

Images of the North: An Analysis of Book Covers of Swedish Crime Fiction in Greek and Spanish Translation

Imágenes del norte: un análisis de
cubiertas de algunas novelas negras suecas
en traducciones al griego y al español

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ABSTRACT: This study is an analysis of the book cover images of a selection of Swedish crime literature, published in Greece and the Spanish-speaking world in the period of 2000-2017. Covers are crucial to the paratextual signal system (Genette, 1991); departing from theories on paratext within translation studies, we aim to compare the original book covers to the covers of the translated volumes. Do the Greek and Spanish book markets emphasise the stereotypical images of the North that have been identified in studies on borealism (Chartier, 2008)? The image covers of the original and the translated editions were examined by means of a content analysis, complemented by an empirical study. The examination of the sample did not unambiguously indicate that the translated editions draw more heavily on the Nordic origin. Similarly, not all covers of the translations revealed belonging to the crime genre.

KEYWORDS: book covers, Swedish crime, paratext, imagology, translations, borealism

RESUMEN: Este estudio presenta un análisis de las cubiertas de una selección de novelas negras suecas, publicadas en Grecia y en el mundo hispanohablante durante el periodo de 2000-2017. Las imágenes de cubierta son importantes en el sistema paratextual (Genette, 1991); a partir de las teorías sobre el paratexto aplicadas al campo de los estudios de traducción, proponemos comparar las cubiertas originales con aquellas de las ediciones traducidas. ¿Hacen hincapié los mercados del libro griego y español en las imágenes estereotipadas del norte que han sido identificadas en los estudios sobre el borealismo (Chartier, 2008)? A lo largo de este trabajo se examinó las imágenes de las cubiertas de ediciones originales y traducidas mediante un análisis de contenido, complementado por un estudio empírico. El examen de estas muestras no indicó de forma inequívoca que las ediciones traducidas recurrieran en mayor medida al origen nórdico. Asimismo, no todas las portadas de las traducciones revelaron pertenecer al género policíaco.

PALABRAS CLAVE: cubiertas de libro, novela negra sueca, paratexto, imagología, traducciones, borealismo



The first thing we notice, when picking a book to read, is probably the title, the author's name and the cover image. Other information is also passed on to us, maybe in a less obvious way, such as indications of genre and the name of the publishing house. In this small scale pilot study, we focused on the information conveyed to us by the book cover in terms of *paratext*. Paratext is, in Gérard Genette's words, "the means by which a text makes a book of itself and proposes itself as such to the readers" (Genette, 1991: 261). More specifically, we will examine the changes that take place when a book is translated and published in a new cultural context, inscribing our study in the broader framework of translation studies. Particular attention will be paid to the signals transmitted by the graphic image, and in light of the *Nordic Noir* success, we aim to examine whether the covers of the translations draw upon the Swedish origin of the novels. The material used in this investigation derives from a former study on translations of Swedish fiction into Spanish and Greek (Johansson & Smaragdi, 2019), where we mapped which fictional literature from the last 18 years (2000-2017) had been translated and published in new linguistic contexts. Not surprisingly, the genre that counted with the greatest amount of translated and published books was crime fiction, both in Greece and in the Spanish-speaking world. However, the prevalence of crime fiction was more important in Greece, where it constituted 51% of all translated Swedish fiction. In the Spanish-speaking world, the diversity was slightly greater; crime fiction constituted 31% of all the translations from Swedish. Our study also showed a great interest in Swedish children's books, in Greece as well as in the Spanish-speaking world. This result is in line with the findings of Andreas Hedberg, according to which the dominating genres in translated Swedish literature are crime novels and children's books (Hedberg, 2019: 14-16).

There is no doubt that Swedish crime fiction, as a major part of Nordic Noir, has been successful worldwide. Kerstin Bergman states that, since the breakthrough of the novels written by Maj Sjöwall & Per Wahlöö in the 1960's, Swedish crime fiction has been dominated by the police novel with a tendency to social criticism (Bergman, 2011a: 42-43). If the 1970's was a strong decade as far as Swedish crime is concerned, Bergman points out that, with the exception of the thrillers of Jan Guillou, the 1980's is a weaker period; according to her, the golden age of Swedish crime starts with Henning Mankell and Håkan Nesser in the beginning of the 1990's (Bergman, 2011a: 45). However, besides the Mankell and Nesser, the 1990's and 2000's are mostly associated with female crime writers and their commercial success. In fact, the British and Norwegian female crime novelists seem to have made way, and, when Liza Marklund published *Sprängaren* (The bomber) in 1998, it was the starting point for a wave of other Swedish women writers, such as Åsa Nilssonne, Camilla Läckberg and Mari Jungstedt (2011a: 45). Other successful female writers are Karin Alvtegen, Åsa Larsson and Kristina Ohlsson (46). In the 2000's, though, the greatest success is, undoubtedly, that of Stieg Larsson, who has strengthened the position of Swedish crime with his *Millennium Trilogy* (46).¹ In a report on the most translated Swedish authors from the period of 2006 to 2010, Mankell, however, was by far the most translated Swedish crime author, followed by Stieg Larsson, Håkan Nesser and Åke Edwardsson. In the fifth place, we encounter Åsa Larsson, and in the sixth place, we find Camilla Läckberg and Mari Jungstedt (Hedberg, 2019: 22).

