

## The Swedish Reception of Jaan Kaplinski's Works and the Expression of the World Literary Field

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this article is to examine the reception in Sweden of Jaan Kaplinski, one of the most internationally recognised Estonian writers and to trace the relations that emerge from the perspective of world literature. Does the reception of Kaplinski's work actualise the influence of world literary circulation through centres, similarly to Pascale Casanova's conception or, rather, has the literary communication between Estonian and Swedish literature taken the shape of a dialogue between two national cultures? Are there combinations of these approaches or something different altogether? Using the example of Jaan Kaplinski's Swedish reception, I investigate what characterises the meeting between the fields of two (semi)peripheral national literatures, and what world literary contexts are expressed in the reception. I also identify and trace which interpretations of Kaplinski are distinctive in the Swedish literary field.

**Keywords:** Jaan Kaplinski, the field of world literature, the field of Swedish literature, reception, national literatures, Estonian literature, translations of Estonian literature, centre and periphery

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Jaan Kaplinski (1941–2021) is among the internationally best-known Estonian poets, whose collections have been published in 20 languages, and, if one adds poems included in anthologies, and his prose, more than 30. In 2016 he was awarded the European Literary Prize (Le prix européen de littérature). Kaplinski's Swedish-language reception and its context in world literature provide multi-layered opportunities for analysis as a case study, because he is one of the first Estonian authors of the post-World War II generation whose works were translated outside the Soviet Union, in addition to which the translation of his works into Swedish has been more lively than for many other Estonian writers. In addition, Kaplinski has had greater world literature ambitions than others among his countrymen.

Literary circulation between Estonia and Sweden is not quite a given. The two countries are neighbours, but due to constantly changing political circumstances, literary circulation has not been established on a solid and functional basis, particularly from Estonia to Sweden. Sociological studies on the translation market have confirmed that more works are translated from larger languages into smaller ones, and this also applies to Estonia and Sweden: more Swedish literature has been translated into Estonian than vice versa. However, research has also emphasised that the condition for works in smaller (or peripheral) languages to be translated into larger

ones may presume the previous publication of a work in a larger literary language; only then can translation reach smaller or more remote languages (e.g. Heilbron 1999; Heilbron and Sapiro 2007). For example, recent research in Sweden shows that in order for Caribbean Latin American literature to be published in Swedish, it must first be initiated into the English literary field (Lindqvist 2018, 100–110), although for linguistic comprehension, translation into English might not be necessary.

French literary scholar Pascale Casanova (2007) has highlighted the trajectories of translation into major centres and languages using the term 'world literary space'. As the sociology of translation currently focuses mainly on power relations in literary markets, and Casanova's own focus is on the mechanisms that consecrate top literary writers, such concepts exclude many regions of the world and literary modes of circulation. American literary scholar David Damrosch's (2003) approach provides some balance, emphasising as it does that world literature is born in every specific process of translation and of reception that occurs between at least two nations, as the work emerges from its culture of origin and enters another. In this case the translated text is surrounded first and foremost by the local literary field of the culture of destination and by world literature translated into that language, whether this is canonical writers and works or the various manifestations of contemporary literary circulation.

Sweden has long had a strong Anglo-American orientation (Svedjedal 2012, 238), and therefore reliance on culture that originates in large centres has become strongly rooted there. However, the fact that Estonia and Sweden are neighbouring nations, and that Sweden has been home to a large number of Estonian refugees from World War II favours the hypothesis that literary relations between the two countries were both more frequent and more independent of literary circulation through other centres. In other words, literature has not had to travel via New York, London, or Paris. Additional aspects influencing literary mediation in the post-World War II years included ideological factors, and the Iron Curtain; other political influences could also have made a mark on literary circulation.

In this article I will trace the reception of Jaan Kaplinski's works in Swedish. In what cases is the influence of the circulation through larger centres noticeable, and how? In which cases has translation and reception taken place in the framework of a clearer Swedish-Estonian cultural dialogue? What other influencing factors, such as political ones, can also be seen in the reception? In addition, I will pay attention to which interpretations of Kaplinski are characteristic of the Swedish literary field, and into which world literary contexts Kaplinski's works are situated by Swedish criticism. The chronology of publication of Jaan Kaplinski's translated works will be examined, as well as their reception in Swedish print media. The material comprises eleven books in Swedish, but closer analysis is made of five of them, along with their reviews (Kaplinski

1982b; 1982c; 1988; 1990; 1993; 1997; 2002; 2003; 2007; 2009; Kaplinski and Põllu 1987). The article supplements the author's previous research (Heinloo 2012; 2013; 2017), indicating that the background material is actually larger and rather more specific to individual texts than it is possible to examine in a single article.

### **The centres, semi-periphery and periphery of the world literary field**

I regard world literature as literature that transcends the boundaries of its national origin through translation, and which is also recognised in other national circles or countries. Such a view corresponds to the vision of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (Pizer 2014, 4–6; Lukas 2016, 21–22), who brought the term world literature into use in 1827. In her concept of world literary space, Pascale Casanova has developed the most important aspect of Goethe's vision, that is, the idea of literary circulation. By entwining the French cultural idea of the republic of letters with Pierre Bourdieu's sociological field theory, she shows how the admission of literature into the world literary canon<sup>1</sup> (or its more permanent elevation to the top) is preceded by active literary circulation through large literary centres (Casanova 2007). Her concept of literary actuality also primarily refers to what is considered interesting in these centres. Casanova refers to the latter as the "Greenwich Meridian of literature", which signifies that which takes place in the centre and the other "literary contemporaneities" that enter into relation with it (87–103). This means that literature holds a position in many fields<sup>2</sup> at once, both the national literary field, the world literary field between two national literatures, as well as a global scale. One should add here that the field between two national literatures does not necessarily remain limited as such, since it also includes translated literature in the country of destination.

On this basis I consider the world literary field to be a conceptual field created in the translation and reception of specific works in the relations between at least two nations. I will trace the form in which such a field is expressed in an international context. Is its background the more hierarchical and regionally more open (or global) treatment of world literature (similarly to Casanova's world literary space)? Or do one-to-one literary relations in more peripheral regions take place less hierarchically, extending primarily between two national cultures?

In order to describe intermediary areas between the centre and the periphery the concept of semi-periphery is employed, signifying either large language areas in states that are less influential economically and politically or, the reverse, smaller language

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1 Cf. David Damrosch's concepts of countercanon and minor canon (2006).

2 I prefer using the term field, although Casanova uses space to distinguish herself from Bourdieu. I see field as a more abstract term that is suitable to emphasise the relativity of power relations in the study of reception.

areas in states that are more influential or successful. The circulation of translated literature and the dynamics of directions of movement are influenced by political, economic, cultural and social categories (Sapiro 2016, 82). These influences can vary. For example, considering the smallness of its language area and book sales volumes, Estonian literature will always be located in the periphery, but culturally and politically its position can shift. In the case of literatures in the European periphery, intellectual historian and literary scholar Katarina Leppänen has emphasised regionality as one point of departure for research, allowing the inclusion of periphery in the semi-periphery. For example, she has foregrounded the example of Scandinavian and Baltic literatures (Leppänen 2018, 84). In the context of the translation market of literature, the category of “semi-periphery” is used to emphasise the role of the language of departure for translation, not so much the connection with the number of native speakers of the language (Heilbron and Sapiro 2007, 3–4).

Direct literary relations between a peripheral and/or semi-peripheral area permit the questioning of the more common patterns found in the book market. If on the one hand it is practical and safer to translate and publish literature that has been tested, here we can discern a somewhat unnecessary reliance on authority, instead of ensuring and expressing quality by one's own acts of translation. In such a context those cases are more exciting in which the pattern has been broken, and translation takes place based on the reciprocal interests between two literatures and the possibilities of circulation. This presumes the existence of many specialists in different languages, and it may be a challenge, but its value can be appreciated particularly in small language areas, as well as in comparative literature.

