraught whole is, of course, Casanova's insistence that oppositional tendencies help in constituting and perpetuating literary tradition. 'For a language to acquire a high degree of literariness', Casanova writes, 'it has to have a long tradition, one that in each generation refines, modifies, and enlarges the gamut of formal and aesthetic possibilities of the language, establishing, guaranteeing, and calling attention to the literary character of what is written in it' (2004: 18). This refinement, as she

clarifies, also includes literary expressions ‘written *against*’ established norms, as in the case of Anglophone postcolonial literature, which is her example here. However, Casanova’s description of literary struggles occurring *in a language* and enriching that language even as they stretch across colonial or national spaces, is difficult to reconcile with her use – and examples – of the terms ‘national’ literatures, and ‘national’ versus ‘international’ writers, as well as the vagueness on the geographical boundaries of literary cultures. Postcolonial literatures offer test cases in this respect. Two examples may be briefly invoked as illustrations.

In her discussion of ‘Colombian’ literature, Casanova writes that ‘One speaks today ... of Colombian literature and of Colombian writers as if they form a politicoliterary entity that is a recognized reality’ (2004: 206). Her argument is that this talk ignores the transnational networks and discourses which enable Colombian literary space to form: the large number of exiled writers, the publishers and literary agents in Barcelona and New York, and the literary debates carried out among writers from various Latin American countries. But it is unclear in Casanova’s text whether the ‘Colombian novel’ and the ‘Latin American’ novel (terms she uses interchangeably, it appears) are the same thing; and how this type of novel relates to the Spanish language in which it is written, and hence to Spanish literary culture. While her basic observation seems to us correct, it is not easy to infer from her account what literary field or fields these authors themselves are located in, help to shape and compete in.

Casanova’s discussion of Trinidadian-British author V. S. Naipaul reveals this conceptual imprecision even more clearly. Quoting at length from Naipaul’s lecture ‘Our Universal Civilization’ in which he points out the literary infrastructure needed to support a career in writing – ‘To get your name on the spine of the created physical object, you need a vast apparatus outside yourself. You need publishers, editors, designers, printers, binders, booksellers, critics, newspapers, and magazines ... and, of course, buyers and readers ... This kind of society didn’t exist in Trinidad’ (204) – she argues that it is precisely from the insight into the social and infrastructural character of a literary space that ‘dominated national literatures’ can be made part of a model of world literary space. ‘By describing the dilemmas, choice, and inventions of writers for outlying spaces as a set of mutually related positions’ it becomes possible to ‘reintegrate’ exiled or migrant writers with the ‘native lands’ from which they have disappeared (204), she writes. What such reintegration means is, however, far from clear. What literary field, or what literary culture, should Naipaul be considered as originating from, and contributing to?

Arguably, one reason for this weakness in Casanova's analytical model is her avoidance of the empirical aspects of literary exchange. Despite her emphasis on the significance of the 'cultural intermediaries' (which serves as a point of departure in Chapter 2 in this volume), her primary focus throughout *La république mondiale des lettres* is on individual authors and nations or literary cultures – a focus that remains in her last book, on translation, *La langue mondiale*. Postcolonial literary scholarship based in print culture and book history has been better equipped to address various instances of non-alignment of language and national field under different rubrics and with more detail. In his study of the postcolonial literary magazines in Mozambique and South Africa, Stefan Helgesson uses the term 'discourse network' to describe the ways in which language and literary infrastructures make up a landscape through which literary content may travel – the point being that the 'discourse network' is reducible neither to the (newly independent) nations as in a 'national culture', nor to the language (Portuguese, English) used for creative expression, nor to the metropolitan locales which enable the circulation of the texts (2008: 11–12). Caroline Davis' studies of the activity of British publishers' activities in late-colonial and early postcolonial African countries have demonstrated the extent to which literary markets were intertwined. To account for this relation of separation and connection, Davis has adjusted Bourdieu's notion of a divided literary economy to speak of a dual market for literature in which the active publishers were able to accumulate both economic and symbolical capital at once, and through the same books, albeit in different places (2012: 346). Key to the conceptual productivity of studies such as these is their grounding in the concrete circumstances of literary production and circulation. The present volume tries to follow a similar course by staying close to the empirical ground. Rather than 'field', then, we reserve the deliberately vague term 'publishing landscape' for the spaces in which the respective translation flows occur.