The most popular subgenre in Swedish crime is the police procedural, which started to appear internationally in the 1950's, and which, in Sweden, has its forerunners in Sjöwall & Wahlöö (Bergman, 2011b: 106). This kind of novel concentrates on the work of a police team

¹The *Millennium Trilogy* of Stieg Larsson consists of the three books *Män som hatar kvinnor* (2005), *Flickan som lekte med elden* (2006) and *Luftslottet som sprängdes* (2007).

and tends to be realistic in the way it describes the police methods and the society in which the plot is set (2011b: 107). Bergman underscores that the police procedural absorbs the fears that circulate in society; Mankell is a good example of how this subgenre treats the decomposition of the Swedish welfare state and the fears related to immigration and globalisation, as well as questions concerning class, ethnicity and gender (Bergman, 2011b: 108).

A survey of the newspaper articles found on the authors and books included in the former study (Johansson & Smaragdi, 2019) underpins Bergman's point. In articles on some of the authors, among them Mankell and Läckberg, from the period of study, in the Spanish newspaper *El País*,² and in the Greek *Kathimerini*,³ *Vima*⁴ and *Eleftherotipia*⁵ there was a tendency to characterise the Swedish crime novels as social novels with a plot, putting into play a strong contrast between an idyllic scenery and dark secrets. We concluded that readers outside Sweden seem to be fascinated by these contrasts, and in many instances we encounter the observation that the Southern European reader might wonder why the most peaceful people write the most horrendous stories.

Normally associated with entertainment, crime fiction has low prestige in the academic world and in literary circles. However, from a sociological point of view, the genre is relevant, not least because it seems to absorb and reflect the social currents of its time. Widely spread and much read, it illustrates the opposition between the cultured and the popular circuits, as described by Robert Escarpit (1978: 72-97). According to this division, the protagonists of the cultured circuit are the aesthetically more demanding and innovative novels, short stories, plays and poems, circulated by specialists, libraries and, partly, the

²See for instance (Cerezo, 2015; Harguindey, 2016; Lorite Gómez, 2013).

³See (Kathimerini, 2012).

⁴See (Bekos, 2011).

⁵See (Venardou, 2014).

educational institutions. The popular circuit, by contrast, does not depend on literary quality and innovative forms, but rather uses literary formulas, and they do so until the readers lose interest in them and start looking for something new (Furuland, 2012: 43).

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Investigation of book cover images tends to draw on the categories first established on paratexts by Genette (1987, 1991). Jacob Ølgaard Nyboe (2017) parts from the Bourdieuan idea that the more a book attracts buyers, and thus contributes to an economic capital, the lesser its cultural prestige. To reach its potential public, every book has to communicate its contents to the right target group, and, in this process, the paratextual signals are vital. Nyboe sets out to empirically test Genette's thesis of the paratextual function of negotiating expectations, and, to this end, he designed an experiment, where 539 respondents were divided into two groups. One of the groups was asked to describe four book covers, trying to define what kind of book they expect it to be, judging by the cover and the genre markers. The other group did the same. In the first group, the genre markers of two books were removed, whereas, in the second, those of the two other novels. The genre markers proved to be decisive when it came to inferring the contents of the books.

Similarly to Nyboe's study, we have collected empirical data for our analysis. However, in this work, the task is not primarily to analyse the visual content of book covers, but rather to observe the changes that the book covers in question undergo when a translation is published in a different linguistic and cultural context.

The question of paratexts has not yet been largely explored in the field of translation studies, although some investigation has been done. Paratextual aspects have been approached by Andrew Chesterman. This author explores theories of translation in relation to norms, strategies and values, and discusses the idea of translations as independent texts in their target

culture (2016: 34). *Text, Extratext, Metatext and Paratext in Translation* is an anthology of articles on different paratextual perspectives in translated literature, in which Valerie Pellatt underscores the increasing attention paid to paratext within the field of translation studies in the twenty-first century (Pellatt, 2013: 1).