### **Relations between the Swedish literary field and the world literary field**

To date, the translation and export of Swedish literature is substantial, particularly when compared to the number of native speakers of Swedish (Svedjedal 2012, 236–239). As of the 1980s and 1990s Swedish is one of the largest languages of origin for translation; it is among six semi-peripheral languages, of which 1–3% of belles lettres has been translated (Heilbron 2000, 14). Johan Svedjedal, who has studied Swedish literature from a world perspective, emphasises that the success of Swedish crime fiction did not fill a void: newer success stories rely on previous ones, such as the long international visibility of August Strindberg, Selma Lagerlöf and Astrid Lindgren (Svedjedal 2012, 244–245). These success stories in turn rely upon previous cultural-political decisions and historical events. For example, the Swedish Academy, established in 1786 for the development and reinforcement of the Swedish language, became, in 1901, the awardee of the Nobel Prize in Literature, to date one of the most prestigious awards in world literature. Thus, an institution with strong national importance has become an

institution which has a strong influence on world literature (cf. e.g. Espmark 2005). Eight Swedish writers have been awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. In view of what will be argued below, Jaan Kaplinski's poetry enters into dialogue with authors from among this circle of awardees, along with the works of Pär Lagerkvist (1951), Harry Martinson (1974), and Tomas Tranströmer (2011).

By the 1990s translations made up 25% of belles lettres published in Sweden; a century earlier the percentage was higher, fluctuating between 50% and 75% (Svedjedal 2012, 237–238). Beginning in the 1870s the largest share of literature translated into Swedish came from English, and the relative weight of English has risen since then (ibid.). After World War II translations of literature from East Europe slowed down because of the Iron Curtain. After Stalinism, from the end of the 1950s, one of the first sources of translation was Polish literature (Uggla 2011, 26–35); works from Hungarian began to be published in the second half of the 1960s (Blomqvist 2017, 94). Sweden opened more clearly to the literatures of East Europe and other nations in the 1970s, when the second generation of refugees of various nations had grown up in Sweden (Gröndahl 2002, 36–37). This meant that they could become mediators of literature as translators, or they could enter literature as authors. The year 1970 also saw the advent of the Fripress publishing house, which facilitated the publication of many authors from East Europe.

Literary relations between Estonian and Sweden can more visibly be traced from 1938, when the translation of A. H. Tammsaare's novel *Husbonden på Kõrboja* (orig. *Kõrboja peremees*, *Master of Kõrboja*, 1922) was published, followed by August Gailit's *Människor på en ö* (*Karge meri*, *Rough Seas*, 1938). Further communication was interrupted by the Second World War, during which about 21,000–22,000 Estonians fled Soviet occupation to Sweden (Kumer-Haukanõmm 2014), and thereafter translations were published of some Estonian exile authors living in Sweden (for example the novels of Valev Uibopuu and the poetry of Marie Under). In the same period translations of a few Soviet Estonian authors were published, which had the goal of furthering communist propaganda. Some young authors made their literary debuts in Sweden, for example Käbi Laretei (1970) and Peeter Puide (1982).

On the other side of the Iron Curtain, among writers who had grown up in the Soviet Union, Jaan Kaplinski was the first to be translated into Swedish: in 1982 his collection *Våra skuggor är mycket långa* (*Our Shadows are Very Long*) was published. It is from that time that one can see a marked quantitative rise and a more continuous wave of translations of Estonian literature into Swedish. In addition, Latvian literature from the other side of the Iron Curtain began to be published in Sweden in the 1980s, where the first single-author collections were of the poetry of Imants Ziedonis and Vizma Belševica in translations by Juris Kronbergs (1978; 1980).

### The work of Jaan Kaplinski and its reception in Sweden

Eleven works of poetry and prose by Jaan Kaplinski have been published in Swedish (1982–2009). Given the volume of the material, I will respond to my research questions using five of Kaplinski's works, all of which are poetry collections, and the intellectual diary *Titanic och isen* (The Titanic and the Ice, 1997). Such a selection is also supported chronologically, because it permits us to follow Kaplinski's reception continuously from the beginning until the year 1989. The selection also includes a prose text that has received the greatest response and which was published almost 10 years later ("The Titanic and the Ice"), followed by the most recently published poetry collection 10 years later again. This sample does not include the reception of the novel *Samma flod* (The Same River, 2009), which may be important, but which has been analysed in a separate article (Heinloo 2013).

Reception of Kaplinski's works can primarily be found in newspapers. Some reviews have also been published in literary and cultural magazines (for example *Allt om Böcker*, *Var Lösen*). Kaplinski made an appearance on the *Baltiska möten* radio show in 1986, when he was visited by radio journalists Ingegerd Lundgren and Maarja Talgre. He appeared on television in 1988 in a broadcast entitled *Grannland Estland*.

Most of the reception of the Kaplinski works under analysis here consists of short reviews in Swedish and Finnish–Swedish newspapers. For most of the 11 works the number of reviews is between 10 and 15. Exceptions are the first collection of poetry (1982) and the last (2007), for both of which there were six reviews. The largest number of reviews (21) was published for *The Titanic and the Ice* in 1997.

### *Våra skuggor är mycket långa* 1982 (Our Shadows are Very Long)

The way translation of Jaan Kaplinski's poetry began in Sweden in 1982 is noteworthy, since this is one of the first of Kaplinski's books to be translated into any foreign language.<sup>3</sup> This is also one of the first translations of Estonian literature into Swedish after the beginning of a more stable translation rhythm. The first of Kaplinski's poems to be selected, under the title *Våra skuggor är mycket långa*, was translated by Ivo Iliste and his wife Birgitta Göranson. Ivo Iliste was among those World War II Estonian refugees to Sweden who grew up and completed their education in Sweden. He was also among those Estonians from abroad who, along with Ilmar Laaban in Sweden and Hellar Grabbi and Ivar Ivask in the USA, noticed Kaplinski's poetry from their location beyond the borders and began to translate it. Estonians from abroad perceived that Kaplinski's poetry would speak to others in the context of world poetry (Grabbi 1973;

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3 Among the first publications of Kaplinski's poetry in separate authorial collections were translations into Czech (1982) and Finnish (1984).

Ivask 1968; 1977; Lehiste 1968). Iliste particularly emphasised the relationship of Kaplinski's poetry to nature and an open ecological world picture (Iliste 1982).

Kaplinski's poetry, selected from three of his collections<sup>4</sup> under the joint title *Our Shadows are Very Long* (1982) was published by the small but high-quality house Fripress, established by the writer and journalist Lennart Frick (b. 1939). Fripress had also begun publishing other East European writers as well as those from lesser known or smaller language regions. In spring 1982 Kaplinski's collection was published alongside collections by Czech poet Jaroslav Seifert, the Hungarian Sándor Csoóri and Géza Thinsz, who had Hungarian roots but had fled to Sweden. It is clear that the goal of Fripress was to convey, in Swedish, the works of top literary writers from different nations. However, at the time of translation, many of these authors were yet to receive international recognition and had not become established, some were from the younger generation. Thus Lennart Frick did not follow and confirm waves of world literature, but rather participated actively in the shaping of them, even before the authors achieved broader international recognition.

How were the first efforts to translate Kaplinski expressed in the reception of his first poetry collection? There were six reviews. It is noteworthy that most of the reviews cover several Fripress books at once; in three of them, the publishing house is praised for its efforts. A small but separate review of Kaplinski's poetry appeared in the national *Svenska Dagbladet* (Küng 1982). Since the author was not yet known in the Swedish literary field, the reviews are introductory in nature.

The contribution of translated literature to the Swedish literary field is explicitly discussed by two critics (Wahlstedt 1982; Erixon 1982). The first one poses the questions: How many poetry translations are merely a variation of what has already been articulated in Swedish? Does poetry as a whole undergo uninterrupted development, so that, for example, poetry written in the languages of the Baltic countries<sup>5</sup> will pass through the same phases of development already accomplished in England and Sweden? The reviewer adds, in conclusion, that Iliste and Göranson's "translation has awakened interest in what more there might be to read from those silent countries which were once part of Sweden" (Wahlstedt 1982). Clearly the critic considers his homeland, Sweden, to be part of the Western cultural space, where directions and

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4 The selected poems have been compiled from the following collections: *The Fish Weave Their Nests* (1966) – 3 poems; *Of Dust and Colours* (1967) – 15 poems; *A White Line Above Võrumaa* (1972) – 17 poems; *The Growth of New Stones* (1977) – 11 poems from the *Same Sea in Us All series*.