The second issue – the first one being about the bounding of literatures involved in cultural exchange – concerns the scale at which literary comparisons are made. On the macro scale, analyses of translation flows typically include all *books* in all *genres*, and do not necessarily offer much to explain the ways in which *literary* works are transferred and exchanged, nor do they enable discussion of the different conditions that apply to, say, poetry, fiction, written plays or children's literature. At this aggregated level, accordingly, explanations for trends are correspondingly broad. One example is the demotion of the Russian language from being a central or semi-central one to a semi-peripheral

one, which Heilbron explains as caused by the break-up of the Soviet Union (Heilbron 2000: 15). Structural and statistical bird's-eye views like these have their merits, but they also show how explanation is necessarily tied to analytical scale. What global comparison at this level forecloses are aspects such as the significance of literary genres and the key role played by agents and institutions (Franssen 2015, Meylaerts 2018). For our purposes, even studies with a comparative 'world' perspective require a more fine-grained approach. Sapiro's investigation of the translation of French literature in the United States – distinguishing between types of novels translated and publishers putting them on the literary market – and Verboord, Kuipers and Janssen's analysis of interrelated forms of institutional recognition strike us as exemplary in this regard (Sapiro 2015, Verboord, Kuipers and Janssen 2015).

The methodological choices behind our study result from our approach to world systems theory. Accounting for the interaction of the world's literatures arguably constitutes a 'problem' no less today than in 2000, when Moretti formulated his challenge. Case-based theorizations of world literature, such as Walkowitz' or Tim Parks', in which a particular *kind* of literature – the 'born-translated' novel or the 'global novel' – is taken to be typical of our times – or any time – depend on the exemplary nature of the cases presented. Even such a conceptually solid understanding of 'world literature' as the one used by Warwick Research Collective (WReC) – for whom the term designates literature which mediates and registers the modern capitalist world system – arguably relies on the premise that certain literary works are *more expressive than others* of the capitalist world (2015: 9). The dilemma of exemplarity in literary study is, as Moretti has recently stated, a version of the dissected meanings of what constitutes the 'normal': the 'frequent-habitual-average' or the 'ideal-normative' (2020: 129).

Quantitative methods are less vulnerable to the problem of exemplarity. In Katherine Bode's view, they also enable valuable inroads in literary study since they begin from a view of literature as a 'system ... rather than a collection of individual texts' and use numbers and statistics as useful ways to investigate how the system works as well as test assumptions presented by more conceptual literary study (Bode 2012: 9, 23–4). Data, and use of a quantitative method, are central to our examination of the Swedish literary semi-periphery. As will become apparent, we use meta-data to count in several ways: the number of translations, the number of editions, the percentages of men and women authors, the years between source text publishing and translation. The statistical measures are simple and use meta-data drawn from existing databases such as

Index Translationum, or raw data provided by the national bibliographies and other authorities. The methodological steps taken are described in more detail in each chapter.

Statistical measures are, however, unable to fully answer all the questions that engage us. The analyses of translational strategies, for instance, are brought out through interpretation rather than measurement, and publishers' marketing and framing of authors – particularly in relation to processes of cosmopolitanization and vernacularization – are best discussed through hermeneutic and semiotic reading of individual book covers, blurbs and presentational material.

The aim of the methodological mix employed in this book is to enable a rich description of the literary semi-periphery and the conditions that underlie its literary traffic. In taking this vaguest and least studied literary world system position as our starting point, we also hope to add to an ongoing critical examination of the world systems model, even as we adhere to it.

A collaborative method

Much like WReC, we believe in the potential of collaborative work for the advancement of world literature study. The conception and writing of this volume would not have been possible without the special interests and research experience of the members of our research group. For a single researcher, it would be difficult to master all translation flows analysed in this volume. This has to do with the massive body of material (databases, publishers, translators, institutions) that has to be taken into consideration, as well as the many languages (English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Swedish) in which all this literature is written. In other words, the method of co-writing is very much connected to our insistence on the importance of analysis based on empirical study. Research should start with a meticulous study of the object itself – qualitative, but also quantitative – and the more knowledge we are able to accumulate, the more valid our conclusions will be. A group of researchers is of course better suited for this kind of work than a single researcher.

