

Moving Currents: A Note of Appreciation

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[novel, **travel**, town, national, **text**, writing, **new**, **novels**, **swedish**, **modern**, **work**, narrative, **towards**, war, **world**, **literary**, north, **place**, urban, **time**, **sense**, texts, **role**, sweden, period, northern, **environment**, **literature**, **life**, story, **early**, **space**, **form**, **cultural**, stockholm, **perspective**, **international**, **home**, **local**, **journey**, **terms**, **turn**, **transnational**, film, **scene**, sea, **representation**, modernism, modernist]

One of my **earliest** encounters with Bjarne was as an undergraduate in Scandinavian Studies at the University of Edinburgh. Bjarne introduced my fellow students and me to Georg Brandes' **work** and his **text** *Hovedstrømninger i det nittende Århundredes Litteratur* ('*Main Currents in the Literature of the Nineteenth Century*'). This was my first contact with the intellectual and creative ferment of the late nineteenth century **literary** and **cultural scene**, and it sparked a preoccupation that continues to this day with the ways in which **literature** responds to the uncertainty of a rapidly modernising **world**. What also inspired me in our discussions of Brandes was the **transnational perspective**, the situating of the **local** within the **international**, and the entanglements of **travel**, **space** and **time**, and **home**. Moving between **places**, whether physically

or intellectually, has been a feature of Bjarne's **life** and thought, as of my own, and I'm very grateful to have this opportunity to thank Bjarne for all the kindness and generosity he has given me as he has helped me navigate my own intellectual **journey**.

In his **role** as a supervisor for my doctoral research, Bjarne gave me the confidence to roam intellectually, to follow the twists and **turns** that the research required, **towards** making **sense**, in my own **terms**, of the questions that preoccupied me. The research took us in directions we did not expect, and I found myself learning computational text analysis methods to understand the **new forms of representation** that were emerging in **modern Swedish novels** of the late nineteenth century. Without the supportive **environment** Bjarne created, I would not have taken those intellectual risks.

Bjarne, as a token of gratitude and to celebrate the next stage in your journey, I offer you a playful homage to your work. The list of words at the top of this note are the most frequent words in a selection of your writing (fourteen articles, in English, spanning the period from 1998 to 2019). Highlighting how those words circulate within this note of appreciation is a small tribute to how your words continue to inhabit and motivate my own. In addition, I would like to offer a computational twist on the 'bird's-eye-perspective' that you have analysed in relation to Lagerlöf's and Andersen's travel writing: a technique that seeks to find new ways of representing in order to provide new perspectives on areas that are more or less well known and familiar to us.¹ Instead of geese, storks, and wild swans taking us on a journey around Sweden's landscapes, distributions of the co-occurrences of your words, visualised through topic modelling, provide an evocative topography of the semantic dynamics circulating through your writing.

1. Thorup Thomsen 2008: esp. 165.

<p><i>Topic 0</i> travel text romantic place orient narrator sweden translation oriental denmark international oriental writer poetic process dominant traveller</p>	<p><i>Topic 1</i> film stories scene cinema short locations sequence set act images protagonist settings visual texts significance day scandinavian means silent</p>	<p><i>Topic 2</i> national war transnational narrative writing guide story period terrain publication exhibition strategy account travel thought train play borders scale</p>	<p><i>Topic 3</i> travel writing modern fictional factual traffic modernity reportage modes modernism contemporary building perception emphasis nation change principle accident processes</p>	<p><i>Topic 4</i> text national sea war nation landscape danish british perspective female uncanny influence tale coast dead letter question information marriage battle</p>
<p><i>Topic 5</i> swedish world literary time life form local home journey texts representation forms turn notion study country context discussion foreign ways</p>	<p><i>Topic 6</i> sense narrative space environment spatial stockholm character period collective human novels development street centre characters alternative movement point people paris identifies</p>	<p><i>Topic 7</i> town urban modernist novel affective modern northern place social city early modernism locational townscape periphery political metropolitan centre articulation modernity</p>	<p><i>Topic 8</i> work role cultural international early sweden literature section range culture volume case boundaries perspectives contribution status public present interest material ideological innovative moving</p>	<p><i>Topic 9</i> north travel writing town south northern passage place related nature back darkness complex memory past title times railway growth childhood long pronounced</p>

Figure 1: Table of topic models (groups of words that frequently occur close to one another across the corpus) with their most frequent words.

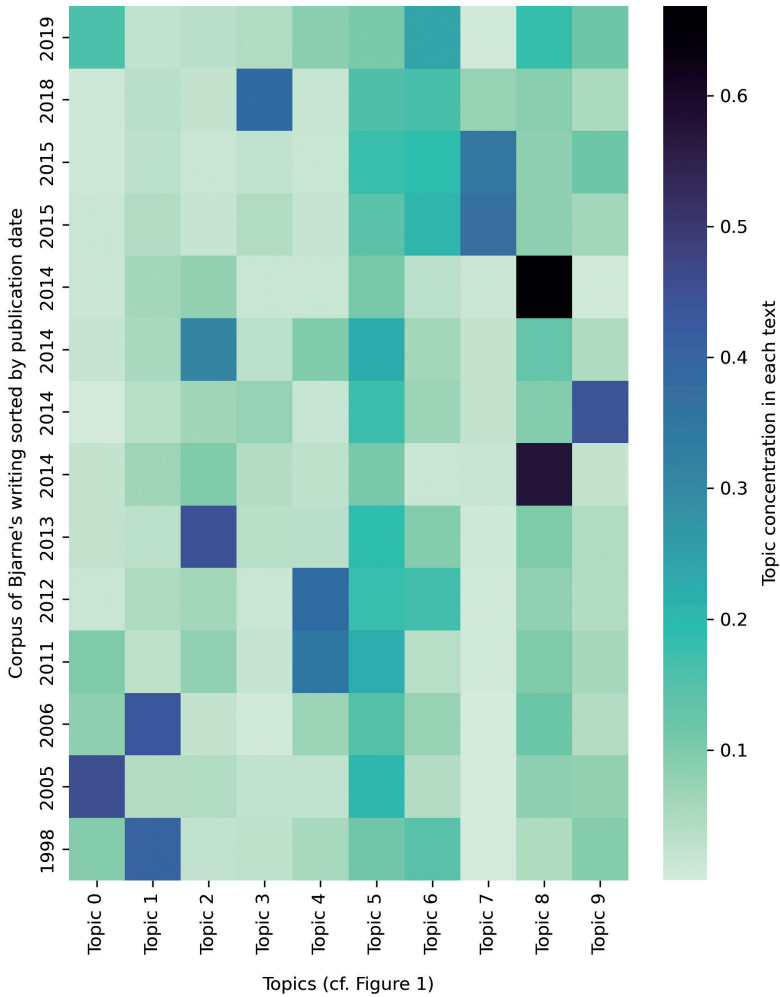


Figure 2: Heat map of distribution of topic models (Figure 1) across the corpus of texts.

Bibliography

- Thorup Thomsen, Bjarne. 2008. 'A Place and a Text In-Between: Translation Patterns in Hans Christian Andersen's *I Sverrig*'. In Marie Wells (ed.), *The Discovery of Nineteenth-Century Scandinavian*. Norwich: Norvik Press, 163–175.