Richard Watts (2000) studies translation of paratexts in the particular case of Aimé Césaire, including cover images, but also the modifications of the prefaces and other paratextual elements. He observes that paratexts are normally conceived to attract readers to a particular text, but in the special case of translations, they have the additional function of introducing and explaining a foreign culture to the reader.

Cecilia Alvstad (2012) focuses on publishers' paratexts, i.e., images and other graphic signals of the covers, and investigates the factors at stake when a fictional work is translated and published in a new context. Alvstad affirms that great paratextual differences can be noted when comparing an original cover to that of its translation, which has to do with commercial considerations: "In the case of translated literature, there may be considerable differences between how a book is paratextually presented in the source and target country, and it is the publisher who is the most important mediating agent of such changes" (2012: 78). When translated into another language and published in a new cultural context, a literary work changes and turns into something partly new, in response to the target cultures' dominating values and ideas (79).

Alba Serra Vilella (2018) examines translations into Spanish of Japanese novels, looking at 432 covers over a hundred year period (1904-2014). She uses three aspects of visual content analysis in her examination, namely cultural specificity, temporality and main represented element. By means of these concepts, she manages to show that the covers of the novels included draw heavily on cultural stereotypes and exoticism. Whereas Alvstad focuses on the presentation of Asian, Latin American and African literature in the Swedish context from a postcolonial perspective, and Serra Vilella examines the Japanese culture in a Spanish-

speaking context, we will pay attention to an inter-European mediation of works of fiction, where cultural differences may be less salient, but still, presumably, adhere to cultural expectations where a whole set of ideas on the North is at play.

STEREOTYPES OF THE NORTH

Although fictional literature is able to broaden our worldview and make us understand the motives and actions of people in a less prejudiced way than in real life, literary works also function as transmitters of stereotypes and fixed images of the Other (Leerssen, 2007: 27). Modern imagology can be a useful tool in understanding the construction of national identity, even though it takes interest in other categories than nations; it deals with subjective discourses and images of reality, which is quite different from, and sometimes the opposite of, reality itself (2007: 27). Imagology is a suitable theoretical frame within which we place the comparative analysis, as we wish to look closer at the book covers in translation, not only to determine the genre to which they belong, but also to investigate which images of the North they present and transmit.

In line with the proposal of Joep Leerssen, Daniel Chartier (2008: 23) describes the *North* and the *Nordic* as categories that go beyond national borders as geographical entities. He suggests that the North is an idea, based on subjective images of reality, and outlines the existence of a grammar of the North in his view, the North as a concept is comparable to a text, i.e., a discourse made up by historical components, characters, narrative schemes, colours and sonorities. Considered that way, the North is variable, because it depends on the position of the perceiver, at the same time as it contains some stable characteristics. In Chartier (2008: 24), some character types are especially prone to give a narration a Nordic touch, such as the Viking, the Inuit and the polar explorer. There are also scenic elements that help do the same thing: the iceberg, the polar bear, the boreal light, the desolation and

solitude, the blue and white colours, the snow and inhospitable and bare nature (24). The ideas on the Nordic such as presented by Chartier have been denominated *borealism* (cf. orientalism). In this study, we will look into whether the book cover images at hand are coded with graphic elements, such as those defined by Chartier, that evoke associations to the idea of the North.

THE NORDIC AS A SALES PITCH?

The present study investigates whether the Greek and Spanish book markets reproduce and allude to borealism, the imagery of the North, sometimes simplified in stereotypical conceptions. It also examines to what extent the cover images indicate genre. Do the covers show traits of cultural specificity? Is there a difference in genre specificity between the Swedish covers and those of the translations? It can be assumed that the book covers that address a Swedish audience show a greater pictorial and graphic diversity, and that they display nuances to a greater extent than the covers of the translated editions. Inversely, translations may be more prone to underscore the Nordic origin, as a selling strategy. Furthermore, the diversity could be greater in the Spanish corpus than in the Greek, because the Spanish speaking market is larger, and therefore have more possibilities to venture large translational projects. We also assume that, independently of the target market, the covers of crime fiction might be easily identified as such due to distinct visual genre markers.

DESIGN, MATERIAL AND METHOD

This study consists of a comparative analysis of three sets of book covers (three Swedish novels, translated into Greek and Spanish, i.e., in all, nine covers), where one part of the examination consists of our description of the denotative contents of the images as well as our analysis of their connotations. Our analysis will be complemented by empirical data

collected by means of a survey, completed by 99 respondents, with the aim of capturing the connotative contents of the same covers.

The book covers that constitute our research material are those of three popular, contemporary Swedish crime novelists, Åsa Larsson, Camilla Läckberg and Henning Mankell, who have all had many, if not all, of their books translated into both Greek and Spanish during the period investigated. We examined the covers of one book of each: *Det blod som spillts* (The Blood Spilt)⁶ (Larsson, 2004), *Predikanten* (The Preacher) (Läckberg, 2004), and *Kennedys hjärna* (Kennedy's Brain) (Mankell, 2005).