5 The word *baltiska* in Swedish is polemical; it can mean the languages of the Baltic countries and Baltic languages. It is possible that the critic is talking about the Balti languages, to which group Estonian does not belong. At the same time, the critic may mean the Baltic countries and the languages that are spoken there, in which case Estonian is among them: in the next section the critic discusses Kaplinski's poetry collection (cf. Heinloo 2017, 34).

trends are set by English-language literary field. It is another matter to read the remaining commentary as tendentious or colonialist. It remains unclear whether the critic understands that the writers of the neighbouring country „have been silent“ because they were violently cut off from the larger world, and not voluntarily, as if they had nothing to say.

Peter Lucas Erixon, who writes in *Östersunds-Posten*, is the second critic who, by reviewing several poetry collections at once, has attempted to make a more general statement. He grants that these works are united by the East European origins of the authors, and acknowledges that there are traces of meaning in this poetry that cannot be found in contemporary Swedish poetry. However, he expresses doubt as to whether all of these nuances come through in translation, and he therefore encourages the translation of one or other poetry collection as a whole (Erixon 1982; cf. also Heinloo 2017, 34). In addition the critic implies that there would be greater value in reaching the poets' "real [poetic] language", which brings human language together on a deeper level. Thus he perceives the universal dimension of this literature.

This East European context and the way the poetry transmits its meaning are not analysed in depth in newspaper articles. However, in the eyes of one critic, the entwining of the international and the personal in one poet, the Hungarian Sándor Csoóri, allows the emergence of "that sadness and longing that we western Europeans presume is hidden in East European poetry" (Wahlstedt 1982). This particular kind of sadness is not exactly articulated in Kaplinski's anthology of selected poetry, but there is the perception of pain and bitterness at the oppression of Indigenous peoples and the dying out of species and languages, and at the pain of collective historical memory. Critics also recognise the more peaceful quality of his poetry with eastern influences, but the highest regard is given to the bolder, more incantatory-prayerful poetry from *The Same Sea in Us All* cycle, from the *The Fish Weave Their Nests* collection (cf. also Heinloo 2017).

There are three ways in which the world literary context is actualised in the reception of Kaplinski's first poetry collection in the Swedish literary field. Firstly, there is the position of the translators and publisher Lennart Frick as active creators of the currents of world literature, even though their work entails moving between semi-peripheries. Secondly, at least one critic has expressed the Swedish orientation toward the centres of the English-language literary field. One can also observe approaches to literary works based on the critics' own culture, that is, the Swedish literary field, by means of which they can achieve a broader perspective. More general and more open treatments of literature emerge because other top writers from East European national literatures are published simultaneously, thus favouring treatments of literature that span larger regions and currents. So, thirdly, both the broader and the more nationally



focused approaches are represented, but what appears dominant is the situating of East European literature in relation to the Swedish and Western literary field, so that the “land of origin” is not separate for each national literature. Rather they inhabit the larger region of Eastern Europe.

### ***Barn av vind och vatten 1987 (Children of the Wind and Water)***

Kaplinski’s further reception in Sweden takes an unusual turn because the translation of the next work I will consider was carried out in cooperation with the exhibition of Kaljo Põllu’s graphic art in a travelling exhibition in 1986 in Norway and Sweden. In Sweden the exhibition was first staged at the Art Hall of Södertälje, and it subsequently travelled to Göteborg, Umeå and Örebro (Kübarsepp 2005, 68). In conjunction with the exhibition a catalogue was published in 1986, and Fripress published a book in 1987 entitled *Children of the Wind and Water*. These two publications overlap in content, but have different formats.

Fripress’s *Children of the Wind and Water* consists of a selection of reproductions of Kaljo Põllu’s series of mezzotints entitled *Dwellers* (Kodalased, 1978) and *The Power of the Rod* (Kalivägi, 1988) accompanied by poetic prose texts written by Kaplinski. This book, published in Sweden in a poetry format is one of the most unusual of Kaplinski’s works, as the text and picture are positioned in equal length on the pages, side by side. This allows for a stronger dialogue between them and scrambles some signals: which came first, the image or the word? In the book, Kaplinski’s name comes before Põllu’s. The edition published in Norway in 1984 has the format of larger images and smaller text blocks, so the overall impression is of an art book. In the collections of Põllu’s reproductions that were published in Estonia, Kaplinski’s texts are on the reverse side of the pictures: once again, art is in the foreground. In Estonia these texts are recognised by means of the work of Kaljo Põllu, not so much as separate texts by Kaplinski. Neither are these texts considered separately among Kaplinski’s poetry collections, though they are considered part of his creative work (cf. for example Salumets 2014). Kaplinski’s larger contribution is recognised as his essays and articles on similar subjects, through which Põllu’s creative work is conceptualised (cf. also Heinloo 2017).

Therefore, the fact that the book was published by a poetry publisher, and that in Sweden Kaplinski’s name had been known longer than that of Põllu, also contributes to the unusualness of Kaplinski’s Swedish reception in the world context. First, such a work has not been published in English; second, the context has been differentiated in the Scandinavian countries. It is particularly in the Swedish reception that the potential of Kaplinski’s texts as prose poetry is foregrounded; indeed, Kaplinski himself has not emphasised these texts in the same way as the rest of his work. In any case, the warm critical reception of the book indicates that it can speak to larger literary cen-

tres. This prevails despite art researcher Riin Kübarsepp's claim that Põllu's poeticised mythological art and its rough freshness and darkness were especially appreciated by the Saami people of southwest Norway and a northern art audience in general (Kübarsepp 2005, 68).

The reception of the work is also influenced by the afterword, where Kaplinski gives an overview of the folk psychology of small or oppressed small peoples and explains the tension between cosmopolitanism and nationalism or nativism. He writes that the cultural orientation of Estonians has largely been forced upon them by foreign powers (primarily German and Russian), but that in the early 20th century, cultural exchange became more differentiated, and learned Estonian circles became more conscious of French, English, and Scandinavian cultures. In counterpoise, many artists and creative people (including the influential Uku Masing) began studying the Finno-Ugric roots of the Estonians. This enabled the finding of one's cultural specificity, but in the course of a search for roots one often reaches back to ancient times. This ethnic layer, or the search for roots, has a general human cast, for the effort to define identity is characteristic of the majority of peoples (Kaplinski 1987).

Regarding this second translated work by Kaplinski, the number of reviews has grown a little, now totalling nine book reviews and two reviews of the exhibition. This time there were no reviews in the Swedish national daily papers, although some were published in the evening papers *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen*, as well as larger regional newspapers. There are three statements of praise for the publisher. Marianne Svensson (1988) notes the ambition and courage, while Magnus Ringgren (1987), writing for *Aftonbladet*, recognises the publisher's ongoing efforts to publish the literature of the Baltic lands: "Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are our neighbour nations; this is a fact that we often forget." In the newspaper of the Gävle region, critic Ulf Jönsson (1987) writes in a more principled manner when he praises the new work as "a direct hit from the publisher that fights against superficiality and isolation in the Anglo-Saxon literary space" (cf. also Heinloo 2017, 47). Kaplinski himself has also criticised the ways in which larger cultures have nullified the particularity of smaller cultures and nations, and as a critic he is open to alternatives that promote cultural communication independently of the larger mainstream and centres.