The empirical groundwork of this study has been carried out by the individual scholars. Paul Tenngart has been responsible for supplying data on the Swedish–English translations, Andreas Hedberg has supplied the Swedish–French data, Cecilia Schwartz has been responsible for the Italian–Swedish flow and Chatarina

Edfeldt has contributed with the Lusophone–Swedish observations. Erik Falk has supplied data on Anglophone African literature in Swedish translation, and Yvonne Lindqvist has been responsible for studying English, French and Spanish Caribbean literature in Swedish. In collecting this data we have all followed the same three-level optics. Translational conditions have been observed on the micro, meso and macro levels – that is, on the level of particular books and texts, on the level of publishers and translators and on the level of literary markets and cultures. This three-level model has then also been operational in our collaborative work of interpreting and comparing the collected data, and in describing the translation patterns they illustrate.

Outline of the volume

Northern Crossings investigates the circulation of literature through the Swedish literary semi-periphery from a number of angles, especially during the period 1980–2018.

Chapter 2, in a reference to Pascale Casanova's idea of 'cosmopolitan intermediaries', investigates what might be called the 'cosmopolitan infrastructure', which enables literary texts to cross borders through translation. Chief among the agents making up this infrastructure are the publishers, which are the focus of the chapter, but references are also made to state policies, since translation support programmes and cultural institutes also impact patterns of literary circulation. Publishers are analysed with respect to how they are placed in their respective literary fields, and how they select and market their authors. We investigate cases of what has been called *horizontal isomorphism* (Franssen and Kuipers 2013: 67–9) in which similarly placed publishers translate and put out each other's works, and discuss instances where publishers occupy widely different positions in their respective fields.

Chapter 3 discusses translators of Nobel laureates. The focus in this section lies not so much on the translations themselves but on who are given the task of translating the authors, and whether translation is primarily a way for a translator to bolster his reputation by taking on a highly renowned author, or whether the author stands to gain by being translated by a prominent translator. The guiding assumption behind this discussion of pairings – that translators can themselves bestow symbolic capital on an author – is that in Sweden translation is an established profession which constitutes its own relatively autonomous field,

an idea that is elaborated in Chapter 5. In this section, drawing on discussions of the 'economy of prestige' (English 2005), we also explore the possible existence of a 'Nobel effect' – that is, whether laureates experience a translation boom after their award.

In Chapter 4, we look at the translations themselves and the way the translated texts are packaged and presented in the target culture through 'paratexts' – for instance blurbs and publisher profiles. How do the translated texts relate to concepts such as domestication, foreignization (Venuti 1995) and untranslatability (Apter 2013)? In this chapter, we analyse a selection of novels from each translation flow, with a focus on the treatment of vernacular elements, introducing the categories of reduction, retention and replacement – are the elements of a source text that are clearly rooted in the source culture reduced, retained or replaced by the translator? The employment of the three concepts, we suggest, allows for a more detailed analysis than Lawrence Venuti's much-used domesticating/foreignization pair, especially when it comes to the different ways of handling vernacular elements in the source texts. With our wide range of examples of translations to and from semi-peripheral languages and spaces, we are also able to discuss semi-peripheral translation generally. Is semi-peripheral translation (both to and from a semi-peripheral language) a particular kind of translation?

Chapter 5 charts the broader outlines, the trends and some of the changes that occur in each translation flow over the period. Against a background that uses statistics on translation ratios to describe Sweden's position in the world literary space, we sketch the characteristics of each translation flow over the period studied with respect to the kinds of literature and gender bias. Indicators of the profile are genre, the temporal gap between source language publication and target language publication and the ratio of women authors translated. This way, we aim to provide a changing profile of the literary target culture on the Swedish literary market and in concrete ways present the Swedish position as the sum total of a set of relations with other literary cultures in which each literary exchange is driven by its own particular (if not unique) dynamics.