In more detail, we carried out a comparative analysis of the sets of covers of each writer with a semiotic approach, based upon the concepts of *denotation* and *connotation* (cf. Barthes, 1964). *Denotation* refers to the questions of what is described (theme, motif, actions, state), how it is described (composition, syntax), and in which context (Nordström, 1984: 40), while *connotation* is a key to understanding the experience of the perceiver of the image; the connotations are the associations evoked by the image. They are often common to a group, be it a specific culture, social group or generation, but they can also be highly personal (1984: 41). It is important to bear in mind that, even if the denotative description is made with an effort to be as objective as possible, there is always a subjective element in it. Our analysis of cultural specificity draws on the observations of Chartier, presented before, and will consequently examine if the covers present *borealistic* elements, i.e., people and animals associated with the North, as well as colours and landscapes considered typically Nordic. Even though the title and the name of the author might affect the analysis of the images, these paratextual elements have been left out in this study since focus here is solely on the pictorial aspects of the covers.

⁶For the translations of the original Swedish titles, we have used the titles of the existing English translations, but for the translation into English of the Greek and Spanish titles, the translations are ours.

Our analyses were supplemented by an inquiry designed to capture possible associations evoked by the images. This survey presented the covers that constitute our material, with questions concerning the genre of the book. There were also questions on the book's prestige, and on whether the cover made the respondents want to read the book. Finally, the respondents were urged to write down three words that they associated with the cover. The respondents were asked to go through the tasks for every one of the nine covers (see Appendix 1). In order to receive answers based solely on the cover images, we manipulated titles, names of the author and genre markers to become illegible. In this report, we will leave the questions on the prestige and attractiveness out. As pointed out by Gert Nordström (1984), the connotations are often specific to certain cultural and social groups or generations. Since we were especially interested in cultural perceptions, more than those related to social classes or generations, we distributed the survey, personally, to groups of exchange students studying Swedish as a foreign language at Lund University, a task which was facilitated by the Swedish teachers. We chose not to address respondents exclusively from Greece or the Spanish-speaking world as we wanted to avoid cultural bias. In all, 99 respondents of different nationalities, from America, Asia, Australia and Europe, took part in the survey. The ages ranged mainly between 18 and 27, with a few exceptions. Summing up, there was a near-even amount of women (n=52) and men (n=47) who assessed the nine covers (see Appendix 1).

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK COVER IMAGES AND RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

In this section, as a starting point, we propose our own analysis of the Swedish, Greek and Spanish covers corresponding to each author, after which we will expose the results from the survey. As mentioned above, we will describe the denotation of each image and analyse the connotative aspect of it. In doing so, we aim to approach the possible cultural specificity of the cover. We have chosen the most circulated editions of the selected books, as their

covers are the most known ones, and therefore can be presumed to be the most representative covers as regards both the original books and their translations.

Comparative analysis of the Åsa Larsson covers

The first set of covers subject to analysis are the original cover of Larsson's *Det blod som spillts* (The Blood Spilt) and the covers of its translations into Greek and Spanish.



Images 1-3: Book covers of Larsson's *Det blod som spillts*. This Swedish edition used was issued in 2009 from © Albert Bonniers Förlag (cover designed by Ilse-Mari Berglin), the Greek translation *Λευκή νύχτα* by Grigoris Kondilis was issued in 2012 from © Metaichmio Publications, and the Spanish translation *Sangre derramada* by Mayte Giménez y Pontus Sánchez was issued in 2010 from Seix Barral, © Editorial Planeta S.A.

The Swedish cover (Image 1) shows elements that can be classified as culturally specific, according to the criteria outlined above. The background represents a vast and mountainous landscape covered in snow, which conveys a sensation of cold; the landscape is uninhabited, and depicts a void wilderness. In the foreground, the main represented elements are two wolves flanking a human figure, most likely a male person, standing in the middle as a mere silhouette, being smaller than the wolves. Not as prominent as the animals and the human figure, but still noteworthy, is an element on the top right that has the form of an eye.

In our interpretation, the elements that connote wilderness, such as the snowy mountain and the wolves, stereotypically associated with bloodlust, prevail over the human figure, whose dimension is disproportionate, looking insignificant in comparison to the animals in the picture. The red leaf-like stains on the top of the cover are easily associated with blood, and the yellow tone in the sky connotes dusk, a phase in which the day turns into night, often a metaphor for dark times coming. Finally, the eye marks the presence of an observer, out of whose sight the human figure is not able to escape.