This time the criticism that appeared in newspapers is notably positive. Of the eleven reviews, ten were found, only two of which have a more neutral tone. Most of the reviewers praise the afterword, which provides insight into the context of the work and allows critics to better orient themselves with respect to the circumstances of its birth. Critics rely a great deal on the afterword, although in this context the critics' own viewpoint is highlighted. With its combination of text and image, the work has spoken to many and has its own enchanting quality:

There is no doubt that they have found gold in the soil of Estonia. For reading this book is like an invigorating rest from the workaday, responsibility-oriented Civilisatorium: it is like driving into the countryside and inhaling forgotten freshness, like taking another walk along an old, winding gravel road. (Gustavsson 1987)

In a similar spirit the *Göteborgs-Posten* critic Erik Lundeberg (1987) writes: "... it is inarguably enthralling to step out of our own time, leave personal worries and crises aside, and read about this timeless, common and popular anonymity."

In *Aftonbladet*, critic Magnus Ringgren (1987) brings out the relevance and contemporaneity of the work. He also expresses the feeling that today the greatest opportunity for cultural flourishing lies in the borderlands of Europe. When critic Ulf Jönsson (1987), writing for *Arbetarbladet*, emphasises the political quality of Kaplinski's activities and his work, he adds that Kaplinski's poetry, with its deep feeling for nature, is more fundamental and not limited to the critique of commands issued in Moscow. He also calls attention to the fact that the ethnographic dimension in this particular work is neither exotic nor unattainable, that it transcends provinciality and reaches the level of general humanity, which is the core of all good art. When two critics are simultaneously reviewing three works – those of Swedish authors that are syncretic and combine image and word (Hultsberg 1987), and the poetry of writers in different levels (internal or external) of exile (Svensson 1988) –, it is precisely this work by Kaplinski and Pöllu that is valued most highly.

Thus, although the Swedish reception of this work begins with a very strong effort to conceptualise Estonians' search for identity, with all of its means of expression, the work offers such a high level of quality and sufficient new aspects that critics begin to think more globally. In at least six or seven reviews the global world literary field is actualised to a noteworthy extent. While it is not always possible to draw very clear boundaries around general viewpoints or points of departure, be these global or local/regional, those reviews in which both or all three are foregrounded are the most vivid. For example, when the *Aftonbladet* critic praises literary communication between neighbouring countries, his comments take an additional step toward the next region: "With astonishing self-evidence Kaplinski speaks of Estonian culture as Nordic culture. Why is this astonishing? It is true, after all" (Ringgren 1987). While recognising the global relevance of the work, Ringgren simultaneously admits that Kaplinski's and Pöllu's passionate relationship with folk culture remains foreign and compelling for him, and asks,

where are the Swedish artists who, when faced with becoming international (read: Americanised) would use folklore as their sword and Scandinavian myths as their shield? Does our vulnerability in the world

need to be more specific "as for Estonians" so that some such movement could arise from the thoroughly levelled ruins of national romanticism? (Ringgren 1987)

Also worthy of note is the key word naivism, which arises in connection with Kaplinski's poetry in at least three reviews. Clearly this is influenced by the content of the texts which express the world picture and perception of Indigenous peoples, although this naivism is also expressed in the style and tone of the texts (Andersson 1987) and the irresistibility of their simple clarity (Jönsson 1987). This layer has not been noticed in the Estonian reception of Kaplinski (Heinloo 2017), although a similar direction has been appreciated in this new century in the texts of Valdur Mikita.

It is interesting to observe how a work with more numerous ethnic layerings is received in Sweden with such interest, sympathy, as well as a slight sense of surprise. The reviews emphasise how the work reveals the ancient mythical worldview by means of contemporary modes of expression (like a contemporary Kalevala). Despite the fact that the context of the work's country of origin is perceived strongly, and that in at least six reviews russification is considered to be one of the points of departure of the work, this interpretation does not stop at that, nor does this factor assert its dominance. Both the afterword and the work mainly favour a world literary field that emerges from the dynamic between two nations, and even a political version of this dynamic. However, in at least six cases a global literary field similar to that of Casanova is noticable. Critics' conceptualisation and evaluation of the work arrive at its aesthetic level. If the context for the publication of the previous Kaplinski poetry collection was East Europe, now the main focus shifts to a more Scandinavian Estonian and Finno-Ugric culture and related peoples. The reviews recognise the work's high quality and power of address.

### ***Samma hav i oss alla 1988 (The Same Sea in Us All)***

The title of the next Swedish collection of selected poetry is *Samma hav i oss alla*, evidently deriving from the international attention Kaplinski had received, for in the meantime two volumes of his selected poetry had been published in the United States, *The Same Sea in Us All* (1985) and *The Wandering Border* (1987). To simplify, *The Same Sea in Us All* was already published in Swedish under the title *Our Shadows are Very Long* (1982), and now, under the new title, the volume corresponding to *The Wandering Border* (1987) was published (1988).<sup>6</sup> However, it is not that simple and there are no

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6 The London and Canadian publications, which cover earlier poems, are still in process (1990 and 1992; 1991). Thus the US publications affected the Swedish situation most.

one-to-one overlaps in either of the collections.<sup>7</sup> The foreword to the Swedish edition is written by the Finnish-Swedish poet Bo Carpelan (1926-2011), well recognised in Scandinavia. In his “Marginal Notes” he foregrounds the deeply felt connection between the moments and vignettes of life in Kaplinski’s poetry, which find their verbal form through precisely chosen details.

Fifteen reviews were published of this work, this time including national daily newspapers. The larger number of reviews, the places they were published and their timing indicate that Kaplinski’s recognition in larger English-language centres has also had an impact on literary exchange between the two nations of Sweden and Estonia. In addition to the larger number of articles, the rise in the writer’s status can be seen by the fact that this time *Dagens Nyheter* published a review on the day the book was published (Kronbergs 2007, 28–29). Indeed, the book was published in October, but already in January 1988 Kaplinski had made an appearance on the Grannland Estland television program.

Regardless of the political moods of the time (signs of the disintegration of the Soviet Union), the reviews focused not on the politics, but mainly on the text and on understanding Kaplinski’s personal poetics. Nevertheless, a political interpretation is provided by six reviews, two of these with a very strong political dominant, even though this layer tends to be absent in the poetry. Communication between the countries increases the search for a layer of collective memory in the poetry, but generally it is agreed that what Kaplinski deals with in his poetry is deeply personal and thereby universal. In the national newspaper Svenska Dagbladet, literary scholar and critic Tom Hedlund writes that in the best part of his poetry, Kaplinski submits to his own soul without any ulterior motive, and that this is where the author shows himself to be a great poet (Hedlund 1989).

Bo Carpelan, author of the foreword, focuses on living in poetry and on sharpening one’s perceptions, though he also mentions Kaplinski’s mature life wisdom. In his texts critics also find pain as part of the reality of the moment as well as of historical memory (cf. also Heinloo 2017, 66). In the eyes of one critic, Kaplinski’s poetry also contains a personal connection to and experience of Poles and Jews, which becomes just as graspable there as it does in Polish poet Jerzy Ficowsky’s poetry collection on the topic of the Holocaust (Svensson 1989). Another critic compares the heaviness of Kaplinski’s soul and his perception of reality with the French philosopher and mystic Simone Weil (Lundstedt 1989).

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7 The 1988 book of translations into Swedish contain 15 poems from the collection *It is Hard to Become Light*, which have a laconic poetics, and 22 poems from the collection *The Evening Brings Everything Back*, which is noteworthy for its more flowing associative poetics and precise use of detail. The choice of poems from the second English-language collection primarily derives from *Evening Brings Everything Back*.

Of poets with a similar creative nature as Kaplinski, Carpelan's foreword mentions the Finnish-Swedish poet Rabbe Enckell and Gunnar Björling. Tomas Tranströmer is also mentioned as a kindred spirit of Kaplinski (Gustafsson 1988) who has a similar sense of time (Eiritz 1989). Tranströmer and Björling are mentioned as having a poetics of similar linguistic density to that of Kaplinski (Gustafsson 1989). As Kaplinski's role models Ingrid Eiritz (1989) mentions Pushkin and Lermontov, and in his poetry she finds parallels with several Russian poets at odds with the Soviet regime (Pasternak, Ahmatova and Mandelstam) as well as with T. S. Eliot from the West. Eiritz explains that this might sound as if Kaplinski is an epigone of these poets, but instead there are similarities in their feeling for life. She also sees Kaplinski as strongly rooted in Eastern wisdom. Gustafsson (1989) sees similarities between Kaplinski and Gunnar Ekelöf as to the melding of the personal and the universal, and between Kaplinski and Pentti Saarikoski in the simplicity and naturalness of tone. According to Gustafsson, Kaplinski showed even greater mastery in the prose poetry of his previous Swedish-language collection. This shows once again that *Children of the Wind and Water* has a special place in Kaplinski's Swedish reception.

The reviews focus on Kaplinski's mystique of reality, and many examples are given of influential details or poetry that has touched the soul. In the case of critics who wrote in the national newspapers, one can notice a greater sense of responsibility in the formation of opinions. In the *Svenska Dagbladet* review the expression "soul ecologist" is used (Hedlund 1989), which also appears in later overviews (Sommelius 1989; Kronbergs 2007).

Kaplinski's mild descriptions of everyday life become absorbing for his interpreters through motifs and details such as a wet white towel and wood sorrel, and the poem "Put the Scythe in the Eaves". Qualities that are appreciated include the poet's ability to bring the great and small, the abstract and the concrete together without the use of stereotypes (Schmidt 1988) and without populist attempts to charm an audience (Lundstedt 1989). Attention was drawn to the fact that the poetry collection creates a feeling of continuity both through its flow and rhythm as well as through a sharpened perception of what is there (Gustafsson 1988; Balgård 1988; Lundstedt 1989).

In the national newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, the writer and poet Madeleine Gustafsson gives us to understand that Kaplinski's newer poetry, with its very connected poetic language, cannot be summed up by a message or a philosophy, even though in the West it had become customary to expect clearer moral positions from East European poets (Gustafsson 1988). For almost a third of the reviewers the East European cultural space is an important context. In addition there are four reviews where descriptions of Kaplinski's land of origin point not only to Estonia but also to the Soviet Union. In two of these cases he is judged to be one of the greatest poets of the

Soviet Union. The Baltic countries are brought out in at least four reviews, although this is rather from a political standpoint. Therefore Kaplinski remains located on a regional semi-peripheral field, though with a bit more attention paid to the Baltic countries.

In the reception of the third poetry collection, *The Same Sea in Us All*, one can perceive more of the influence of the larger centres than previously. Specific qualities of communication between nations are foregrounded, for example the Swedish, Finnish-Swedish and Finnish literary field and their points of contact with world literature, particularly through Tomas Tranströmer and Gunnar Ekelöf. Critics also maintain quite a lively interest in political events in Estonia (cf. Heinloo 2017, 64–65). In at least seven reviews – that is, in approximately half of them – one can recognise thinking on the level of a Casanovian world literary field, though this remains on the horizon anyway, given the number of reviews and the extent of attention.

### ***Titanic och isen 1997 (The Titanic and the Ice)***

Kaplinski's work under the Estonian title *Jää ja Titanic* (Ice and the Titanic) is a book of thoughts written in the years 1991–1993 and published in 1995. Between the writing and publication of the book, in 1994, the shipwreck of the ferry Estonia took place as the boat was travelling from Tallinn to Stockholm. After the publication of the book, the shipwreck came to inform its context. The book was published in Sweden in 1997 by Natur och Kultur publishing house in Enel Melberg's translation under the title *Titanic och isen* (The Titanic and the Ice). As can be seen from the reception, the reversal of terms in the title has a great weight with respect to interpretations of the work (cf. also Heinloo 2012). More than in Estonia, the focus in the Swedish translation is on the symbol of the Titanic and a critique of Western civilisation.

Twenty-one reviews were published of *The Titanic and the Ice*, including two reviews in magazines; most, however, were in newspapers. In the context of the wreck of the Estonia this work has received more media attention than any other Swedish translations of Kaplinski's work. Considering the introductory nature of the newspaper reviews, most of them serve the purpose of explaining the central symbol and its problematics. Thus there is much summary and many quotations. Selections and sentences from Kaplinski's afterword (Kaplinski 1997, 137), which focuses on the Estonia, are cited eight times.

In approximately half of the reviews, *The Titanic and the Ice* is viewed in the contexts both of Swedish literature and earlier books published internationally about the Titanic. Such reviews can be found in the larger daily newspapers. The work that is placed alongside *The Titanic and the Ice* four times is Hans Magnus Enzensberger's *The*

Sinking of the Titanic (1978), which was translated from German into Swedish in 1984.<sup>8</sup> The *Dagens Nyheter* critic Ulf Eriksson (1997) claims that these works supplement each other, both with respect to time interval and tonality. Enzensberger is bitter and more aggressive, while Kaplinski is softer but more pessimistic, considering that wars have been fought in the meantime. In the Swedish literary tradition, points of contact are seen between Kaplinski and the works of Werner Aspenström and Harry Martinson (Wistrand 1997; Sandelin 1997).

The *Göteborg-Posten* critic Lars Nygren (1997) discusses the fact that myths such as the Titanic refuse to disappear. At the time the book was published the most expensive Hollywood film about the Titanic was being made, and new stage productions appeared on Broadway, but Nygren does not think Kaplinski exploited the symbol. However, he adds that the scale of progress thus far has been on the level of genetic mutations and Anlara space ships (adding an allusion to Harry Martinson's science fiction poem). Writers who have used the symbol of the Titanic include Karl Asplund (Wistrand 1997), Claes-Göran Wetterholm and Stig Ahlgren (Bolinder 1997) and the musicians Mikael Wiehe and Gavin Bryars (Wistrand 1997).

Implying the difficulties entailed in writing critiques of civilisations (the demonisation of excess technology and ecstatic praise for nature), the *Svenska Dagbladet* critic Jesper Olsson (1997) mentions the international philosopher Georg Henrik von Wright as a thinker strongly influenced by his time (as Kaplinski was). To the same extent, when writing about Kaplinski's work, he draws a comparison with Kaplinski's correspondence with Johannes Salminen (1990), stating that the origins of *The Titanic and the Ice* can already be discerned in that text. As a writer for a national newspaper, the critic has perceived the different literary fields pertinent to the work and is able to switch perspective accordingly. For example, he writes that the wreck of the Estonia adds a level to the work, but the text can also be read independently.

The *Dagens Nyheter* critic who compared *The Titanic and the Ice* with Enzensberger shares Kaplinski's global thinking, but also approaches the writer on the basis of his origins, in keeping with Kaplinski's own experience with the Soviet Union (the death of his father in a prison camp in Kirov) (Eriksson 1997). Although it is quite easy to turn critique of civilisation against Kaplinski, his dogmatic quest for harmony comes across as a manifesto of humility, which contains rare courage. Similarly, Eriksson has succeeded in drawing parallels from world literature in an effort to comprehend Kaplinski's own systems of thought. Having read Kaplinski's previous book *På gränsen som inte finns* (*On the Border That Does Not Exist*, 1993) the critic is thinking about the author when asserting that when feeling doubts about Western civilisation it is not

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8 This work was published in Estonian in Maarja Kangro's translation of 2015.



always necessary to turn immediately toward Eastern ways of thought. Catholic mysticism may provide a similarly universal representation of love. As an example the critic mentions the Spanish poet Antonio Colinas and his book *Treatise on Harmony*, similar in many ways to Kaplinski's work.

On thirteen occasions *The Titanic and the Ice* was compared with Kaplinski's own previous works that had appeared in Swedish; eight critics pointed to previous contact with Kaplinski's creative work through specific comparison (cf. also Heinloo 2012, 19–20). Contact with other Estonian authors comes up in the views of two critics: the *Uppsala Nya Tidning* critic indicates that both the recently reviewed Peeter Puide and Kaplinski hold resemblances to Uku Masing's thinking (Winqvist 1997). The critic for the evening newspaper *Kvällsposten* emphasises the fertility of European literature when reviewing *The Titanic and the Ice* and Maimu Berg's *I Loved a Russian* side by side. (Nydahl 1997).

The reviews also emphasise that the writer thinks globally, travels to conferences all over the world and speaks on philosophy, geography, the wars in Yugoslavia and the freedom of speech of Algerian writers, but the roots of these questions are located in Kaplinski's land of origin and in his past (Eriksson 1997; Söderberg 1997; Bladh 1997). In the newly re-independent Estonia, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Kaplinski searches for alternatives as to which cultural spaces one should orient toward in free Estonia (Saag 1997; Söderberg 1997). Some Swedish critics applaud the setting up of the wreck of the Titanic as a symbol of the disintegration of a system, using the Soviet Union as an example; this symbolic approach is seen as a productive way of reading (Nydahl 1997; Sommeliu 1997). Although the afterword (and the book as a whole) contains the question of the future of humanity, the criticism of the Soviet Union therein has provoked Swedish critics to think more about the past of Kaplinski's country of origin. There is also an opposite example, where the critic refers directly to the freeing of Estonian airspace of Soviet planes and asks what will be the destiny of the land and its people (Rotkirch 1997). Reviews that touch upon the politics of the day are in the minority; however, in connection with the critique of technocracy, today's technological challenges are seen more as those posed by computers or gene technology. Three critics also mention contemporary discussions about nuclear plants (Sommeliu 1997; Nygren 1997; Nydahl 1997).

Kaplinski is referred to as a man of world literature, a recognised poet, and established writer and essayist whose name is always mentioned in the context of the Nobel prize. In reviews dating from after the Nobel discussions in 1996,<sup>9</sup> critics are more knowledgeable about Kaplinski's authorial profile, remarking on his idiosyncrasies, his

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9 Jaan Kaplinski and Tiia Toomet were invited to the awards ceremony in 1996, which they also attended.

quiet and clear writing style, beautiful nature descriptions that capture the silence and connections between micro- and macrolevels.

In the Swedish reception of *The Titanic* and *the Ice* one can sense the world literary field in several ways. More than in Estonia, for example, this work is compared to other books published on the topic of the Titanic, or authors who have used this symbol. In addition, other writers, Swedish or foreign are referred to with whose writings Kaplinski's work is in dialogue. Although on eight occasions Kaplinski's own comment on the wreck of the Estonia is cited from the afterword, and this gives the reception more of a political cast, critics have maintained their more literary approach to the book. One can find reviews in which the author's position is evoked less, but in most of them it turns out that the work has appeared in the Swedish literary field and thereby also entered the field of world literature. Approximately half of the critics view the work more consciously from the perspective of the world literary field similarly to Casanova's sense of the word.

The overall effect is both global and local: the global reach of the themes of the work, the writer's international recognition and the fact that he was mentioned in the context of the Nobel prize constitute one aspect. Simultaneously there is a local dimension, which refers to the shipwreck, which has an impact both on the Estonian and the Swedish cultural field: the outcome is that attention paid to this text in the form of responses in print media is even larger than for previous works by Kaplinski.

### ***Någonstans vid världens kant 2007 (Somewhere at the Edge of the World)***

*Somewhere at the Edge of the World* was published by the Ariel publishing house for the 2007 Göteborg book fair when the focus was on Estonia. That same year twenty translations from Estonian were published. On the one hand this means that the attention of media was divided among several authors, so the predicted number of reviews per text would be smaller; however, Kaplinski was one of the principal guests at the festival and so had the chance to present his own book.

This time the translators were Latvian-Swedish translator and poet Juris Kronbergs, and Guntars Godiņš, who translates Estonian literature into Latvian. Given that there are few poetry translators from Estonian into Swedish, the choice was made on the basis of the translators' experience; both are experts on poetry and have had good contact with Kaplinski.<sup>10</sup> This fact is worth mentioning because it seems that in Sweden there has been somewhat of a fluctuating opinion regarding translation through a third language. The *Uppsala Nya Tidning* critic Tore Winqvist (2008) thinks that this has worked surprisingly well, but critic Staffan Bergsten (2008) is more sceptical, referring

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<sup>10</sup> Based on private conversation with Guntars Godiņš at the Prima Vista literature festival 10.05.2023.

to the half-rhymes in the poems. Evidently this doubt emerges with respect to Part II of the selected poetry, where the poems have a stricter formal structure and employ rhyme, although the proportion of such poems in the collection is small – fourteen poems out of one hundred and fourteen. Since Kronbergs has proven himself as a translator in Sweden, there does not seem to be a general reason for this scepticism. Finding or not finding a translator is a significant reason why this collection appears 18 years after the publication of the previous one.

The same long interval is referred to in the title of one of the introductory articles in the press (Anter 2007), or in the introductory part of another article that states how, despite the fact that Kaplinski is an established author in Sweden, this new publication after such a long period has the effect of a new acquaintance (Granberg 2007). This is, in fact, so, since the selected poems bring together a larger number of periods and include poems from previous collections that have not appeared in Swedish. The critics' introductions of Kaplinski as a writer are broader – he is one of the central authors of Estonian poetry, well known both in Sweden and the world at large, and therefore annotations are shorter. Overviews are based on Juris Kronbergs' afterword and include examples and personal opinions. However, the reviews also express wonderment (Winqvist 2008; Bergsten 2008) or statements of the fact (Lingebrandt 2008) that Kaplinski is a great poet from a small country. The facts that Estonia is not widely known and that there is a lack of knowledge of Estonian literature, also reemerge in connection with the festival (e.g. Kalmteg 2007; Lingebrandt 2008). Reviews that glance in Kaplinski's direction have been written with a cognizance of a more global literary field, but his style is compared to works in Swedish literature; thus the world literary field which extends between two national literatures is activated.

Critic Matilda Roos (2007) compares Kaplinski's poetry with that of authors born in the 1940s and 1950s, contrasting their attitudes to death, with Kaplinski's view possibly influenced by Buddhism. Winqvist (2008) compares Kaplinski's more modernist style with that of Erik Lindegren and with the style of Pär Lagerkvist, in whose later works one can discern an even freer form and more motifs from ordinary life. Staffan Bergsten (2008) proposes that Kaplinski be awarded the Tranströmer award conferred by the city of Västerås. Critic Sten Wistrand (2008), one of the writer's great admirers, ends his review with the statement that with this new collection Kaplinski confirms previous opinions of his work: "Kaplinski is not only one of the wisest contemporary poets, but one of the best."

In consideration that approximately every 20 years a new generation makes its appearance in society, it may not be a mistake that Somewhere at the Edge of the World had the effect of a new introduction to Kaplinski's works in Swedish culture. At any rate, the larger national newspapers have been sidelined in responses to the pub-

lication of this work. The focus has been on the Göteborg Book Fair with its Estonian theme, and the responses are thus different as well as more general than previous feedback. Indeed, Kaplinski was one of the principal guests at the festival and participants could listen to him performing on stage and in discussion groups. In those newspapers that published short reviews, introductions to Kaplinski are brief, but employ more grandiose wording. In reviews the global literary field has become actualised, though there remains contact between the Estonian and Swedish national literary fields. In such cases, connections have been made to Swedish authors, who also have a greater presence in the field of world literature. This time the Baltic aspect has been actualised through the work of translators.

### Conclusions and discussion

In this article I have analysed the publication and reception of Swedish translations of Jaan Kaplinski's oeuvre in order to clarify how communication has taken place between the Estonian and Swedish literary fields. To what extent has Kaplinski's Swedish reception been influenced by literary circulation through centres of world literature? To what extent does it exemplify dialogue between two national cultures? In what way is the world literary field expressed in either or both of these options? I have also observed which interpretations of Kaplinski are particular to the Swedish literary field.

The Swedish reception of Jaan Kaplinski originally begins with mutual contact between two neighbouring countries, which is preliminary to the circulation in world literature through the enablement of centres. However, one can discern a greater world-literary ambition, particularly by literary scholars and critics among Estonians abroad, by translators and the Swedish publisher. Since the publishing house Fripress simultaneously publishes books by four East European poets, which are usually reviewed together, Kaplinski's country of origin has been thought of as a part of a larger region which can be considered a semi-periphery. This is true despite the fact that the nations of origin are treated separately, both in the books themselves and reviews. Communication has taken place between two semi-peripheral literary fields which does not copy that which is derived from centres. Nevertheless the number of reviews prior to the writer's recognition in the United States remains much more modest. The greatest critical attention is paid to those of Kaplinski's poems with the strong ecological message, that is poems from his earlier periods, and those poems deemed most characteristic of the poet are the incantatory-prayerful poems from the cycle *The Same Sea in Us All*.

With respect to the second translated book, the particular literary communication between Estonians and Swedes continues, because no such work like *Children of the Wind and Water* exists in the English-language literary field. One can discern that

reception is now supported by Kaplinski's rise in international recognition. Kaplinski and Põllu's work *Children of the Wind and Water* is perceived as the collaborative creative work of two noteworthy contemporary Estonian authors, provoked to a large degree by regional questions of nationality (including russification) and a search for roots. Nevertheless, for approximately half of the reviewers the work is immediately situated in a broader regional (or global) field of the world literature, because of its actuality and high quality. The work represents the world picture of Indigenous peoples using contemporary modes of expression. Discussion about the Nordic nature of Estonian culture is broached for the first time. In the context of Kaplinski's works in general, this particular one most clearly shows the artistic potential and quality of prose poetry, that part of his oeuvre that the writer himself has not foregrounded, and what in Estonia has mainly been seen as a part of Kaljo Põllu's work.

The publication of Kaplinski's third poetry collection in Sweden (1988), particularly with the title *The Same Sea in Us All* is the strongest in terms of following the narrative of his international recognition, although in content the books do not overlap precisely with his books in English translation. In any case the influence of world literary circulation, which operates through centres, is stronger. This can also be seen by the expansion of reviews published in Sweden, and the places of publication are also more prominent. In addition, Kaplinski has already performed on radio and television and been a guest at the Malmö poetry festival.

Of the contexts of *The Same Sea in Us All* one might draw special attention to the Buddhist world view, and the foreword written by the renowned Finnish-Swedish poet Bo Carpelan strengthens ties between the collection and a more Nordic literary field. In addition critics notice Kaplinski's ties with the spirituality of some top Swedish poets (Tranströmer, Ekelöf), particularly in how individual experience can become universal. Although there is little representation of political reality in the work, critics create these connections via topics that interest them either with respect to Kaplinski's person or his previous poetry. Also, the East European literary field continues to be in the background of one third of the reviews, even where it is admitted that Kaplinski's oeuvre does not exactly fit that type of poetry (Gustafsson 1988). Resonant topics from the reviews include the force of generalisation from an individual's experience, a characteristic flowing poetic language and the force of detail.

Of Kaplinski's works discussed in this article, the one with the greatest global scope is the thought diary *The Titanic and the Ice* (1997), but its publication in Swedish is originally a literary happening between two nations, since the book has not been published in English. The local level is emphasised by the fact that the book was published a few years after the wreck of the Estonia while sailing from Estonia to Sweden. By 1997 Kaplinski was already well known internationally, and over half the reviews

point toward entrance to a more global world literary field. Critics, particularly those writing for the larger newspapers, are able to switch focus between different levels and literary fields. However, with respect to *The Titanic* and *the Ice*, the particularity of Swedish criticism is evident, as well as the diversity (and newness) of contexts created, especially from the perspective of the Estonian literary field.

Although more of Kaplinski's prose has been published since 1997, the poetry collection *Somewhere at the Edge of the World* (2007) seems like a new introduction of Kaplinski to the next generation after his last poetry collection (1988) in Sweden about 18 years earlier. With this collection the importance of communication between neighbouring nations is foregrounded, because the translators and mediators are third neighbours, that is, Latvians. At any rate, the end of the first decade since 2000 is the most complex for studying Kaplinski's reception, since the media of communication are both more diverse and more dispersed. It is observable that mediating literature through print media has undergone a decline. There is much less of a volume of responses, and even that is organised in the context of the Göteborg book fair. Here what is foregrounded is a more social approach to literature, which takes as its centre the Estonian state or nation. In reviews of the poetry collection, introductions have been more boldly situated in the world literary field, while closer analysis of poetics relies more strongly on comparisons with Swedish authors, albeit with those who have greater international recognition. Half of the reviews emphasise that Kaplinski is a great writer from a small country. One can see that while the writer has moved to a more central field of world literature, the location of Estonia(n) has changed from the semi-peripheral to the periphery. Though it should be acknowledged that the social visibility of literature has changed in the meantime, the case of Kaplinski allows us to observe that for the Swedish media „the greatest poet in the Soviet Union“ is a weightier judgment than „a world-class writer from independent Estonia.“

Kaplinski's reception in Sweden allows one to trace the dynamics of how literary circulation through centres is distinguished from as well as interwoven with one-to-one literary communication between two neighbouring cultures. One can say that this intercultural communication has proceeded more smoothly when Kaplinski's work can be considered a part of semi-peripheral culture. Where Estonia's position has been relegated to the periphery – it is no longer a part of Soviet or Russian-language cultural space – communication has diminished. It seems that a new introduction of Estonia and its people is awaited, an introduction that might speak for a larger collective. Alternatively, literature that has already received recognition in world literary centres. This is illustrated by the fact that after the Göteborg book fair in 2007, a minimal amount of Estonian literature has been published in Sweden. At any rate it seems that in Sweden criticism pays more attention to works that speak in the name of certain

regions or that represent larger collectives (cf. above, Leppänen's proposal 2018). If Kaplinski speaks for Finno-Ugric peoples or East Europe, he is listened to with greater openness, because it seems that in the context of communication between nations it is expected that a certain nationally collective or universal dimension be recognised.

From the content analysis of reviews of Kaplinski's works it emerges that the world literary field is always expressed in the reception process; generally, in half of the cases in the global dimension and half between national cultures. It also turned out that for works that had not been published in large literary languages, the reception was not necessarily limited to the dimension between two national cultures. That is, in literary criticism, for half of the cases what is actualised is the more open regional or global field. In addition, for the Estonian and Swedish example it was shown how literary communication also tends to become political, so not only happening in an autonomous literary field. For future discussions one can offer the hypothesis that for the circulation of translated literature it is perhaps most useful when both are included, the dialogue between two nations and the broader world literary context.

The example of Kaplinski's Swedish reception clearly shows how literary hierarchies of power affect communication between (semi)peripheral areas by way of large centres. It also became clear that literary communication between semi-peripheral and (semi)peripheral regions may take place to some extent independently from centres. Moreover, original and high-quality literary communication can arise when both sides have sufficient courage and ambition. Smaller cultures can influence world literary circulation (and thereby the canon) through mutual translation activities.

*Translated by Tiina Ann Kirss*

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## Jaan Kaplinski loomingu rootsi retseptsoon ja maailmakirjanduse välja avaldumine

Sirel Heinloo

**Võtmesõnad:** Jaan Kaplinski, maailmakirjanduse väli, rootsi kirjanduse väli, retseptsoon, rahvuskirjandused, eesti kirjandus, eesti kirjanduse tõlked, keskused ja perifeeria

Jaan Kaplinski (1941–2021) on rahvusvaheliselt tuntuimaid eesti luuletajaid, kelle autorikogusid on ilmunud 20 keeles ning kui juurde arvata antoloogiates ilmunu ning proosa, on keeli üle 30. Roots keeles on tal ilmunud 11 teost, nii luulet kui proosat. Selles artiklis on lähema vaatluse all neist viis – eelkõige kõik luulekogud (1982; 1987; 1988; 2007) ning lisaks mõttepäevik „Titanic och isen“ (1997; eesti keeles „Jää ja Titanic“, 1995).