Although very different from the Swedish, the cover of the Greek translation *Λευκή νύχτα* (*Lefkí níhta*; White night) (Image 2) also presents cultural specificity. Whereas the Swedish cover depicts a winter landscape, the Greek one represents a typical autumn landscape of the North. With its heavy sky, in dark, greyish colours, this cover shows nature in hibernation. In contrast to the Swedish cover, this one is set in a place not far from urbanity, although solitary and close to the forest, and the closeness to an urban area is marked by the presence of the bench. There is a human figure in the centre of the picture, whose posture, bending down, signals sorrow rather than happiness. A grey and brown colour scale dominates the picture, which has a black frame. There are red elements as well, and even if they are part of the genre marker graphics and not of the image itself, the red colour can be associated with blood. Like the Swedish cover, the Greek depicts a lonely person, but with the difference that the former shows a human figure exposed to the fierce wilderness while the latter portrays someone experiencing anguish, captured in depressing, dark surroundings.

The cover image of the Spanish translation entitled *Sangre derramada* (Blood spilt) (Image 3) displays plants, crows and butterflies on each side, flanking two children holding hands, or, perhaps, a symmetry due to a mirroring effect. The image does not show any cultural specificity; the depicted elements are universal, and the colours, white, red and black, are not specifically associated with the Nordic. It could be dismissed as a banality, because of

its naïve style, often seen on children's books. However, crows are traditionally associated with death, being regarded as ominous, and butterflies are sometimes used to symbolise the soul of a dead person; at a closer look, the cover does provide us with clues on its contents.

The empirical results on the Larsson covers

In this section, we will present the empirical results on the book covers analysed above, to see to what extent the respondents' reactions and our prior analysis coincide.

When it comes to identifying the genre, only 20% of the respondents decipher the Swedish cover as the cover of a crime novel, nearly half of them (46%) assuming, instead, that it belongs to a youth novel. The Greek cover is also not recognised as the cover of a crime novel by a majority (only 19%), but rather as a biography (33%). The Spanish cover, on the other hand, is mainly thought to be a love novel (43%); only 6% classified it as a crime novel. The results of the survey indicate that none of the three covers convincingly signals belonging to the crime genre, even if more respondents identified the Swedish and the Greek ones as such, while very few thought that the Spanish one was a crime novel.

Now, in the survey, the first set of questions had fixed response options, while the fourth task was to write down three words associated with the cover. In doing this, the respondents were free to write anything that came to their minds. When organising the data, consisting in nearly 300 words, we grouped them thematically. Since our purpose was to investigate cultural specificity, more precisely the borealistic traits that we thought likely to find to a large degree on the covers of the translations, we identified certain words that met our criteria on the Nordic. In the table below, we have listed the words that appeared in relation to each one of the three Larsson covers, with the words one can associate with the North in italics.

Table 1: Words associated with Larsson's The Blood Spilt.

Swedish	Greek	Spanish
<i>animal, pack, wolves</i>	<i>loneliness</i>	love, romance, passion
<i>nature, wilderness</i>	reflection, thought	relation, connection
<i>snow, ice, winter, cold</i>	<i>depression, sadness</i>	nature, environment
fight, struggle, hostility	<i>nature, wilderness</i>	children, teen, youth
adventure, explore	<i>forest, woods</i>	friendship
survival, danger	real life	butterfly
forest, woods	ageing, elderly people	femininity, girls
children, teen, youth		flower, garden
<i>loneliness</i>		psychology
		thrilling, exciting

In the first column of Table 1, the words associated with the Swedish cover are listed, some of which are denotative in that they describe elements presented in the image, such as ‘wolves’ and ‘snow’, while others capture the connotations of the image, interpreting the image in terms of ‘wilderness’, ‘cold’ and ‘loneliness’. In the second column, we encounter the words used by the respondents to describe the Greek cover. This cover evokes more interpretation than the Swedish one, and many respondents associate the image with loneliness, depression, reflection and coming of age. Finally, the Spanish cover image evokes associations to love, passion, relationships and femininity, that is, universal matters that are not culturally bound.

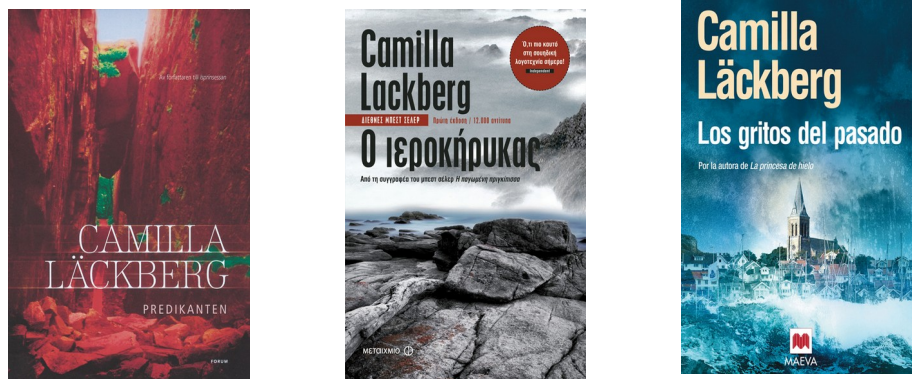
In summary, more words are used to point to the culturally specific when describing the Swedish book cover, than in the description of the Greek. However, there are more words that can be associated with the Nordic to describe the Greek cover than to describe the

Spanish edition; in the list of words associated with this cover, no culturally specific words could be found at all.

In conclusion, as to the Larsson's book, the results of the questionnaire coincide with the analysis which proposed that the Swedish cover is more culturally specific than the Greek one, while the Greek, nonetheless, is more borealistic than the Spanish one, presenting a typically Nordic autumnal landscape. According to the preliminary analysis as well as to the empirical results, the Spanish cover does not have Nordic connotations.

Comparative analysis of the Camilla Läckberg covers

The next set of book covers subject to analysis are the Swedish, Greek and Spanish versions of Läckberg's crime novel *Predikanten* (The Preacher).



Images 4-6: Book covers of Läckberg's *Predikanten*. This Swedish edition used was issued in 2005 from © Bokförlaget Forum (cover was designed by Anders Timren), the Greek translation *Ο ιεροκήρυκας* by Grigoris Kondilis was issued in 2014 from © Metaichmio Publications, and the Spanish translation *Los gritos del pasado* by Carmen Montes Cano was issued in 2009 from © Editorial Maeva.

As can be seen in Image 4 above, the cover of the Swedish edition is dominated by a photograph of the sides of two cliffs divided by a deep gap. The cliffs are red, although with the presence of some green elements, and the terrain in the foreground is red. The main

represented elements, that is, the rocks, could be associated with the interior of a body, and the red colour strengthens this association. Representing universal phenomena, stylistically coloured in an unnatural way, the Swedish cover cannot be classified as culturally specific.

The Greek cover of the translated book *Ο ιεροκήρυκας* (*O ierokírikas*; The preacher) (Image 5) also presents a universal motif, a rock by the seaside. The granite rocks, typical of the Swedish coastal landscapes, dominate the picture, and the sea can only be seen as a blue band in the middle, crowned by foaming, white waves, that contribute to the cold impression. The prevailing colour of the cover is dark grey, even if there are also white, blue and black elements. The red colour is only used as a background to the genre information, but even so, it is important since it brings some warmth to the steel colour scale. The grey colour scale used in the image connotes the Nordic, since it evokes a harsh and cold climate.

The Spanish cover of *Los gritos del pasado* (The cries of the past) (Image 6), also represents the sea, but has a different tone than the Greek, with its nuances of blue. In the centre of the picture, there is a church, appearing in a clearance, but surrounded by a dark blue sky and foregrounded by the foaming sea. The picture shows some elements identifiable as culturally specific, such as the cold sea, but others, such as the church, could belong to any occidental setting, even a Southern European. In that way, the image used on the cover of the Spanish Läckberg translation is connectable to the cold, but not necessarily to the North.

Altogether, the Swedish and the Spanish covers do not, according to our criteria, appear to be specifically Nordic, while the Greek shows more borealistic traits.

The empirical results on the Läckberg covers

The answers to the questionnaire regarding the Swedish original cover of Läckberg's *Predikanten* indicate certain difficulty to identify it as crime literature; only one out of ten lists it as a crime novel (11%). In fact, the survey shows that it has been difficult to place it in a particular genre, since 30% of the respondents state that they do not know to what genre

the book belongs. Regarding the cover of the Greek equivalent, it is largely identified as a crime novel (61%). The Spanish cover, however, is discerned to be the cover of a crime novel by only 15% of the respondents; a majority considered it likely to be a historical novel.

Now, what words came to the respondents' minds when looking at the covers of the different versions of *The preacher*? In Table 2, we have organised them thematically, and the words that we identify as borealistic appear in italics.

Table 2: Words associated with Läckberg's The Preacher.