Artiklis analüüsin Jaan Kaplinski loomingu rootsikeelsete tõlgete ilmumist ja nende vastuvõttu arvustustes, et selgitada, kuidas on toimunud eesti kirjanduse ja rootsi kirjandusvälja vaheline suhtlus: kuivõrd mõjutatud on Kaplinski rootsikeelne retseptsoon maailmakirjanduse keskuste kaudu käivast kirjandusringlusest – sarnaselt Pascale Casanova kontseptsooniga (2007) – või kuivõrd on tegemist peamiselt kahe rahvuskultuuri vahelise dialoogiga. On ka võimalus, et suhtluses olid olulised hoopis mõned muud, näiteks poliitilised tegurid.

Selgus, et Jaan Kaplinski näite puhul on aktuaalsed mõlemad dünaamika võimalused ning need on omavahel ka põimunud. Näite põhjal paistab ka, et eesti ja rootsi kultuuri vahel on kirjanduslik kontakt olnud sujuvam siis, kui kirjaniku loomingut saab pidada semiperifeerse kultuuri osaks. Veel enam, selle juhtumi analüüs võimaldab tähelepanu juhtida võimalusele, et väiksemad kultuurid saavad maailmakirjanduse ringlust (ja selle kaudu kaanonit) mõjutada ka omavahelise tõlketegevuse kaudu.

Kõige omanäolisemalt kahe rahvuskultuuri vahel sündinud, kuid sellegipoolest globaalsema ambitsiooniga on Kaplinski retseptsoon esimese valikkuu puhul (1982), mis oma ilmumisega ennetab keskuste kaudu käivat maailmakirjanduse liikumist. Arvustuste hulk oli siis veel küll tagasihoidlikum (6). Kaplinski teise, Kaljo Põlluga koostöös sündinud tõlkeramatuga „Barn av vind och vatten“ („Tuule ja vee lapsed“, 1987) jätkub eripärasem eestlaste ja rootslaste vaheline kirjandussuhtlus. Siiski võib aimata, et vastuvõttu toetab nüüdsest ka Kaplinski rahvusvahelise tuntuse tõus, arvustuste hulk on veidi kasvanud (11). Kaplinski kolmanda luulekogu ilmumine Rootsis (1988) jälgendab väliselt, eelkõige pealkirja „Samma hav i oss alla“ („Seesama meri meis kõigis“) kaudu kõige enam autori rahvusvahelise tuntuse narratiivi, kuigi sisult see kogu samanimelise ingliskeelse väljaandega ei kattu. Keskuste kaudu käiva maailmakirjanduse ringluse mõju on igatahes tugevamalt taustal, nagu on näha ka Rootsis ilmunud arvustuste hulga suurenemisest (15) ja nende prominentsematest ilmumiskohtadest. Lisaks on Kaplinski esinenud raadios ja televisioonis ning olnud külaline Malmö luulefestivalil. 1997. aastal ilmunud „Titanic och isen“ on teos, mille kohta on ilmunud kõige rohkem arvustusi (21). Selleks ajaks oli tõusnud ka Kaplinski rahvusvaheline tuntus ning mainimised Nobeli kirjanduspreemia kontekstis. Teose lokaalsemat tasandit rõhutab asjaolu, et see ilmus mõni aasta pärast Eesti–Rootsi suunal sõitnud parvlaeva Estonia hukku. Lõpuks, 2007. aastal ilmunud valikkuu „Någonstans vid världens kant“ („Kuskil maailma äärel“) on justkui Kaplinski uustuvustus järgmisele põlvkonnale pärast 18 aastat. 2000. aastate teise poole vastuvõtu puhul paistab silma, et kirjanduse vahendamine trükimeedia kaudu on kahanenud. Vastukaja on mahuliselt vähem (6) ning see on osalt organiseeritud Göteborgi raamatumessi kontekstis, mis tõi esile sotsiaalsemat, Eesti riigi või rahvuse kesket lähenemist kirjandusele.

Uurisin ka, missugused maailmakirjanduslikud kontekstid Kaplinski loomingu vastuvõtus veel avalduvad ning missugused tõlgendused on eripärased just rootsi kirjandusväljal.

Esimese valikkogu „Våra skuggor är mycket långa“ („Meie varjud on väga pikad“, 1982) puhul pandi kriitikute poolt kõige enam tähele Kaplinski jõulisemaid ökoloogilise sõnumiga luuletusi tema varasemast perioodist ning kõige isikupärasemaks hinnati luuletaja loitsulikke-palvelikke luuletusi tsüklist „Seesama meri meis kõigis“. Kuna Kaplinski luulekogu avaldanud kirjastuses Fripress ilmusid samal ajal ka kolme teise Ida-Euroopa luuletaja raamatud ja neid ka arvustati üheskoos, on ka Kaplinski päritolumaad tajutud osana suuremast regioonist.

Kaplinski ja Põllu teose „Tuule ja vee lapsed“ (1987) puhul tajuti selle tõukumist piirkondlikest rahvusküsimustest (sh venestamisest) ja juurte otsimisest, kuid märgati ka Kaplinski proosaluule kvaliteeti ning teose kõrget esteetilist taset ja aktuaalsust avaramaski maailmakirjanduse kontekstis, sest teos kujutab kaasaegsete väljendusvahenditega ürgset loodusrahvaste maailmataju. Esimest korda aktualiseerus ka arutelu eesti kultuuri põhjamaisuse üle.

Kolmanda valikkogu „Seesama meri meis kõigis“ (1988) arvustustest jäid kõlama üksikisiku üldistusjõud, isikupärane voolav luulekeel ning detaili jõud. Raamatu kontekstidest võib välja tuua budistlikuma maailmatunnetuse ning luuletaja Bo Carpelani eessõna tugevdab sidemeid põhjamaisema kirjandusväljaga. Lisaks nägid kriitikud Kaplinski sidemeid mõnede rootsi tippluuletajate vaimususega (Tomas Tranströmer, Gunnar Ekelöf), eriti selle pinnalt, kuidas üksikisiku kogemus saab universaalseks. Olgugi et poliitilise reaalsuse kujutamist on teoses väga vähe, löid kriitikud need seosed end huvitava teemadega Kaplinski isiku või tema varasema luule kaudu. Ka Ida-Euroopa kultuuriväli oli umbes kolmandikus arvustustest endiselt taustal.

Selleks ajaks, kui ilmus mõttepäevik „Titanic och isen“ (1997), olid rootsi kriitikud juba teadlikumad Kaplinski autoriprofilist. Osati märgata tema omapärasid, tasast ja selget kirjutamislaadi, kauneid vaikust püüdvaid looduskirjeldusi, mikro- ja makrotasandi sidumist. Viimase, 2007. aastal ilmunud valikkogu arvustustes olid luuletaja tutvustused julgemalt maailmakirjanduse väljal, kuid poeetika lähemal vaatlusel toetuti võrdlustele pigem rootsi autoritega, kuid siis just nendega, kellel on samuti suurem rahvusvaheline tuntus.

Kaplinski teoste arvustuste sisuanalüüsisel selgub, et maailmakirjanduse väli avaldub vastuvõtu- protsessis igal juhul – üldiselt pooltel juhtudel globaalsemas mõõtmes ja pooltel juhtudel rahvuskultuuride vaheliselt. Tuli ka välja, et teoste puhul, mida ei ole ilmunud suurtes kirjanduskeeltes, ei pruugi retseptioon jääda tingimata ainult kahe rahvuskultuuri vaheliseks – kirjanduskriitikas aktualiseerub pooltel juhtudel ka regionaalselt avaram või globaalsem väli. Samuti tuli Eesti ja Rootsi näite puhul välja, kuidas kahe rahvuskultuuri vaheline kirjandussuhtlus kipub olema ka poliitiline, seega mitte ainult autonoomsel kirjandusväljal. Edasiseks aruteluks võib välja pakkuda hüpoteesi, et ehk ongi tõlkekirjanduse ringlemisele kõige kasulikum, kui kaasatud on mõlemad, nii kahe rahvuse vaheline dialoog kui ka avaram maailmakirjanduslik kontekst.

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