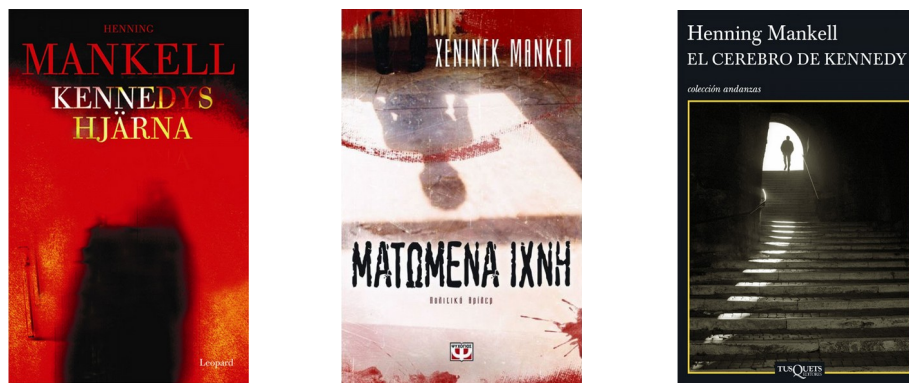
Swedish	Greek	Spanish
red	<i>nature, outside</i>	city, town, village
stones, rocks, cliff	mystery, mystic	religion, church
adventure, challenge	crime, detective, police	history
nature, landscape	<i>cold, arctic</i>	ocean, sea, waves
blood, bloody	blood, bloody	<i>storm, bad weather</i>
fantasy, abstract, Sci-fi	geology, earth, eco	harbour, port, ships
love, passion, romance	rocks, stones	<i>cold, frozen</i>
	<i>sadness, gloomy, moody</i>	mystery
	<i>darkness, black</i>	war, conflict, fight
	sea	tragedy, disaster
	fog	drama, cliff hanger

As we can see in the listing above, the Swedish cover is not described in borealistic terms, but rather evokes universal associations, like adventure, blood, fantasy and passion. The Greek cover makes the respondents think about chill and the arctic, but also sadness and darkness. The Spanish cover is not associated neither with darkness nor with depressed states of mind, but it does make the respondents think of cold and frozenness. In conclusion, to

judge from the collection of words, the Greek cover is the more culturally specific one, the Spanish being associable with the Nordic only to a certain extent, and the Swedish cover, not at all. This result is in line with our analysis of the cover.

Comparative analysis of the Henning Mankell covers

Below, we will present our analysis of the Mankell cover images, its denotations and connotations, and after that, the results from the empirical study.



Images 7-9: Book covers of Mankell's *Kennedys hjärna*. This Swedish edition used was issued in 2005 from © Leopard Förlag (cover designed by Lena Olofsson), the Greek translation *Ματωμένα ίχνη* by Vasiliki Knitou was issued in 2011 from © Psychogios Publications, and the Spanish translation *El cerebro de Kennedy* by Carmen Montes Cano was issued in 2006 from © Tusquets Editores S.A.

The Swedish cover of Mankell's *Kennedys hjärna* (Kennedy's Brain) (Image 7) does not contain culturally specific elements. In the centre of the image, there is an insinuation of a bridge or some kind of passage, and there is no human presence. The colours used are red, black and gold. In the same way as the Swedish cover of Läckberg's *Predikanten*, there is a certain ambiguity as to the picture, since the forms and colours may evoke associations to body organs. In the picture, there is nothing in particular that connotes the Nordic, and, concerning the genre, the cover does not signal crime literature.

The cover of the Greek translation *Ματωμένα ίχνη* (*Matoména íchni*; Bloody traces) (Image 8), however, does contain strong genre markers: the main represented element is a human figure, perhaps a boy, reflected on a bloodstained floor. On the other hand, the image does not contain any elements that have typically borealistic connotations, nor are the colour nuances particularly associable with the North. With its grey, black and red colours, and the motif that suggests a boy witnessing a murder, the cover could be set in any cultural context.

The last cover of the triad is that of the Spanish translation entitled *El cerebro de Kennedy* (Kennedy's brain) (Image 9). This cover is a photograph, entirely in black and white, of a human figure's silhouette on the top of a staircase of stone. The staircase is in a dark passage leading up to the light, where the silhouette appears. In the same way as the Swedish and Greek covers, this one does not emphasise cultural specificity, but is universal in kind. The colours are, as mentioned above, solely black and white. This cover has a sober look and is not genre specific. It is possible to interpret the human figure as having reached the light or, more pessimistically, descending the stairs.

To sum up, the three cover images are not culturally specific, lacking connotations to the Nordic, but could describe and represent any cultural context. The covers in images 7 and 9 do not indicate genre in a strong way, whereas Image 8, the Greek cover, evokes associations to crime.

The empirical results on the Mankell covers

Contrary to our analysis, the results of the survey indicate that the Swedish Mankell cover is surprisingly effective as a genre communicator, since it was largely identified by the respondents as that of a crime novel (63%). The Greek cover is, however, even more easily identifiable; a vast majority of the respondents understood the image as a crime motif (74%). When it comes to the Spanish cover, most respondents thought that it was a biography (34%), while 26% identified it as crime.

In the following (Table 3), the presentation of the survey will be completed by the respondents' free associations evoked by the covers.

Table 3: Words associated with Mankell's Kennedy's Brain

Swedish	Greek	Spanish
blood, bloody	blood, bloodstains	<i>darkness</i> , shadows
fear, horror, scary	murder, killing	mystery, mysterious
mysterious	crime	journey, road, path
<i>darkness</i> , shadows	mysterious, mystery	hope, hopeful
red	child, kid, son, boy	light
murder	fear, terror, horror	life, life story
crime, police	shadows	stairs, staircase
fire, heat		<i>loneliness</i>
love, passion, romance		basement, dungeon
anger, aggression		success, goals, reach
death		

In Table 3, there is a large amount of words associated with typical motifs of the crime genre corresponding to the Swedish Mankell cover, such as blood, fear, mystery, darkness, murder, crime and death. This underscores the genre identification of the survey, but contrasts with our analysis, according to which this cover was not easily identifiable as that of a crime novel. The fact that the Greek cover evokes much the same kind of associations (blood, murder, crime, mystery, fear) is not surprising. However, the Spanish cover evokes associations like 'life', 'journey' and 'mystery'. It is noteworthy that different respondents read it in a diametrically different way: among the words, we encounter both 'darkness' and 'light'. None of the covers reveals the Nordic origin of the book.

In recent years, translation studies have broadened its scope, focusing not only on the text itself but, also, on the textual and visual elements that accompany it, that is, in Genette's terminology, the paratext. Book covers are powerful paratexts that draw attention to a particular text and presents it to a potential reader. In this study, we investigate the changes that the covers of three examples of the Swedish crime genre undergo when moved to another cultural context. In the light of the success of the Nordic Noir, it could be assumed that the publishers would prefer cover images that expose traits associated with the (stereo)typically Nordic, as part of a marketing strategy. In our examination, we have taken into account the denotative aspects of the cover images, especially motif, colour and composition, in order to explore the connotative perception of the images. Focus has been on cultural specificity, in this case as to whether the covers present *borealistic* traits. Is it possible to observe that kind of cultural specificity in our sample? We have also looked into the extent to which the cover images reveal that the novels at hand are examples of the crime genre.

In accordance with the imagological proposal, we consider the Nordic not so much a geographical entity as a set of ideas; the imagery of the Nordic, the so called borealism, uses certain characters, animals, colours and landscapes that function as symbols evoking the Nordic (cf. Chartier 2008). Do these Nordic traits appear more frequently on the book covers of the translations than on the Swedish original covers?

Beginning with the set of covers of the Larsson novel *The Blood Spilt*, the Swedish cover image was the one most easily identifiable as Nordic, whereas the Greek one was borealistic to some extent; on the contrary, the Spanish cover image did not have traits that met with the criteria for borealism. Inversely, the Swedish cover of Läckberg's *The Preacher* is not culturally specific. It is possible to classify the Spanish cover as Nordic because of the cold colour scale, while the Greek one is more convincingly borealistic. Finally, none of the Mankell cover images can be categorised as culturally specific. Concerning the cultural

specificity and the borealistic traits, the analysis of our sample does not lead to an unequivocal conclusion, but points to certain diversity. We assumed more diversity in the original covers, while the covers of the translations would be more streamlined in reproducing stereotypes, connoting the Nordic. This turned out to be true only of the Greek covers, whereas the Spanish ones showed a greater diversity. We expected the diversity to be greater in the Spanish corpus than in the Greek due to the larger book market (and hence larger projects). The results show that there are, in fact, more stereotypes and genre specific markers on the Greek covers. Finally, with reference to the identification of genre, the empirical study indicated that the Greek translations were most easily identifiable as crime novels, while the Swedish and the Spanish editions were more ambiguous, concerning genre. In conclusion, the sample of translations of the smaller market, that is the Greek, largely agrees with our hypothesis of cultural stereotypes and genre specificity, while the Spanish sample, which unquestionably belongs to a larger market, is more diverse.

Being a small-scale pilot study, the results are, of course, merely indicative, and there is a need for a more extensive corpus to be able to draw reliable conclusions on the covers of Swedish crime and their translations into Greek and Spanish.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

1. To which genre do you think that the above book belongs?

- Love story
- Crime novel
- Historical novel
- Biography
- Youth novel
- I don't know

2. How would you describe the book? It belongs to literature of

- High prestige (highbrow)
- Certain prestige (so-called hybrid)
- Low prestige (for example best sellers)
- I don't know

3. Would you be interested in this book if you saw it in a bookstore?

- Yes, definitely
- Maybe
- No
- I don't know

4. Mention three words that you connect with the book cover: