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Brought into the Limelight

*Canonisation Processes at Work in Astrid Lindgren's
Oeuvre in Flanders and The Netherlands 1952-2012*

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Introduction

Whenever an artist dies, the work slowly begins to replace his body, becoming a corporeal substitute for him in the world. It can't be helped, I suppose. Useful objects, like chairs and dishes, passed down from one generation to another, may briefly feel haunted by their former owners, but that quality vanishes rather quickly into their pragmatic functions. Art, useless as it is, resists incorporation into dailiness, and if it has any power at all, it seems to breathe with the life of the person who made it. Art historians don't like to speak of this, because it suggests the magical thinking attached to icons and fetishes, but I have experienced it time and again[.]
(Hustvedt 2003, 257)

In the fall of 2014, leading Swedish daily newspaper *Dagens nyheter* enquired among its readers which they deemed to be the most important Swedish cultural “event” since the newspaper came into existence 150 years earlier. Astrid Lindgren’s creation Pippi Longstocking ended up as the distinct victor in the online poll, and her 1973 novel *The Brothers Lionheart* came in ninth.¹ The predominance of Astrid Lindgren and her literary figures in the Swedish cultural imagination is striking.² In his essay on Pippi Longstocking’s glorious success, *Dagens nyheter* critic Björn Wiman states, “Today, all of

¹ The full list of the ten cultural events which were voted most important can be consulted online: <<http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/sveriges-10-viktigaste-kulturhandelser/>> [Accessed 2 January 2015].

² Compare (Surmatz 2005, 5-6): “Lindgren’s works, on account of their large and enduring success with the audience and their incessant presence in the critical, journalistic discussion on children’s literature, have acquired an inestimable significance for general developments within the realm of children’s literature in Sweden and in Germany since 1945, furthermore all over Europe at least” [Lindgrens Werke haben aufgrund ihres großen und beständigen Erfolgs beim Publikum und ihrer anhaltenden Präsenz in der kritischen, journalistischen Diskussion über die Kinderliteratur eine kaum zu überschätzende Bedeutung für die allgemeine Entwicklung im Bereich der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur in Schweden und Deutschland seit 1945 erlangt, außerdem zumindest europaweit] [my translations throughout].

us are Pippi Longstocking” (Wiman 2014, n.p.).³ Wiman’s salient observation in fact signals the omnipresence of Astrid Lindgren and her body of work in Swedish cultural life at large.⁴ In addition, Wiman comments on the nature of canonical children’s books in general:

The classics of children’s literature are those books which have become incorporated into our blood circulation – even if we have not read them ourselves. For the best children’s literary narratives no constructed canon is necessary: they are a part of general consciousness anyhow. With them, it is like with true education: they are those that remain when we have forgotten everything we have learnt. (Wiman 2014, n.p.)⁵

Wiman suggests that canonised works of children’s literature have acquired a place in a community of readers’ awareness, as has the oeuvre of fictional artist Bill Weschler, one of the protagonists in Siri Hustvedt’s acclaimed novel *What I Loved* (2003). Likewise, Astrid Lindgren’s legacy is kept alive, and in a sense has become transcendental, ethereal, and pervasive.

I myself first became aware of the ubiquity of Astrid Lindgren and her oeuvre when I mapped out and compared the coverage of the author’s decease in Swedish, Dutch, and Flemish newspapers within the framework of my master’s dissertation in 2004. Observations on the far-reaching extent to which Lindgren’s story lines and characters have permeated Swedish cultural life and society in its entirety led to the question how an author acquires status in the first place: How does he or she gain recognition and eventually become canonical? How and why is value attached to the writer’s oeuvre? How can one consequently examine what impact that author has, or, in other words, by what terms can one judge the author’s importance? Starting from the above questions, in the study at hand I set out to investigate what the parameters of canonisation are, that is to say, what set of criteria needs to be imposed – knowingly or unknowingly – on an author or a work in order for them to be considered canonical. I seek to answer the question what proverbial boxes they need to tick.

An essential premise for this inquiry is that a traditional conception of the literary canon and canonical works as sacred cows which are to remain untouched no longer is relevant. It does not correspond to both current cultural practices in general and ways of

³ “I dag är vi alla Pippi Långstrump” (Wiman 2014, n.p.).

⁴ E.g. (Kåreland (ed.) 2005); (Kåreland (ed.) 2009).

⁵ “Barnlitteraturens klassiker är de böcker som gått in i vårt blodomlopp – också om vi inte själva har läst dem. För barnlitteraturens bästa berättelser behövs ingen konstruerad kanon, de finns ändå i det allmänna medvetandet. Det är med dem som med den äkta bildningen: det är de som finns kvar när vi glömt allt vi lärt oss” (Wiman 2014, n.p.).

reading in particular, which have become all the more differentiated in recent decades.⁶ For this reason, I am convinced that the topics of canon, canonisation, and canonicity likewise should be treated in a dynamic fashion. My intention, then, is to abandon the static perspective which governed canon debates for years on end. My approach is inspired by cultural studies and postmodern reception theory and entails the acceptance of the fundamental assumption that the meaning of a literary text is not merely enclosed in the text itself but that it is co-created by its readers. For the purpose of this study, these ideas are applied in a very specific context. What will be dealt with here is a particular *meaning* attributed to a literary work by a particular *group of readers*, viz. *canonical value* which is ascribed by the *adult agents* in the field of children's literature who negotiate between adult authors and child readers. As a result, the goal of this inquiry has shifted in comparison with traditional canon studies: the objective is no longer to establish a normative, permanent list of canonical works but to describe discernible processes of canonisation and their development. Of particular interest in this respect are the channels through which a work is canonised, the reasons why, as well as the different phases which these processes go through. My main focus will be the field of children's literature, but its particular relationship with the literary field as a whole will be taken into consideration as well in those instances where it proves to be relevant for the canonisation of works of children's literature.

⁶ See for instance (Kåreland 2009, 121); (Mackey 1998, xii-xvi); (O'Sullivan 2000a, 391); (Persson 1998); (Squires 2007); (Steiner 2009); (Viies 2005, 153-154).

Chapter 1

“No Man Is an Island”: Underlying Assumptions and Approach

*No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
(John Donne)¹*

1.1 The Emergence of the Canon Debate in Children’s Literature

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the concept of the literary canon was hardly of any concern in the newly-emerging field of children’s literature research. Attempts at engaging with the topic were rather scarce and mostly made in Europe, more specifically in German and Scandinavian academic circles, within the larger context of historiographical studies. Amongst such endeavours,² *Three Centuries of Children’s Books in Europe* (1959)³ by German-Swiss children’s book author and publisher Bettina Hürlimann

¹ < <http://www.online-literature.com/donne/409/> > [Accessed 20 May 2015]

² The list of titles I mention here is not exhaustive but representative of the interest in the topic as it becomes visible in the library collections of the *Swedish Institute for Children’s Books* [Svenska barnboksinsitutet] and the *International Youth Library* [Internationale Jugendbibliothek] in Munich, Germany, two major organisations where I spent several research stays in order to prepare for this study.

³ Originally published as *Europäische Kinderbücher in drei Jahrhunderten* (Hürlimann 1959). The English title is taken from the translation which appeared in 1967.

was one of the very first. It was soon followed by two Swedish monographs: *Swedish Children's and Youth Literature 1591-1839* (1964),⁴ written by Göte Klingberg, one of the pioneers of children's literature studies in Sweden, and influential children's literature critic Eva von Zweigbergk's *The Children's Book in Sweden 1750-1950* (1965).⁵ Further examples are *Classical Children's Books. Critical Considerations* (1969),⁶ a volume edited by German literary theorist and professor at the Frankfurt am Main Institute for Children's Books Research Klaus Doderer,⁷ *Children's Literature in Sweden. Reading Materials for Children and Children's Books Programmes* (1970) published by Swedish literary theorists Lars Furuland, Örjan Lindberger and Mary Ørvig,⁸ A unique early example from the American field is *Classics of Children's Literature* (1980), an anthology of children's literature selected by John Griffith and Charles Frey (University of Washington). In the present chapter, I will retrace the developments instigating the discussion of the topic and map out the main issues which dictated the debate. Moreover, I will expound how the entire study at hand can be framed against the background of these developments. I will conclude by plotting a methodological framework for the execution of the present inquiry into the canonisation of Astrid Lindgren and her works.

The mid-1980s saw the introduction of the literary canon as a new, heavily debated theme in international children's literature research. In this 1980s canon debate, the spark was put to the tinder by two separate projects in which the notion became topical and which in a way could be seen as complementary. The first project was a study entitled *Poetics of Children's Literature*, published in 1986 by Israeli Zohar Shavit, which was groundbreaking as it was one of the first full-length monographs to deal with children's literature as a topic in its own right, boosting in a field of research which was, at that time, otherwise characterised by paucity. Inspired by literary theorists such as Yuri Lotman, Itamar Even-Zohar, and Gideon Toury, Shavit assumes in her book "a dynamic concept of literary systems" based on the following premise:

[I]t is understood that the literary system is not static but is 'a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are interdependent'[,] (Shavit 1986, 64)⁹

⁴ *Svensk barn- och ungdomslitteratur 1591-1839* (Klingberg 1964).

⁵ *Barnboken i Sverige 1750-1950* (von Zweigbergk 1965).

⁶ *Klassische Kinder- und Jugendbücher. Kritische Betrachtungen* (Doderer 1969).

⁷ Doderer held a professorship at the "Institut für Jugendbuchforschung" at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt am Main from 1963 until 1990.

⁸ *Barnlitteratur i Sverige. Läsning för barn och barnboksprogram* (Furuland, Lindberger and Ørvig 1970).

⁹ In this excerpt, Zohar Shavit quotes Itamar Even-Zohar from his 1979 article "Polysystem Theory" in *Poetics Today* 2: 290.

Starting from this polysystemic perspective, classifying different systems in terms of central versus peripheral positions, Shavit pinpoints the prerequisites for the origin of children's literature. She draws attention to the fact that this particular branch of literature emerged considerably later than adult literature, and that it in fact "began to develop only after adult literature had become a well-established institution" (Shavit 1986, 3). Indeed, the polysystemic approach adopted by Shavit allows for an interpretation of this very development placing children's literature, when it first started to evolve, on the *margins* of the general literary system at a time when adult literature already had claimed its place at the *centre* of that system, leaving it, as it were, predestined for an existence on the periphery.

Hence, Shavit concludes that the status of children's literature "within culture as a whole and in the literary polysystem in particular is inferior" (Shavit 1986, 33).¹⁰ Moreover, she argues that it resembles that of peripheral, non-canonised adult literature, seeing that it shares some characteristics with this inferior kind of adult literature, such as conservatism and reluctance to accept new models (Shavit 1986, 33). Nevertheless, Shavit warns against totally equating it with the latter. Because children's literature, "by itself, is stratified as a whole into canonized and non-canonized systems" (Shavit 1986, 33), which marginal adult literature obviously is not. Another difference is the former system's connection with the educational system, which the latter lacks (cf. *infra*). So, whereas non-canonised adult literature is a peripheral and single-layered system in essence, children's literature is looked upon as a system which in itself is multi-faceted, with a canon of its own, even though it likewise operates in the margins of the comprehensive general literary system. In her book, Shavit focuses on the children's literary system, omitting a comparison with the similar but different system of non-canonised adult literature. She studies not only how the system of children's literature is regarded by players of other systems, but also how it sees itself, as she considers those two views to be entwined.

Shavit sums up which issues are at play with regard to external views on the children's literary system. This enumeration in effect provides us with a good insight in what she sees as markers of success in the literary system in general. Shavit finds, firstly, that

¹⁰ It should be noted that Zohar Shavit published this study almost three decades ago, in 1986. The pessimistic outlook on the position of children's literature and its authors held by Shavit reflects the condition of the field at large at that point in time. The subject had hardly been developed and was yet to acquire any clout within the overarching literary field. In general, her study was felt to be admirable because it asked good questions, yet to some it was slightly disappointing as it failed to answer them satisfactorily (Nodelman 1987, 162). I would argue that, although *Poetics of Children's Literature* emanates a rather pessimistic view and may be in need of revision and fine-tuning, it remains clear that Zohar Shavit opened up the field for questions which are still relevant today.

works of literary history rarely devote attention to children's books, which leads her to conclude that "a distinction is made between 'real' literature and children's literature" (Shavit 1986, 35). Children's books, as opposed to "serious" books for adults, are in general not deemed to be an essential part of a culture's literary legacy. When it comes to academic attention, by contrast, the situation for children's books seems to be improving as an ever-increasing number of children's books is becoming the subject of research and teaching. Nevertheless, Shavit finds it problematic that at the time of writing the books in most cases were not studied in their own right but merely as "vehicle[s] for education" (Shavit 1986, 35). In her opinion, this tendency to keep coupling children's literature with education "only reinforces its inferior position" (Shavit 1986, 35).¹¹ Furthermore, the constant references to the "educational value" (Shavit 1986, 36) of good children's books contribute to a further dissociation of children's literature from literature of distinction. Last but not least, Shavit believes the position of children's writers in society to be "peripheral and apologetic" (Shavit 1986, 37). All in all, it is Shavit's conviction that "[c]hildren's literature is [...] deprived of all status symbols" (Shavit 1986, 38) and that it consequently cannot acquire a more central position (and hence be canonised) within the general literary system. Her conclusions are that children's literature should be considered as a separate subsystem within the general literary system, operating in the periphery of that "umbrella" system and that its inferiority is to be attributed to the association of children's books with didactic and educational purposes which precludes any judgment of the books in their own right.

An additional difficulty for the system of children's literature which Shavit points at stems from the great amount of pressure its relation to the general literary system is subjected to. Children's writers seem to suffer from low self-esteem, if you will,¹² as they are struggling with the restrictive effect of "the simultaneous (often contradictory) need to appeal to both the child and to the adult" (Shavit 1986, 63). As opposed to the adult literary system, where grown-ups both write, publish and buy their own books, children, the intended audience, are in this system presented with books which are written, published and bought for them by others (viz. adults). In the case of a children's book, the child reader is never the sole recipient.¹³ Shavit sees two ways in which an adult children's books author can cope with this disproportion: he or she can either refuse to take the adult reader into account, or, on the contrary, aim the text at this adult co-reader

¹¹ Compare (Surmatz 2005, 25).

¹² Cf. (Ghesquière 1982, 28-29); (Ghesquière 2009, 21).

¹³ A detailed analysis of the adult's position in the children's literary field can be found in (amongst others theoretical works) (Ewers 2009): Chapter 5 "Children's Literature as Reading Material for Adults", and (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008): Chapter 1: "Made by Adults: The Children's Book, The Child. An Encounter Between Child and Book" [Door volwassenen gemaakt: Het kinderboek, het kind. Een ontmoeting tussen kind en boek].

exclusively.¹⁴ In Shavit's opinion, the products of both solutions are texts which are ambivalent (Shavit 1986, 63), of which the child-centred type belongs to the non-canonised layer of the subsystem and the adult-oriented to the canonised stratum. For it is the approval of adult readers that is essential in order for works of children's literature to become canonised, as Shavit emphasises, "we are dealing here with a group of texts that normally belong to the children's system, although their being read by adults is a *sine qua non* for their success" (Shavit 1986, 64).

Shavit maintains that these ambivalent canonised texts "belong simultaneously to more than one system and consequently are read differently (though concurrently), by at least two groups of readers" (Shavit 1986, 66). Hence, in Shavit's understanding of the system of children's literature, an essential feature of its canonical,¹⁵ ambivalent texts is that they reconcile the disparate preferences of adult and child readers in the system. They unite a certain sophistication which is expected by the former with a reliance on familiar and well-established elements which the latter look for. Furthermore, the central texts of children's literature often incorporate elements which have already been disparaged in the adult system but have not yet become in vogue in the children's system (Shavit 1986, 67). Consequently, they can be said to operate in a grey area where the two systems meet. In Shavit's view, it is this precise position which is defining for canonical children's texts, the crux of the rationale being that "it is exactly their disagreement with each of the systems, and the fact that they could not be exclusively accepted by either, that makes possible their simultaneous acceptance by both systems" (Shavit 1986, 67). In sum, in *Poetics of Children's Literature* a complex set of conditions are shown to govern the system of children's literature, having to do mainly with its connotation of being an educational tool as well as its application of non-canonised components of adult literature. This analysis of Zohar Shavit's called for further inquiries into the nature of and the dynamics surrounding the children's literary system or field.¹⁶

A similar preoccupation with the impact of the prevalent didactic-oriented approach to children's books underpins the second figurative spark instigating the canon debate, which was the foundation of the Canon Committee by the Children's Literature Association (ChLA) in the United States. The Canon Committee developed out of a panel held at the 1980 annual ChLA conference called "Developing a Canon of Children's Literature", and, run by Canadian children's literature scholar and later ChLA president

¹⁴ I use the term "co-reader" as it was coined by Hans-Heino Ewers in *Fundamental Concepts of Children's Literature Research* (Ewers 2009, 43).

¹⁵ To the canonised texts of the subsystem of children's literature, Zohar Shavit counts a.o. *Alice in Wonderland*, *Watership Down*, *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *The Little Prince* and *The Hobbit* (Shavit 1986, 66).

¹⁶ Polysystem theory in itself is quite normative in its polarising approach to the literary practice. Therefore, I will not be using the term "system" to designate the different areas of literary activity, but rather the term "field", inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's work (1977 [2003]).

Perry Nodelman, proposed a list of 63 canonical works, which it put forward as “touchstones”. The almost entirely Anglo-Saxon list was eventually published in the three-volume *Touchstones. Reflections on the Best in Children’s Literature* (1985-1989). In his account of the rationale informing the compilation of the *Touchstones*-anthology rendered in the introduction to the first of the three volumes, Nodelman starts from his personal experience when he began to teach children’s literature in the middle 1970s, which was quite a departure from his training as an expert of Victorian poetry. He observes a discrepancy between a focus on child readers’ wants and needs in guidebooks of the time and his own impulse to highlight literary merit. He indicates that in his own understanding of what constitutes “literary merit”, prompted by his background in general literary theory, it “depend[s] exclusively on qualities like uniqueness and unity of vision, on subtle use of language and such” (Nodelman 1985, 3). From a perspective such as Nodelman’s, the practice of taking into account the impact books have on their audience, as was common in the fairly new domain of children’s literature studies, proves difficult to accept.

Although Nodelman admits that he later came to realise that “all literature must be understood and judged in terms of its effects on readers” (Nodelman 1985, 5), upon his first encounter with children’s literature he made the deliberate choice to apply on children’s books criteria taken from general literary theory. Moreover, he describes the state of affairs in the emerging field at the time to show that he was not alone in choosing this path. He mentions that

English teachers [...], educators and librarians with a taste for literary pleasures were separately coming to realize that the conventional approaches to children’s literature, while useful and necessary, were simply not literary enough in focus to answer the sort of questions [...] that they believed to be important. (Nodelman 1985, 6)

Furthermore, Nodelman states that his analysis of existing studies on children’s literature showed that the same books were referred to time and again. Clearly, there must have been some works which qualified as canonical, but which had not yet been identified as such. In addition, the call for a canon, that is, “a list of works everybody agreed were the important ones” (Nodelman 1985, 6), grew ever louder among those who were convinced that “[c]hildren’s literature studies would remain chaotic until such a shared context could be developed” (Nodelman 1985, 6).

The Canon Committee was established in response to the increasing demand for a canon. As Nodelman explains, it was inspired by British writer and literary critic Matthew Arnold, who introduced the term “touchstones” in 1880 in the foreword to a collection of poems by T.H. Ward. As Nodelman elucidates,

Arnold used the word as a metaphor: the streaks left by gold or silver on touchstones, hard black stones like jasper or basalt, can be compared with the

streaks left by alloys, in order to determine the quality of the metals. Arnold was thinking of that when he said, 'Indeed there can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent [...] than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry. [...] an infallible touchstone for detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality, and also the degree of this quality, in all other poetry we may place beside them. (241-2)' (Nodelman 1985, 1)

He goes on to indicate the impact of the concept for the study and criticism of English, and is convinced that current literary study rests on these ideas proposed by Arnold. What is more, Nodelman believes that it has retained its relevance in the study of children's literature, where "teachers still select works of literature for study at least partially in terms of the potential such works have to act as touchstones for students in their future reading, and evaluation of literature" (Nodelman 1985, 1-2).

The scholars who eventually joined forces in the Canon Committee set out to separate the wheat from the chaff, focusing their attention on books which were both unique and admired, which, in other words, "combined distinctiveness with popularity", (Nodelman 1985, 7). A further criterion was that the book should also be important in the sense of having invited discussion (Nodelman 1985, 7). As Nodelman asserts, the Committee members soon reached consensus on what books needed to be included in their anthology. However, he admits that one might find fault with the selection because of its Anglo-Saxon bias, or its preference for realism and intricacy (Nodelman 1985, 8-9). He furthermore recognises the validity of objections raised against the elitist nature of the Committee's attempt to pinpoint excellence and frames it within a context of "class warfare" when he argues that canonical works "are considered touchstones because they accord with the tastes and further the interests of those who already have power" (Nodelman 1985, 9).¹⁷ Pierre Bourdieu and his sociological outlook on judgment values can easily be identified as an important source of inspiration to the Canon Committee. Finally, in the view of the Committee as expressed by Nodelman, the aim of its anthology "is to offer guidance in the reading, understanding, and evaluation of all sorts of literature" (Nodelman 1985, 11). The touchstones should in effect function as benchmarks for further reading. As far as the nature of those touchstone works is concerned, Nodelmans gives the following clues: They should be broadly beloved, and elicit imitation as well as critical examination (Nodelman 1985, 9). On the whole, as Nodelman contends, the *Touchstones*-anthology "constitute[s] an investigation of value in literature in general, and in children's literature in particular" (Nodelman 1985, 11).

¹⁷ Moreover, Perry Nodelman adds that processes of canon formation, such as the *Touchstones*-project, may be perceived as working to "impose the taste of a small group upon the rest of humanity" (Nodelman 1985, 10).

Both Zohar Shavit's *Poetics of Children's Literature* and the *Touchstones*-list championed by Perry Nodelman and his colleagues appeared on the stage of the then still young field of children's literature research in the middle of the 1980s.¹⁸ In Shavit's study, the persistent connection of children's literature with didactic aims was identified as a drawback for the system, hindering its potential acquisition of a more central position in the overarching literary system, alongside canonised adult literature. The Canon Committee in its selection of touchstones endeavoured to assess children's books in terms of aesthetic rather than educational value, thus responding to laments comparable to the one voiced by Zohar Shavit. In addition, by suggesting that the touchstones be used as gauges providing a guiding principle for any reading done afterwards (cf. supra), the Committee tied in with the original meaning of the term canon, derived from the Greek "kanón", which designates a "measuring rod, [or a] rule".¹⁹ As will become clear in the remainder of this chapter, the different layers of meaning of the word are echoed in other facets of the debate as well as in current canon research.

Nevertheless, as far as the *Touchstones*-anthology was concerned, Nodelman claimed that the aim of the project never was to lay down a rule or a law but rather the resolve "to open a dialogue" (Nodelman 1985, 11). The ensuing decade indeed saw a surge of responsive readers and anthologies gathering noteworthy children's books, assembled within different contexts and rooted in various perspectives. Examples are *The Literary Heritage of Childhood. An Appraisal of Children's Classics in the Western Tradition* (1987) compiled by the aforementioned scholars Charles Frey and John Griffith, *Classics of Children's literature* (1995) edited by Bettina Hurrelman, professor in literary didactics at Cologne University (Germany),²⁰ and *A Child's Delight* (1997), announced as a collection of "[e]ssays on children's classics" by Noel Perrin, American writer and professor of English at Dartmouth College. As such, the establishment of the phenomenon of canon lists of children's literature became a fact, and its influence continued into the new millennium with publications such as German children's literature scholar Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer's *Classics of Children's Literature. An International Lexikon* (1999b),²¹ *Crosscurrents of Children's Literature. An Anthology of Texts and Criticism* (2007) coordinated by American children's literature experts J.D. Stahl, Tina L. Hanlon and Elizabeth Lennox Keyser, and

¹⁸ The emergence of the field of children's literature studies will be dealt with at length in section Chapter 3.

¹⁹ <<http://dictionary.reference.com/etymology/canon>> [Accessed 3 February 2014; emphasis in original]. It is added that *kanón* is "akin to *kánna* cane". Compare <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=canon&allowed_in_frame=0> [Accessed 3 February 2014]: "from Greek *kanon* 'any straight rod or bar; rule; standard of excellence,' perhaps from *kanna* 'reed' (see *cane* (n.))".

²⁰ *Klassiker der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur* (Hurrelmann (ed.) 1995).

²¹ *Klassiker der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur. Ein internationales Lexikon* (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999b).

Children's Literature: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends (2009) edited by Heather Montgomery and Nicola J. Watson.²²

In 2006, a collection of scholarly articles appeared which openly engaged in a debate with the ChLA-endorsed *Touchstones*-canon list. Equally under the aegis of the Children's Literature Association, Sandra L. Beckett and Maria Nikolajeva published *Beyond Babar. The European Tradition in Children's Literature* (2006). As we gather from Sandra Beckett's introductory chapter, the collection was in fact intended as a supplement to the three-volume *Touchstones*-anthology, meant to "fill the gaps left by the first *Touchstones* volume by adopting a global perspective and providing essays on a corpus of masterpieces for children from around the world, a kind of 'International Touchstones.'" (Beckett 2006, v-vi) Beckett furthermore indicates that the scope of the *Beyond Babar*-anthology was to "examin[e] in depth eleven of the most celebrated European children's novels" (Beckett 2006, ix), "written by some of the most important twentieth-century children's authors" (Beckett 2006, x). Amongst the works under scrutiny is Astrid Lindgren's Pippi Longstocking-series.²³ In her chapter on these books, Maria Nikolajeva praises Lindgren for being "the most prominent and famous contemporary children's author in Sweden" (Nikolajeva 2006, 52), who "created a vast number of literary figures that are today known and loved all over the world" (Nikolajeva 2006, 53). Nikolajeva not only mentions how popular Lindgren's works have become but also points out just how influential an author she was: "Together with such writers as Lennart Hellsing and Tove Jansson, Lindgren radically changed Swedish children's literature and its status in society" (Nikolajeva 2006, 53). What is more, Nikolajeva adds, Lindgren's impact exceeds national boundaries, and she can be said to occupy "a unique position in children's literature" (Nikolajeva 2006, 54). According to Nikolajeva, this stature is due to what she sees as Lindgren's "greatest contribution", namely "to have created an extremely favorable climate for children's literature, to have opened avenues for new forms and styles, and thus to have raised the general status of children's literature in Sweden and throughout the world" (Nikolajeva 2006, 54).²⁴ Ultimately, to Nikolajeva's mind, it seems impossible to imagine

²² Also worth mentioning here is the collection titled *Stories and Poems for Extremely Intelligent Children of All Ages* (2001), picked by Harold Bloom, author of the highly controversial *The Western Canon. The Books and Schools of the Ages* (Bloom 1996).

²³ The other books included in *Beyond Babar* are (in that order): Janusz Korczak's *King Matt the First* (originally published in 1923), Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Little Prince* (1943), Tove Jansson's Moomin novels (published between 1945 and 1970), Gianni Rodari's *The Befana's Toyshop* (1954), Cecil Bødker's *Silas and the Black Mare* (1967), Michel Tournier's *Friday and Robinson: Life on Speranza Island* (1967), Christine Nöstlinger's *Conrad, The Factory-Made Boy* (1975), Michael Ende's *Never-ending Story* (1979), Peter Pohl's *Johnny, My Friend* (1985), Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World* (1991).

²⁴ This role of Lindgren's as a champion of children's literature as a whole will be covered at length in the final chapter of this study.

contemporary Swedish culture without Astrid Lindgren, since “[h]er significance as a writer and a national icon in Sweden cannot be overestimated” (Nikolajeva 2006, 54).

Evidently, Maria Nikolajeva is not alone in this opinion. Indeed, judging by the responses in national newspapers in Sweden,²⁵ by the time of her death in January 2002 Astrid Lindgren had left an indelible mark on Swedish culture. As Carl Hamilton, journalist for *Aftonbladet*, puts it, at times “it feels as if Astrid Lindgren has written the entire country” (Hamilton 2002, n.p.).²⁶ Maria Schottenius in *Expressen* observes that the Swedes found a commonality in Lindgren’s oeuvre. “If anything can be called culture”, she writes, “then it is the one Astrid Lindgren gave us. An attitude to life, and morals. A frame of reference” (Schottenius 2002, n.p.).²⁷ Moreover, she adds that Swedish society in its entirety is permeated with her works: “We are all a part of her. And with her books people get the unity which can solely be provided by real good literature. Whatever happens, on the whole, it has an Astrid Lindgren-reference” (Schottenius 2002).²⁸ Furthermore, Paul Binding in *Babel Guide to Scandinavian Fiction* discusses the central position that she holds in Swedish literature and remarks,

It would be an unbalanced selection of Swedish books that didn’t include something by the most-translated writer Sweden has ever produced, eclipsing even August Strindberg and Selma Lagerlöf, and [...] who has become a national institution, read by everybody, quoted and referred to by politicians, and with a law named after her, the Lex Astrid [sic],²⁹ on the humane treatment of farm animals. (Binding 1999, 150)

What Hamilton, Schottenius and Binding point to is that both the author Astrid Lindgren and several of her works are authoritative,³⁰ not only as regards their literary value but also with respect to their social relevance. The writer and her texts have become embedded in Swedish society and culture to such an extent that they can be said to have shaped it. As such, the stature of Astrid Lindgren and her works can be termed “canonical”, in a specific, function-oriented sense which – again – can be traced back to the roots of the word “kanón”. The opinion of these Swedish journalists that Lindgren and her stories have become a unifying factor in Swedish society represents the contents

²⁵ The news coverage of Astrid Lindgren’s decease in Sweden, Flanders and the Netherlands was scrutinised in (Van den Bossche 2004).

²⁶ “[det] känns som om Astrid Lindgren har skrivit hela landet” (Hamilton 2002, n.p.).

²⁷ “Om någonting kan kallas kultur så är det den Astrid Lindgren har givit oss. En livshållning och en moral. En referensram” (Schottenius 2002, n.p.).

²⁸ “Alla är vi en del av henne. Och med hennes böcker får människor den samhörighet som bara riktigt god litteratur kan ge. Vad som än händer, i stort sett, så har det en Astrid Lindgren-referens” (Schottenius 2002).

²⁹ The law on animal protection is actually called Lex Lindgren (see <<http://astridlindgren.se/manniskan/opinionsbildaren>> [Accessed 11 February 2014]).

³⁰ Compare (Bloom 1996, 1): “canonical, that is, authoritative in our culture”.

of the phrase “canonical” based on Hebrew interpretation of the Torah, which I will elaborate on in the following section.

1.2 Canon, Canonicity, and Canonisation: Shifting Conceptions

As Swedish literary theorist Lars Brink explains in “Canon, Character-Building, Cultural Heritage?” (2006),³¹ some scholars concentrate on aesthetic qualities of canonical works, whereas others stress the purpose of a canon, such as the creation of cultural participation. An example of the second kind of argumentation can be found with (former) professor of English at University of Notre Dame (In.) Gerald L. Bruns. With reference to the Hebrew Torah, Bruns claims, “A text [...] is canonical, not in virtue of being final and correct and part of an official library, but because it becomes *binding* upon a group of people” (cited in (Brink 2006, 14; emphasis in original)). The pertinence of canonical works on a social level and the linkage with religious history are in fact crucial for understanding the use of the word “canon” in contemporary literary theory. The primary, general meaning of the term today is that of a rule or law, particularly an ecclesiastical law “enacted by a council or other competent authority”.³² Hence, canonisation is related to legislation, to the laying out of laws. In addition, “canon” is nowadays used to refer to those texts from the Bible which are “recognized [...] as genuine and inspired”,³³ a sense of the word which stems from exegesis of the Bible.

Wolfgang Iser in *The Range of Interpretation* (2000) likewise looks into the Judaic tradition of studying and explaining the Torah and points out that against this background “canonization is a process of choosing the texts that will become the object of interpretation” (Iser 2000, 13). In other words, canonisation relies on selection and hence entails the establishment of a hierarchy, as the chosen texts are considered to possess an authority which non-canonical texts are denied. As Iser remarks, the process of selection

simultaneously elevates [the chosen texts] into a position of censorship over the other texts, whose study and interpretation may even be forbidden, because it helps

³¹ “Kanon, karaktärsfostran, kulturarv?” (Brink 2006).

³² <<http://dictionary.reference.com/etymology/canon>> [Accessed 3 February 2014].

³³ <<http://dictionary.reference.com/etymology/canon>> [Accessed 3 February 2014].

to stabilize the *authority* of the texts that are chosen. [...] the *ascription* of authority requires a negative foil to underpin its authenticity. (Iser 2000, 13; emphasis added)

A first important proposition put forward by Iser here is that authority is something which is ascribed, which means that it is a property which is acquired, not one which is inherent in the chosen texts. His interpretation actually runs counter to traditional accounts of canonisation in a religious context, in which the power to choose texts is believed to lie with God and no human can interfere with this divine ability. In Iser's atypical view, put differently, the "canon does not invest itself with authority; authority is bestowed on it, for whatever reason, from outside" (Iser 2000, 15). To this observation Iser adds that "texts in and of themselves do not legislate the conditions for their own reading[,] although each text can only come to life through being read" (Iser 2000, 19). Here, he hints at the impact of the readers in the process of canonical selection, which is an insight which comes in useful when dealing with canonisation within a non-religious framework.

The result of the former finding is that canonisation implies a redistribution of authority, which is a second significant assumption. The moment a text is included in the canon, a shift occurs in which "authority [is] removed from the writers of the text and transferred to its interpreters" (Iser 2000, 14).³⁴ Within the Judaic tradition, Iser goes on to elucidate, the texts of the canon were "meant to offer guidance" (Iser 2000, 14), which inspired the need for them to be explained and interpreted, so that they could be understood by all members of the religious community. The guiding principle was that the texts should be put to use so as not to operate in a vacuum, and they should be applied by their readers in their daily lives. The task of analysing the sacred tales was only to be conducted by the sages and the rabbis (Iser 2000, 14), whose interpretations were to become norms for the religious community. Only certain groups of readers were in the position to select, or canonise, texts and interpret them. (Here, too, the influence of Bourdieuan ideas is apparent.) Moreover, the act of interpretation displays the authority of the canonical texts. As Iser puts it,

the reading highlights the authority of the canon by bringing out its all-encompassing dimension, so that it can be turned onto a *measuring rod* for all the other texts; simultaneously, it transposes the canon into *guidelines* for the life of the community. (Iser 2000, 19; emphasis added)

The texts which are part of the canon are endowed with the function of a benchmark, which reflects yet another possible meaning of the term "kanôn", viz. "a standard;

³⁴ This excerpt is a quotation which Iser took from Halbertal, Moshe. *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997, p. 18.

criterion”.³⁵ As has become evident, the concept of a canon encompasses two different sides: one related to the exalted disposition of the texts themselves and one concerned with their meaning and use, the first of which in fact can account for the second. It is only when a text is recognised as superior that it can begin to play its role as a guiding factor in readers’ everyday existence.

The expression “canon” came to be used widely in literary theory in the course of the second half of the twentieth century (Brink 2006, 13), after the example of its application in religious milieus. In *Cultural Capital. The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (1993) John Guillory, who specialises in the history of literary scholarship at Yale University (Ct.), indicates, “The concept of the canon names the traditional *curriculum* of literary texts by analogy to [...] the scriptural canon” (Guillory 1993, 6; emphasis added). Traditional approaches to the concept of the literary canon rest on a definition which goes back to the very roots of the word “canon”, which is “benchmark and directive”, as is specified by Torben Weinreich, Danish professor in children’s literature and former head of the Centre for Children’s Literature in Copenhagen (Weinreich 2003, 14).³⁶ As Weinreich furthermore states, the term is used “within most art forms, including literature, to designate a list of the most important works or artists within that art form” (Weinreich 2003, 14).³⁷

As such, a canon serves as a “a classificatory construct”, the main function of which is “to position texts in relation to one another”, as we can read in *Constructing the Canon of Children’s Literature: Beyond Library Walls and Ivory Towers* by Anne Lundin, professor at the School of Library and Information Studies (University of Wisconsin-Madison) (Lundin 2004, xvii). Furthermore, in this view, a canon is generally regarded as an actual set of standard works, indeed “much like a library collection” (Lundin 2004, xvii). Dutch children’s literature scholars Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer and Piet Mooren, associated with Tilburg University, also point at the directional function of a canon, which derives from the fact that it “meets [...] the need for orientation and structure” (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 8).³⁸ By highlighting which “books are deemed to be valuable and worthy of passing on to the next generation by a large group of people” (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 8),³⁹ it has the potential to guide readers. Against a

³⁵ <<http://dictionary.reference.com/etymology/canon>> [Accessed 3 February 2014].

³⁶ “målestok og rettesnor” (Weinreich 2003, 14). Torben Weinreich was the director of the “Center for Børnelitteratur” at the Danish Pedagogical University [Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitet] between 1998 and 2004.

³⁷ “inden for de fleste kunstarter, også litteratur, som betegnelse på en liste over de vigtigste værker eller kunstnere inden for kunstarten” (Weinreich 2003, 14).

³⁸ “voorziet [...] in de behoefte aan oriëntatie en structuur” (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 8).

³⁹ “boeken die door een grote groep mensen waardevol worden gevonden en de moeite waard om aan de volgende generatie door te geven” (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 8).

literary-theoretical background, in its narrowest sense the notion of a canon appears just as selective as its religious counterpart, singling out authors and works of literature which should be known and studied, and, in doing so, “demarcating the characteristics of *actual* and *legitimate* art and culture” (Persson 1998, 56; emphasis added).⁴⁰

The process of selection informing the construction of a literary canon is described as phased by Scottish genre theorist and critic Alastair Fowler in “Genre and the Literary Canon” (1979). In a first stage of canon formation, Fowler explains, the vast amount of works in the so-called *potential* canon (to wit: every literary work ever published) is narrowed down to a more restricted *accessible* canon, comprising all of the works which have continued to be in print and hence within the reader’s reach (Fowler 1979, 98). A further screening of the potential and accessible works results in the emergence of an utterly narrow *selective* canon (Fowler 1979, 99), situated at the top of the literary food chain, if you will. Lars Brink expounds on the operation of this pyramid of canon levels and highlights the exclusivity of the third level:

Finally, the selective level is the canon which ‘the most skilful readers’ picked because they consider it to be worthy of exceptional attention. This would then act as three steps, where fewer and fewer works are eligible the higher up one gets. (Brink 2006, 18)⁴¹

In this connection, Staffan Bergsten and Lars Elleström in their textbook [*The Fundamental Concepts of Literary Historiography*] aptly state, “The more a canon swells, the less it becomes precisely a canon” (Bergsten and Elleström 2004, 37).⁴² Combined with the insight that the selected, canonised texts acquire the stature of a standard, it becomes plain to see why an effect of the winnowing process of selection is that a canon creates a tradition which it subsequently helps to preserve, as canonical authors and works go on to set an example for subsequent writers and texts.

⁴⁰ “ringa in vad som kännetecknar den *egentliga* och *legitima* konsten och kulturen” (Persson 1998, 56; emphasis added).

⁴¹ “Den selektiva nivån slutligen är den kanon som ‘de skickligaste läsarna’ utvalt därför att de anser den värd särskild uppmärksamhet. Detta skulle då fungera som tre trappsteg där färre och färre verk kommer ifråga ju högre upp man kommer” (Brink 2006, 18). However, Brink qualifies the latter statement, adding that “[i]n practice, books may have been picked on the selective level [...] without them therefore being strong on the nearest lower level, the accessible, whereas on the other hand the actors on the accessible level [...] can choose to target books other than those which are most common on the selective level” [I praktiken kan dock böcker ha valts ut på den selektiva nivån [...] utan att de för den skull är starka på den närmast lägre nivån, den tillgängliga, medan å andra sidan aktörerna på den tillgängliga nivån [...] kan välja att satsa på andra böcker än de som är mest gångbara på den selektiva nivån] (Brink 2006, 18).

⁴² “Ju mer kanon sväller, desto mindre blir den just kanon” (Bergsten and Elleström 2004, 37).

Moreover, whenever the term is applied in this confined sense the significance of canonical works is emphasised. Thus, this use demonstrates the association of the notion of a canon with things “of the first class, of acknowledged excellence” (Lundin 2004, xvi). Such a view is for instance held by Anne Lundin, who believes a literary canon to encompass “‘Literature’ with a capital L. and a certain resonance of tone” (Lundin 2004, xvi). A comparable perspective can be found in the description of the phenomenon of a classic offered by Marie Louise Ramnefalk, one of the editors of the Swedish series *All-Time Classics*.⁴³ In response to the question what the editorial committee considered as a “classic” she writes: “What we assume is literature which belongs to a sort of canon, a *tradition*, works which are central junctions in world literature, which perhaps have *gathered a following* or can measure themselves with *the superb* in another way” (Ramnefalk 1988, 31; emphasis added).⁴⁴ Indeed, the conception of canonicity that generally emanates from such an approach is developed along the lines of exemplariness and uniqueness. A famous – or perhaps even infamous – example of such a line of reasoning can be found with Harold Bloom, literary critic and professor of English at Yale University, in his study *The Western Canon. The Books and School of the Ages* (1996). In his discussion of a mere twenty-six authors whom he deems to be canonical, “that is, authoritative in our culture” (Bloom 1996, 1), Bloom attempts to reveal what constitutes greatness: “I have tried to [...] ask what makes the author and the works canonical”, he writes (Bloom 1996, 3), and continues to state, “The answer, more often than not, has turned out to be strangeness, a mode of *originality* that either cannot be assimilated, or that so assimilates us that we cease to see it as strange” (Bloom 1996, 3; emphasis added).

Within this type of discourse on the canon aesthetic norms seem to prevail and emphasis is placed on the lofty position of the canonical text in comparison with other works. In terms of Alastair Fowler’s pyramidal conception of canonisation, it can be seen as solely concerned with the upper tier, viz. the selective level. In addition, such argumentations in terms of “exclusivity” are permeated with a sense of sanctity attached to the canonical works of literature, by analogy with the reverence which was bestowed upon the books of the Bible that came to belong to the canon. In “On Teaching the Canon of Children’s Literature” (1992), John Griffith and Charles Frey, keen contributors to the canon debate within children’s literature studies (cf. *supra*),⁴⁵ highlight the aura of sacredness surrounding the apical works of children’s literature. They indicate that the

⁴³ In Swedish, the series is called “Alla tiders klassiker”.

⁴⁴ “Det vi utgår från är litteratur som ingår i någon sorts kanon, *en tradition*, verk som är centrala knutpunkter i världslitteraturen, kanske kommit att *bilda skola* eller på annat sätt kan mäta sig med *det yppersta*” (Ramnefalk 1988, 31; emphasis added).

⁴⁵ As mentioned before, Frey and Griffith contributed to the canon debate by means of their anthology *Classics of Children’s Literature* (1980) as well as their collection of essays *The Literary Heritage of Childhood. An Appraisal of Children’s Classics in the Western Tradition* (1987).

canon of the field is hard to identify, and that this difficulty arises from the “complex web of assumptions about values of tradition, cultural integrity, and respect for classics and canons” that is involved in dealing with “literature”, which is “what we and our forebears have been taught to *revere*” (Griffith and Frey 1992, 22; emphasis added).

Although John Griffith and Charles Frey recognise the majestic nature of canonical works and hence appear to lean towards a discourse of excellence, their outlook on the field at the same time compares to Zohar Shavit’s in that they conceive of it as “a set of concentric circles whose inner rings would be considered [...] to be the essential works, the classics – an anthology list, even, perhaps, a canon” (Griffith and Frey 1992, 22). Moreover, Griffith and Frey elaborate on the disposition of the core, the most central of the circular layers of literary works: “[T]he very notion of canonicity implies authority”, they write, more specifically “the kind of authority that sees itself empowered to exclude certain works from legitimacy, empowered to create margins” (Griffith and Frey 1992, 22). The resemblance borne to Shavit’s polysystemic view is obvious, and Fowler’s pyramid metaphor for canon formation is brought to mind here as well. Upon closer examination, their argumentation tends towards inclusion (a bird’s-eye view on the matter, if you will) rather than an elitist discourse of excellence and exclusivity. As such, Frey and Griffith position themselves on the cusp of two different yet related paradigms. Their stance is representative of a line of research which transcends the study of immanent qualities of the work and in which attention is no longer devoted to the authority of *the* canon exclusively, but where the social relevance and use of canonical works are studied as well.

Over the past few decades (roughly since the early 1970s) the notion of an absolute “canon” has been questioned and criticised severely within literary theory, as a result of which ideas on the nature of the canon itself have shifted considerably. In contemporary theory, therefore, canon is no longer looked upon as a fixed given. Instead, importance is placed on the circumstances surrounding the canonisation of a work. The theoretical foundation of this study is aligned with these altered ideas. One scholar who addressed the changing conceptions of the canon is Heinrich Kaulen. In “‘Canonisation Process’ instead of ‘Canon’” (2007),⁴⁶ Kaulen finds that the latter half of the twentieth century witnessed a shift in guidance, which implied that the canon ceased to be the sole point of reference providing orientation in literary matters and that this function was “usurped” by bestseller lists, for instance. Paradoxically, the unsettling of the notion of a single, authoritative canon has led to a renewed interest in canon formation. Because, as Kaulen contends, the “less” a canon exists, the more it is being quarrelled about (Kaulen 2007, 109).⁴⁷ He argues, in other words, that if it is not clear which works do and do not belong

⁴⁶ “‘Kanonisierungprozess’ statt ‘Kanon’” (Kaulen 2007).

⁴⁷ “Über den literarischen Kanon wird umso heftiger gestritten, je weniger es ihn gibt” (Kaulen 2007, 109).

to the canon (and if that canon consequently cannot be used as a benchmark), the concept itself will be discussed all the more.

The fact of the matter is that traditional processes of canon construction have eroded due to fundamentally altered circumstances in the literary field. One of the main impulses informing these evolutions is the shift in focus from the literary work itself to readers and interpretations. As will become clear in section 1.4, this move is central to my understanding of canonicity as well. Moreover, many of the critics who look into this matter attribute the evolving ideas on canon formation to socio-political grounds. Roderick McGillis (2006), for instance, finds, “In terms of the study of literature, the focus upon a canon of great books, the construction of a new canon and interpretive methods that universalise the meaning of literature, have all come under criticism for being hegemonic” (McGillis 2006, 326). McGillis stresses that the discernible reconceptualization was informed by an ideological drive mainly. To be precise, he identifies as a crucial influence in this process the “struggle for recognition” of different social groups, not only regarding social standing but also with respect to their representation: “The call is for teachers and critics to recognize the voices of all cultural groups both within the economy of literary production and within the larger social economy” (McGillis 2006, 326). Again, as in Perry Nodelman’s argumentation, the Bourdieuan notion of a class struggle is referred to. Similarly, in his contribution to *This You Must Read. Literary and Educational Canon Formation in (Children’s) Literature* (2004),⁴⁸ late professor in modern Dutch literature Gerard de Vriend points out that the undermining of the canon has made it lose its prescriptive nature (de Vriend 2004, 26). Also in said volume, Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer and Piet Mooren observe a shift from what they call “absolutism” to “pluralism” (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 9). The evolution that has taken place, they argue, is one from a firm belief in a single, stable canon, compiled by a relatively small number of experts, to different groups foregrounding their own canons.⁴⁹ Therefore, they find, “Canon formation now more than ever is a democratic process” (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 9).⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Dat moet je gelezen hebben. Literaire en educatieve canonvorming in de (jeugd)literatuur* (van Lierop-Debrauwer, Mooren and Bekkering (eds) 2004).

⁴⁹ Compare the definition of a canon taken from *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Abrams and Harpham 2012), in which Meyer Howard Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham indicate that the current state of affairs in canon research is characterised by fluctuation. As opposed to the biblical canon which is enforced by authorities, explicit and closed, “[t]he canon of literature is the product of a wavering and unofficial consensus; it is tacit rather than explicit, loose in its boundaries, and always subject to changes in the works that it includes” (Abrams and Harpham 2012, 41).

⁵⁰ “Canonvorming is meer dan ooit een democratisch proces geworden” (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 9). Van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren furthermore observe, “Societal developments such as feminism and increasing migration, developments within literary theory such as the influence of postmodernism and the

Heinrich Kaulen comes to a similar conclusion. He rejects the very presumption of a singular, general canon, which to his mind is a fallacy:

Talking of one canon (in singular) is for any epoch – except for archaic and pre-modern forms of society and from life under dictatorships, where such a canon is forced through in an authoritarian manner – an intolerable simplification. At no point – apart from in these exceptional cases – has there been a canon of works, authors and interpretation which applied to the entire society and which was lasting and established. There have been and still are only historically variable canons (in plural) which are connected with specific social groups, supporters and institutions. (Kaulen 2007, 109)⁵¹

This study is aligned with Kaulen’s suggestion that attempts at compiling a – preferably exhaustive – list of canonical authors within any literature could be questioned, and that a different, non-exclusive attitude is called for.⁵²

1.3 Conflicting Approaches to Canonicity

The objections voiced against the idea of an absolute canon described in the previous section raise questions as to what approach(es) could serve as an alternative. What if, as Heinrich Kaulen claims, both the traditional canon *as such* and its criteria of representativeness, originality (innovativity), and intertextuality are untenable (Kaulen 2007, 109-110)? If we no longer can rely on *the* canon and its constituents, what other ways are there to study the concept of canonicity? As it so happens, the answer can – again – be found in the context of exegesis, in which the word canon originally came into

attention devoted within children’s literature and teaching methodology to a continuing supply of culture have initiated the process in which the absolutism of yesteryear has given way to pluralism” [[m]aatschappelijke ontwikkelingen zoals het feminisme en de toenemende migratie, ontwikkelingen binnen de literatuurwetenschap zoals de invloed van het postmodernisme en de aandacht binnen de jeugdliteratuur en vakdidactiek voor een doorlopend cultuuraanbod, hebben er de aanzet toe gegeven dat het absolutisme van weleer heeft plaatsgemaakt voor pluralisme] (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 9).

⁵¹ “Die Rede von einem Kanon (im Singular) ist für alle Epochen – abgesehen von archaischen und vormodernen Gesellschaftsformen und vom Leben in Diktaturen, wo ein derartiger Kanon autoritär durchgesetzt wird – eine unzulässige Vereinfachung. Zu keinem Zeitpunkt gab es, klammert man diese Sonderfälle einmal aus, einen für die Gesamtgesellschaft verbindlichen, überzeitlichen und festgelegten Werk-, Autoren- oder Deutungskanon. Es gab und gibt immer nur historisch wandelbare Kanones (im Plural), die an bestimmte soziale Gruppen, Trägerschichten und Institutionen geknüpft sind” (Kaulen 2007, 109).

⁵² Moreover, I subscribe to Heinrich Kaulen’s viewpoint that a critical perspective on the matter is even more necessary in the case of children’s literature.

use. A pertinent issue pertaining to canonisation is the question what is deciding in the assessment of a literary work. A possible solution lies in the displacement of authority observed by Wolfgang Iser (Iser 2000, 14; cf. supra), which could inspire an analogous shift of focus in canon research, a movement away from an unequivocal commitment to canonical texts themselves and towards inclusion of both the reception of the works and the role of the agents who actually endow those very texts with authority.

Heinrich Kaulen in fact advocates an approach of this kind, as he argues that when determining the canonical value of a text or an author, instead of relying on text-immanent and system-internal standards, one should turn to external factors, focusing on the value judgments and individual interests which dictate canon formation. In short, he favours an approach which foregrounds canonical *processes*, a plea which is informed by his conviction that “there is no canon, in the sense of a closed off and established text corpus, only canonisation, that is to say historically describable processes of canon selection, decanonisation, and canon transformation in specific groups and institutions” (Kaulen 2007, 110).⁵³ A similar and relevant viewpoint on this matter is that of Torben Weinreich, who points out that canons do not necessarily exist in a traditional “open” form, that is laid down and made public (usually as a list, issued either by publishing houses, governments or institutions) (Weinreich 2004, 13). Weinreich stresses that one equally should be aware of the possibility of “hidden” canons, which do not exist as lists as such, but which can be uncovered (for instance by means of a study such as the present). The hidden canon should be seen as an overview of what people actually are familiar with and read (Weinreich 2004, 13-14).⁵⁴ Part of the goal of this study is in fact to reveal the hidden canon of Astrid Lindgren’s works. In order to achieve such a goal, one should abandon the idea of drawing up a fixed list and emphasise the evolution involved in an author’s becoming canonical instead.

In this respect, the work of John Guillory has proven to be influential. In *Cultural Capital. The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (1993), Guillory criticises assumptions about cultural value commonly used by both supporters and adversaries of the traditional notion of a canon. One of the propositions he seeks to adjust is the oppositional perception of values as “either intrinsic or extrinsic to the work” (Guillory 1993, 26). Guillory recounts how in the canon debate text-internal properties such as universality were undermined and displaced by a view on value as “relative, contingent, subjective, [and] contextual”, that is to say, “grounded in the consensus of a particular community” (Guillory 1993, 26). However, Guillory qualifies the effect of this antithetical intervention:

⁵³ “es gibt keinen Kanon im Sinne eines abgeschlossenen und festgelegten Textkorpus, sondern nur Kanonisierung, also historisch beschreibbare Prozesse der Kanonselektion, der Entkanonisierung und des Kanonwandels in spezifischen Gruppen und Institutionen” (Kaulen 2007, 110).

⁵⁴ See also (Weinreich 2003, 15).

“On this account values are indeed extrinsic to the work but they are at the same time intrinsic or internal to [...] an ‘interpretive community’”.⁵⁵ Guillory himself sets great store by the way in which the works are passed on in such communities of readers and notes, “Canonicity is not a property of the work itself but of its transmission” (Guillory 1993, 55). Likewise, German literary theorist Renate von Heydebrand stresses that an individual, subjective selection cannot count as a canon, but that the selection should be valid for multiple individuals, who – as a community – should sustain its claim to legitimacy (von Heydebrand 1993, 5). Rita Ghesquière argues along similar lines when she underlines the text-external nature of canonicity:

Whether literature belongs to the canon or not, does not have much to do with intrinsic characteristics [...]. Canon just means that something (genre, characteristic) is assessed as ‘valuable’ by the literary trendsetting community. Products that meet the posited norms, will be granted a place on the cultural forum. Hence, it is the group that predominates (critics, authors, publishers) that determines whether or not a given repertoire belongs to the canon. (Ghesquiere 2009, 19)⁵⁶

Similarly, British professor in children’s literature Peter Hunt fits in the evaluation of children’s books with the framework of reader-response theory, from the perspective of which “what is important is *who* is reading rather than *what* (in terms of marks on the page) is being read. It is the reader who makes books good, rather than the other way around” (Hunt 1995, 239; emphasis added). This kind of rationale underlies the ideas Hunt put forward in “How Not to Read a Children’s Book” (1995). In this article, he compares the perception of two well-known works of children’s literature – *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame (1908) and Enid Blyton’s *Five Go Down to the Sea* (1953) – with regard to literariness, which he considers to be of overriding importance in matters of canonisation. Hunt claims that the first of these books is well-respected and taken for granted by critics, whereas the latter has not been able to gain much critical acclaim.⁵⁷ He argues that *The Wind in the Willows* and *Five Go Down to the Sea* are read differently, and that

⁵⁵ Here, John Guillory quotes Stanley Fish, which Guillory himself deems to have presented “the most prominent version of this argument” (Guillory 1993, 26). The quotation is taken from Fish, Stanley, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.

⁵⁶ “Of literatuur al dan niet tot de canon behoort, heeft niet zozeer te maken met intrinsieke kenmerken [...]. Canon betekent alleen dat iets (genre, kenmerk) door de literaire smaakmakende gemeente als ‘waardevol’ beoordeeld wordt. Producten die aan de gestelde normen beantwoorden, krijgen een plaats op het culturele forum. Het is dus de groep die domineert (critici, auteurs, uitgeverijen), die vastlegt of een bepaald repertoire al of niet tot de canon behoort” (Ghesquière 2009, 19).

⁵⁷ Hunt’s observation hints at a crucial dissonance in children’s literature criticism, that between two separate circuits of evaluation. I will return to this matter in sections 2.1 and 3.2. For an elaborate discussion of Blyton’s status within children’s literature criticism, see (Rudd 2000).

the consent concerning the former is informed by the fact that it “conforms to the dominant literary values”, that it is considered to be “literary”, “and thus [is] validated, is on booklists, university courses, and so on” (Hunt 1995, 234). Blyton’s work, by contrast, “generally pay[s] little attention to virtually any concept of ‘literariness’” (Hunt 1995, 234), making it nigh-on impossible for the work to be sanctioned. In short, Hunt’s claim is that if an author or a work is shown to adhere to the prevailing literary norms, it can become “officially accepted”, and vice versa.

In indicating the diametrical opposition underlying the approach to writers and texts as either “literary” or “non-literary”, Peter Hunt in fact hints at a mechanism which, in a broader perspective, can be seen to underpin canonisation in its entirety. The process of declaring something “literary”, that is living up to the *standards* of literariness, mirrors a “top-down” process of canonisation, which I described, in collaboration with Sylvie Geerts, in the introductory chapter to *Never-ending Stories - Adaptation, Canonisation and Ideology in Children’s Literature* (2014), as follows: “In processes guided from above, a literary work becomes canonised because it expresses and confirms the ideology of the dominant majority” (Geerts and Van den Bossche 2014, 9),⁵⁸ with the majority’s conception of a literary *standard* being part of their ideology. I subscribe to Robyn McCallum’s and John Stephens’ use of the term “ideology”, which they employ in a broad sense to delineate a “writer’s social, political, or moral beliefs” (McCallum and Stephens 2011, 361). I employ it to encompass such beliefs held by not only authors but all players in a literary field.

By way of thought experiment, and in an effort to challenge such a prejudiced approach, Peter Hunt in the aforementioned article sets out to apply a literary reading to *Five Go Down to the Sea*. Despite his attempt to undercut the binary logic implied in the concept of literariness, he actually confirms it himself through his acceptance as a premise for his rationale of the established categorisation of *The Wind in the Willows* and *Five Go Down to the Sea* as literary and non-literary respectively. In doing so, Hunt proves to be thinking hierarchically and normatively, the bottom line being that literariness is in fact to be preferred. What he implies, then, is that non-literary works indeed are inferior and in need of “redemption”. I believe that Peter Hunt rightfully points out the predominance of the notion of literariness in the imagination of critics and scholars who are in a position to canonise authors and literary works.⁵⁹ In my view, though, literariness is but one reason on account of which the label of canonicity can be justified, and highlighting this feature exclusively is too prescriptive an attitude. I wish to argue that

⁵⁸ However, this statement should be qualified, seeing that “a book [also] can gain acclaim from the bottom upwards, by a dynamic force emanating from questioning and subverting that very ideology” (Geerts and Van den Bossche 2014, 9). In this case, canonisation occurs in a “bottom-up” fashion instead.

⁵⁹ See also section 4.1.

other possible grounds for canonisation of an extrinsic nature, such as exemplariness and the possibility to invoke identification, should be taken into account as well,⁶⁰ which is why I will assume a descriptive stance, aiming at documenting as many of the potential factors involved as possible.

A final argument of Peter Hunt's which is relevant here, is the thought that the label attached to a writer or a text – either as approved or not – is deciding for how it is perceived. In Hunt's reader-response-oriented conception, the weight of the subjects actually doing the reading and assessing is of course paramount. The crux of his argumentation is that

[t]he value we accord a book is proportional to the way in which we read it, and the way in which we read it is not a function of the book, but a function of the way in which our culture *allows us to read it*. (Hunt 1995, 239; emphasis in original)

Hence, evaluation is considered to be fully text-external, reflecting cultural norms and preferences. If canonisation – the process of gaining approval – indeed is perceived as entirely work-external, what is implied is that it is determined not by inherent qualities of the work but by its reception, that is, how it is met. What is more, because the acquired “tag” determines how the author or work is read from then on,⁶¹ it will get increasingly embedded in discourse and hence may prove utterly difficult to shed. In a way, the label “canonical” becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, as Anne Lundin shows when she ponders the “power of the select words we weave over certain books, such as ‘GREAT,’ ‘BEST,’ ‘CLASSIC,’ [‘]TOUCHSTONE.’” (Lundin 2004, 141) She finds that “such appropriation of language for our own purposes does not transform the object viewed [...] but instead the viewer of the object who envisions a different creation” (Lundin 2004, 141). The literary work itself does not change by grace of the label attributed to it, but so does its reception. A similar point is made by Canadian children's literature expert Roderick McGillis, who considers its effect on a wider scale: “The establishment of a canon [...] preestablishes what one ought to appreciate as a reader. From this perspective we have pre-determined that some books are worthwhile and others are not” (quoted in (Høyrup 2008, 247)). Canonisation can in fact be seen as a matter of instilling a particular horizon of expectation – to use Hans Robert Jauss' seminal notion – in the general reading public.⁶²

In canonisation, the impact that is vital is that of a particular type of readers: those possessing the authority to canonise authors and works. They can be seen as a sort of intermediary, passing on the primacy of certain writers or texts to putative readers

⁶⁰ These will be discussed in Chapter 4.

⁶¹ Likewise, Peter Hunt points out that the treatment of canonised texts involves an “expectation of excellence” (Hunt 1995, 234).

⁶² Jauss' ideas on canonisation could in fact also be used if one wanted to further explore the hermeneutical perspective on canonisation.

(critics, scholars, and amateurs alike). In a best case scenario, the canonical reputation of these authors and works will reverberate and other readers will in turn approach them with the respect that their canonicity commands. Therefore, the way in which they are dealt with in communication is crucial. As Australian John Stephens and Robyn McCallum, both household names in the field of children's literature research, indicate, the critical discourse on an author or work can make or break them. In particular, they see their being the subject of debates and evaluations, or the lack thereof, as decisive. As Stephens and McCallum put it, "Texts enter (or leave) a canon by means of the discourse which surrounds them" (Stephens and McCallum 1998, 22). This stance, as well as Lundin's, reflects how I myself conceive of canonicity, namely as an extraneous awareness of the import of the writer or text. The assumption underlying this entire study is that books or writers do not become well-established of their own accord exclusively but to a large extent by means of the publicity they are given. The fact that a book is available and can be read does not suffice. In order to be successful the author or the work should be part of a public discourse raising awareness on their behalf and eventually putting them on the map.⁶³ The ultimate goal should be for them to become self-evident and to merge into the collective literary subconscious so as to be passed on to ensuing generations.⁶⁴ Therefore, a key factor for success is that both the writer and the text are brought to the attention of different types of addressees and that they remain topical. It should be pointed out to the readers that they deserve to be read as canonical, something which is, in fact, a precondition for the construction of the required awareness.

On the whole, my drawing upon Iser's reception theory and similar theoretical perspectives such as Kaulen's or reader response studies entails an outlook on "canonicity" as a label of quality indicating a text or writer's having acquired a certain culture's *fiat* to be read as good. It should be noted that canonicity and canonical can refer to authors as well as works, although one will find that they are used preponderantly with respect to literary artefacts (rather than their writers). I will therefore in the main employ the term to denote works, meanwhile leaving open the possibility to use it with reference to an author. "Canonisation", then, is understood to be the process of obtaining that mark of quality. Once the writer or text has been endorsed, it will from then on be approached as deserving of that support. I wish to add, though, that canonicity by no means is a permanent achievement but that it can be lost if it is not sustained. The proposed concepts appear viable to me precisely because they facilitate the adoption of a broader perspective. I believe that the text-internal perspective in itself is too confined to fully grasp what canonicity entails. A literary work's intrinsic characteristics are most

⁶³ In this context, "the map" could be equated with Alastair Fowler's so-called selective canon (Fowler 1979, 99).

⁶⁴ See (Dankert n.d., 398). Compare also (von Heydebrand 1993, 18).

definitely important, as they are what it is judged on, but the work does not exist in a vacuum. It is not an island, it is part of the continent, which is why one ought to look beyond the text's own characteristics and take into account how these affect readers' interpretation and evaluation of that very text. Applying the concepts discussed here, then, will allow me to exceed the textual dimension of canonicity and to involve factors on an external, contextual level as well.

Lastly, also reflecting the context of religious interpretation in which the term canon came into being, a clear societal relevance of canonical literary texts can be observed. Initially, this was mainly due to the moral purpose bestowed upon the canonised books of the Torah, which, as Wolfgang Iser points out, were meant to offer spiritual guidance and mould people's everyday lives (Iser 2000, 19; cf. supra). Similarly, within a literary framework, authors and works which have become canonical have acquired a concrete meaning for their readers and as such come to belong to the broader frame of reference of the culture in which they are approved. The Swedish critics' findings on Astrid Lindgren cited earlier in the current chapter exemplify this proposition, which in effect is the focus of the present study. Intrinsic in my understanding of the property termed "canonical" is that, just as "no man is an island", no author or literary work can be dissociated from its social and historical context. In fact, in my opinion, the cultural and social impact of a canonical author or work is crucial. As such, I align myself with Deborah Stevenson, children's literature scholar and director of the American Center for Children's Books (Illinois), who conceives of "canonical" as an author or a work invoking a "broad awareness" of that very author or work "as indispensable" (Stevenson 1997, 112). Here, the term canonical is employed – in line with Stevenson – as a label for writers or texts which are endorsed by a certain culture, to the extent that the writer or text has become "requisite for *understanding* a part of literature", to quote Stevenson again (Stevenson 1997, 113; emphasis added). It is thus understood that what constitutes canonical is variable and dependent on the cultural and social preferences of the age. Consequently, if we accept that canonical stands for something which is essential for making sense of a culture, "canonicity" can be said to mean an extensive *awareness* of an author and his or her oeuvre as vital.⁶⁵

More broadly speaking, in considering canonicity from such an integrative perspective I am tying in with a cultural studies approach to children's literature. In Danish children's culture theorist Helene Høyrup's terms,

⁶⁵ The characteristics of these disparate views on canonicity will serve as the starting point for the analysis of the contents of the corpus and will therefore be discussed at length in section 1.4.

Cultural studies is concerned with – among other things – the investigation of the material and ideological circumstances which define children’s literature, both at present and historically speaking, and how texts interact with readers [...]. In addition, *cultural studies* looks into the post-text of children’s literature, that is to say, its reception, adaptations and cultural validation in research and transference. (Høyrup 2006, 96; emphasis in original)⁶⁶

It is due to its inclusion of the ‘post-text’ of children’s books that cultural studies can serve as an appropriate approach for a study on canonisation. In general, as will be shown elsewhere (compare section Chapter 4), a textual outlook on matters of canonicity is adopted. Although some properties of canonical texts in themselves may in part account for the canonicity of the texts, I am convinced that an analysis of their status within a given literary field purely based on such immanent factors is not complete, the reason being that canonisation is matter of *transmission*, as John Guillory argues (Guillory 1993, 55; cf. supra). As a result, canonical works (in this case of children’s literature) are, in Klaus Doderer’s words, “literary products which have obtained a high sociological efficiency due to their ‘tenacious’ transfer and continued appreciation” (Doderer 1969, 7).⁶⁷

Canonical texts are socio-culturally embedded,⁶⁸ which is why, as Helene Høyrup furthermore points out, “Phenomena such as classics and canon can be studied beneficially as a *continuum between literature and culture*” (Høyrup 2006, 101; emphasis added).⁶⁹ Hence, in order for an inquiry into canonicity to be meaningful, the textual perspective should be complemented with a contextual one, emphasising the socio-cultural embedment of the work. (I will elaborate further on this matter in the next section, on the concepts informing the structure of this study.) Moreover, in studying processes of canonisation – besides venturing to single out some canonical works of children’s literature – and emphasising the element of transmission in those processes, I am tying in with Renate von Heydebrand’s insightful argumentation about canonisation. In “Problems of the ‘Canon’ – Problems of Cultural and Pedagogical Politics” (von Heydebrand 1993),⁷⁰ she acknowledges that it is necessary to look into the so-called “material canon” [materiellen Kanon], that is, a concrete, tangible collection of canonical

⁶⁶ “*Cultural studies* er bl.a. interesseret i at undersøge de materielle og ideologiske forhold, der betinger børnelitteraturen aktuelt og historisk, og hvordan tekster spiller sammen med læsere [...]. Som et yderligere element afsøger *cultural studies* børnelitteraturens post-tekst, dvs. dens reception, adaptationer og kulturelle validering i forskning og formidling” (Høyrup 2006, 96; emphasis in original).

⁶⁷ “Literaturerzeugnisse [...], die durch ihre ‘zähe’ Tradierung und langanhaltende Wertschätzung eine hohe soziologische Effizienz erzielt haben” (Doderer 1969, 7).

⁶⁸ Compare (Høyrup 2006, 101): “kulturelt forankrede tekster” [culturally anchored texts].

⁶⁹ “Fænomener som klassikere og kanon kan med udbytte undersøges som et *kontinuum mellem litteratur og kultur*” (Høyrup 2006, 101; emphasis added).

⁷⁰ “Probleme des ‘Kanons’ – Probleme der Kultur- und Bildungspolitik” (von Heydebrand 1993).

authors and works within a given field (von Heydebrand 1993, 5). However, in her view, it is imperative that the study of this material canon be supplemented with an investigation of how and why these authors and works acquired canonical status.

What is of interest to Von Heydebrand are the norms and values that prevail in processes of canonisation, which is why she argues for a clear description of these evaluations in what she calls a “normative and interpretative canon” [Kriterien- und Deutungskanon] (von Heydebrand 1993, 5). In her opinion, the interpretation of these assessments and evaluations is of vital importance within canon research, seeing that “[t]he material canon as such does not have any normative power. It is the underlying conceptions of value, which are made explicit as a catalogue of criteria and interpretative canon and subsequently act as norms” (von Heydebrand 1993, 6).⁷¹ Value judgments also occupy an important position in Simone Winko’s functional outlook on canonisation, as rendered by Per Dahl: “canon discussions do not solely, or in reality not at all, revolve around the set of works, the canon list, but about the interpretation and conceptions of value which the canon represents or is associated with” (Dahl 2002, 86).⁷² I find this insight very useful and will apply it as a guiding principle for conducting this study.

⁷¹ “Der materiale Kanon als solcher hat keine normative Kraft. Es sind die hinter ihm stehenden Wertvorstellungen, die als Kriterienkatalog und Deutungskanon explizit gemacht werden und dann als Normen wirken” (von Heydebrand 1993).

⁷² “kanondiskussioner [drejer sig] ikke kun eller i virkeligheden slet ikke om værkrækken, kanonlisten, men om de tydninger och værdiforestillinger, som kanon repræsenterer eller identificeres med” (Dahl 2002, 86).

1.4 Reconciling Divergent Approaches to Canonicity

What does 'classic' mean? Does it mean those books that have retained their popularity over the years? The ones that are representative of a type? The ones that were seminal in the field or spawned many imitations? The ones that are of the highest literary quality (however we might define that)? (Montgomery and Watson 2009, 1)

In the above quotation taken from their introduction to *Children's Literature: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, Heather Montgomery and Nicola J. Watson touch the sore spot of many scholars dealing with the canonical works of a given literature: how does one determine what features characterise these texts? The properties of being “representative” and “high-quality”, as well as their “serving as models”, to paraphrase Montgomery and Watson, all point to a prescriptive point of view on canonicity, highlighting what inherent qualities a canonical work *should possess*, whereas the attribute of “retained popularity” seems to suggest a different, descriptive outlook, drawing attention to a characteristic the canonical work *has possessed* over a period of time. In effect, the observation made by Montgomery and Watson mirrors a bifurcation which underpins most inquiries into canonicity, within the children's literary field as well as without it. As one can derive from the literature review in the previous section, this is what the textual/contextual dichotomy boils down to: either one focuses one's attention on the exemplary role and outstanding literary quality of a single canonical work in a preponderantly normative type of research, or one takes on a predominantly descriptive stance which is simultaneously longitudinal. In the latter case, factors such as the life span and popularity of the work are stressed, and canonical works are – more or less – equated with “evergreens” or “longsellers”. Broadly speaking, researchers tend towards either one of those two divergent approaches.

These two distinct views pertaining to canonicity are indeed discernible in contemporary children's literature studies, as is shown by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer in *Children's Literature, Canon Formation and Literary Evaluation* (2003).¹ She terms the two main currents of research *synchronic* and *diachronic* respectively (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 178). Researchers holding a synchronic view, Kümmerling-Meibauer explains, believe that a canonical work is not necessarily a best-seller, rather, they are convinced

¹ *Kinderliteratur, Kanonbildung und Literarische Wertung* (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003).

that it owes its classic status to its aesthetic quality merely. The diachronic approach, on the other hand, brings into focus the popularity and the lasting potential of the works in question, studying their effect and reception (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 178). Moreover, a similar distinction underpinned the compilation of a canon list in Denmark in 1994,² as is indicated by Torben Weinreich in *Canon. Literature in Primary Education* (2004).³ He observes that the canon committee had drafted the following requisites for the selection of works for that particular canon:

[T]he classic requirements of the canon selection (1994) [...] include both an ‘essence’ criterion and a ‘functionality’ criterion. The *essence* criterion is a.o. universality, general applicability, complexity, and ambiguous polyphony, in other words linked with *quality*. The *functionality* criterion means that the works should have *survived* in the sense that they are unremittingly being read, studied in research and continually inspire new authors. (Weinreich 2004, 17; emphasis added)⁴

In “Canon, Classics and Critical Editions”,⁵ Per Dahl (2002, 85) specifies that the Danish canon committee’s essence criterion encompasses the following qualities:

- (1) Universality;
- (2) Transhistoricity;
- (3) Complexity (and exclusivity);
- (4) Ambiguous “polyphony”.⁶

² Denmark is one of the few countries in which the debate on the literary canon also has been concerned with children’s literature. Since long, the canon has been discussed lively in Denmark, but the debate was originally only concerned with adult literature – and more specifically with what literature should be taught in primary schools across the country. The debate was at its liveliest between 1992 and 1994 and grew stronger again in 2004. In the summer of 1992, minister for education Bertel Haarder lit the fuse of the powder keg by organising a canon meeting. His goal was to come up with a selection of great works of Danish literature that every pupil should get acquainted with. A committee was appointed, the result of whose work was published in 1994 in a report entitled *Danish Literary Canon. Fine Literature in Schools* [*Dansk litteraturs kanon. Skønlitteraturen i skolen*]. This report contained a list of authors and works which were considered quintessentially Danish.

³ *Kanon: Litteratur i folkeskolen* (Weinreich 2004).

⁴ “kanon-udvalgets klassikerkrav (1994) [...] indeholder både et væsenskriterium og et funktionskriterium. Væsenkriteriet er bl.a. universalitet, almengyldighed, kompleksitet og mangetydig flerstemmighed, altså knyttet til kvalitet. Funktionskriteriet betyder, at værkerne skal have overlevet, sådan at de stadig læses, stadig gøres til genstand for forskning og stadig inspirerer nye forfattere” (Weinreich 2004, 17).

⁵ “Kanon, klassikere og kritiske udgaver” (Dahl 2002).

⁶ “1) universalitet, 2) transhistoricitet, 3) kompleksitet (og sluttethed) og 4) mangetydig flerstemmighed” (Dahl 2002, 85). The Danish adjective “sluttet” is explained in *The Danish Dictionary* [*Den danske ordbog*] as “not open or accessible to all, but only for a specific (particularly selected) group of people” [ikke åben eller tilgængelig for

Dahl adds, “together, these standards equal artistic quality” (Dahl 2002, 85).⁷ With its focus on textual factors the essence criterion reflects the synchronic features of literary quality identified by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer.⁸ The functionality criterion, conversely, pertains to “the selection requirements of the work or, rather, the skills for breaking through which are noticeable in its reception” (Dahl 2002, 85).⁹ It includes the following criteria (Dahl 2002, 85):

- (1) New readers’ fascination;
- (2) Susceptibility to transfer;
- (3) Inspiration for new writers;
- (4) Challenge to research.¹⁰

As such, the functional prerequisites correspond almost entirely with the diachronic perspective, in which the importance of responses prompted by the work over a sustained period of time is emphasised. It should be mentioned that a slight overlap seems to occur in the interpretation of the attributes “exemplariness”, a constituent of Kümmerling-Meibauer’s synchronic perspective corresponding with the essence criterion advanced by Weinreich and Dahl, and “inspiration for new writers” in the latter’s description of the functionality criterion matching the former’s diachronic features instead. Seeing that the proposed paradigms synchronic/“essentialist” and diachronic/“functionalist” otherwise neatly capture the possible viewpoints on the topic, I will use this categorisation as a tool for structuring the in-depth analysis of the value judgments as they occur in the corpus material. Overall, these two views truly seem to be formative currents in the field of children’s literature studies.

Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer shows that the diachronic approach is the most common one, when she states that “in the majority of reference works and handbooks, those works count as classics which have been popular and widespread and are still being

alle, men kun for en bestemt (særlig udvalgt) gruppe personer] (consulted online: <<http://ordnet.dk/ddo/ordbog?query=sluttet&search=S%C3%B8g>> [Accessed 4 April 2014]).

⁷ “tillsammen er de ensbetydende med kunstnerisk kvalitet” (Dahl 2002, 85).

⁸ In order to avoid confusion, I should point out that Kümmerling-Meibauer does not use the concept “synchronic” to denote a characteristic which is bound to a certain point in time (as it is used in linguistics, for instance), but rather to denote a property which is tied to a particular work. It can be pinned down to that work, much as a synchronic feature of a language can be pinned down chronologically. The diachronic perspective, then again, does encompass the element of longevity associated with its traditional use (connoting a longitudinal perspective).

⁹ “de udvælgelseskrav eller måske snarere den evne til gennemslag, som gør sig gældende i receptionen” (Dahl 2002, 85).

¹⁰ “1) nye læseres fascination, 2) trøstevne [...] 3) inspiration for nye forfattere og 4) udfordring for forskningen” (Dahl 2002, 85).

read today” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 178).¹¹ In contrast, Kümmerling-Meibauer herself stands for a clearly synchronic approach, which can be derived from the fact that she throughout her book *Children’s Literature, Canon Formation and Literary Evaluation* displays an interest in intrinsic, text-immanent characteristics such as innovativity, representativeness, the aesthetic design of the language, a reflection of the child’s inner world, imagination, ambiguity, crosswriting, and intertextuality (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 248-270). Furthermore, her stance becomes clear in her account of the policy she applied when compiling her anthology *Classics of Children’s Literature. An International Lexicon* (1999b):

In Kümmerling-Meibauer (1999a) [*Classics of Children’s Literature*, here (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999b); svdb], the emphasis was clearly laid on the synchronic attribute of literary quality and representation, the diachronic attributes of long-term effect and popularity can, to be sure, enhance the classic status, yet they are no imperative criterion for the classic status of a children’s book. (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 178)¹²

Evidently, she gives precedence to an “essentialist”, synchronic approach to canonicity and fails to acknowledge the impact the diachronic features of longevity and popularity might have. In my opinion, however, Kümmerling-Meibauer discards these aspects all too easily.

In effect, although the taxonomy of the divergent types of arguments appears to be functional, I do not believe that either one of those types can be disregarded. Quite on the contrary, I conceive of the acquisition of canonicity as a process which both synchronic and diachronic circumstances exert an influence on, and that the result of that process relies on an intricate interplay between those two kinds of factors. Therefore, in my view, an either/or-method for dealing with this matter, prioritising either one or the other paradigm, is not adequate, hence my preference for an overarching concept. As a result, and starting from my descriptive cultural studies approach, my aim with this study is to identify and map the impact of both types of factors in the canonisation processes with respect to Astrid Lindgren’s oeuvre, and to eventually weigh their shares against each other. As such, there is a clear connection between my study and the approach to canonisation advanced by Helene Høyrup in her PhD thesis *Children’s Literature, Text and*

¹¹ “in der Mehrzahl der in Lexika und Handbüchern anzutreffenden Definitionen [gelten] diejenigen Werken als Klassiker, welche lange beliebt und weit verbreitet waren und auch heute noch gelesen werden” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 178).

¹² “In Kümmerling-Meibauer (1999a) wird der Akzent deutlich auf das synchrone Merkmal der literarischen Qualität und Repräsentativität gelegt, die diachronen Merkmale der Langzeitwirkung und Popularität können den Klassikerstatus zwar noch verstärken, sind jedoch nicht ein notwendiges Kriterium für den Klassikerstatus eines Kinderbuchs” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 178).

Canon. Studies in the Theory of Knowledge of Children's Culture.¹³ With reference to Emer O'Sullivan's work, Høyrup suggests that "[c]anonisation as intercultural dissemination can be studied as an interaction between aesthetic and text-external circumstances" (Høyrup 2008, 225),¹⁴ adding that "it is moreover relevant to draw in society's discourse on children's literature, e.g. theory and history" (Høyrup 2008, 225).¹⁵ In the same vein, she furthermore criticises research which is orientated towards the synchronic paradigm exclusively: "With autonomy-aesthetic, text-immanent criteria for canonicity, classics and quality, one's perspective is inevitably marked by a theoretical leeway as regards the progression of knowledge within literary theory" (Høyrup 2008, 222).¹⁶ Her argument, then, is that such an approach should be supplemented with a "cultural-analytical" perspective (Høyrup 2008, 224),¹⁷ operating with "impact-aesthetic attributes" (Høyrup 2008, 225),¹⁸ which in fact applies to my approach as well.

In choosing to proceed in that fashion, I subscribe to an inclusive view on canonisation advocated by Simone Winko, who proposed concepts comparable to *synchronic* and *diachronic*. She takes into account *textual* and *contextual* factors, and conceives of the former as qualities attached to the text itself, which entails that her category corresponds to that of synchronic features proper to a literary work. In her view, those textual properties cannot be dissociated from contextual circumstances, as becomes evident in Per Dahl's account of Winko's views (Dahl 2002). Dahl writes that the latter "are attributed the largest significance – by far – in matters of canon formation, because the seemingly purely textual factors (the qualities which are ascribed to the text) in actuality often turn out to be enveloped in a functional, contextual dimension" (Dahl 2002, 85).¹⁹ Similarly, in *Brave New Worlds. Old and New Classics of Children's Literature* (2011), Elena Paruolo points out that the ongoing debate on the literary canon and the success of cultural studies is a manifestation of the necessity to take into account both types of influences. As she puts it,

¹³ *Børnelitteratur, tekst og kanon. Studier i børnekulturel vidensteori* (Høyrup 2008).

¹⁴ "Kanonisering som interkulturel udbredelse kan undersøges som samspil mellem æstetiske og teksteksterne forhold" (Høyrup 2008, 225)

¹⁵ "det er desuden relevant at inddrage samfundets diskurser om børnelitteratur, f.ek. teori og historie" (Høyrup 2008, 225).

¹⁶ "Med autonomiæstetiske, tekstimmanente kriterier for kanonicitet, klassikere og kvalitet bliver synsvinkeln uundgåeligt præget af et teoretisk efterslæb i forhold til den litteraturvidenskabelige progression af viden" (Høyrup 2008, 222).

¹⁷ "kulturanalytisk" (Høyrup 2008, 224).

¹⁸ "virkningsæstetiske træk" (Høyrup 2008, 225).

¹⁹ "tillkendes [...] langt den største vægt for kanondannelse, fordi de tilsyneladende rent tekstuelle faktorer (de egenskaber der tillægges teksten) i virkeligheden ofte vil vise sig at være indlejret i en funktionel, kontekstuel dimension" (Dahl 2002, 85).

The difficulty encountered in clearly defining the canon (a list of classics, a school reading list, a collection of rules for interpretation...) proves that the argument is not exclusively a *literary* one, even though works of literature are its declared subject. The construction of a canon brings together a multitude of *non-literary* factors: the media, critics, readers and, more generally, history, the establishment and politics. (Paruolo 2011, 11; emphasis added)

Hence, the crux is that strict separation of the two kinds of factors hardly is tenable.

The possible tension between the two paradigms is implied in the discussion of the concept of a “classic” provided in the eponymous entry in *The Children’s Literature Dictionary. Definitions, Resources, and Learning Activities* (2002), edited by Kathy Labrobe, Carolyn S. Brodie, and Maureen White. Their definition reads as follows: “Classic: A literary work that has established itself as having enduring significance or worth and is still in print” (Labrobe, Brodie and White 2002, 38). Due to its emphasis on durability and availability, it exhibits an outspoken diachronic bias. However, this first sentence is immediately succeeded by the remark, made with reference to G. Robert Carlsen’s *Books and the Teenage Reader* (1967), “that it is a cliché to say a classic ‘has stood the test of time’” (Labrobe, Brodie and White 2002, 38). By way of alternative approach, Labrobe, Brodie and White report, Carlsen pinpoint four features distinctive of a classic, namely, “a significant theme, timeless symbols and images, well-designed structure, and a subtlety to be enjoyed repeatedly” (Labrobe, Brodie and White 2002, 38).²⁰ The choice of words (“a cliché”) with reference to the longitudinal perspective entails a sense of contradiction, undercutting the validity of such arguments, for which the intrinsic features put forward by Carlsen are provided as a legitimate alternative. By merely presenting the two possible outlooks and leaving unanswered the question whether one of those is to be preferred, the authors of the *Dictionary* in fact suggest that the two cannot be reconciled.

In practice, however, we can find quite a few examples of scholars who hold a view on canonicity in which the two types of arguments are jumbled together, not seldom without them displaying any awareness of the divergent nature of these paradigms. Bruce A. Ronda, for instance, in asserting that “[b]y *canon* we typically mean those texts that are said to have an enduring quality by virtue of their universal themes, literary craft, or surplus of meaning” (Ronda 1992, 32; emphasis in original), intermingles diachronic and synchronic criteria. In mentioning the lasting appeal of canonical works, he obviously hints at a longitudinal view, whereas the properties deemed to confer longlivedness on them are clearly text-internal. Luc Lannoy, in his attempt to specify the contents of the notion “classic”, leans towards a longitudinal perspective but blends in a text-immanent element as well. He writes,

²⁰ The passage referred to in Carlsen’s *Books and the Teenage Reader* is found on pp. 148-149.

Generally speaking, it is agreed that the stories concerned are those which last for generations on end, which over the years manage to enthrall a group of readers and hence are retold time and again, which are revised or assimilated in various ways, or whose narrative theme and/or figures have served as models for many other children's books (e.g. the 'robinsonade'). (Lannoy 1993, 210)²¹

In his account, the synchronic aspect of exemplariness is juxtaposed with diachronic arguments hinting at longevity and a sustained readership. Compare also Dutch children's literature expert Joke Linders' characterisation of classics as "books [which] have proven themselves by means of favourable reviews, sales figures and long duration" (Linders 1994, 151),²² in which she at first sight draws attention to the impact and reception of the works primarily. Nevertheless, her mentioning of "*favourable reviews*" surpasses the contextual level and implies that the contents of the texts themselves also come into play. A similar line of thought underlies Deborah Stevenson's argumentation in "Classics and Canon" (2009), where she highlights the importance of intrinsic features in addition to contextual ones. She observes, "Classic status accrues from *writerly qualities* as well", and "*High literary quality*' is a commonly proffered criterion for classic status" (Stevenson 2009, 115; emphasis added). Furthermore, Stevenson explains that it results from a specific conviction held by those dealing with children's books, viz. "a firm belief that classic status must mean something about *the text itself*, not just its *history*" (Stevenson 2009, 115; emphasis added). Evidently, in this case, again, synchronic and diachronic features are interwoven.

A scholar who dealt with the perceived contradiction between synchronic and diachronic features in a different way is Emer O'Sullivan. In *Children's Literary Comparatistics* (2000a),²³ she champions a perspective on canonical texts which, "independently of the effect, values the particular (historical, aesthetic, innovative or representative) accomplishments of the works" (O'Sullivan 2000a, 426).²⁴ Moreover, in the revised English edition of that same book, O'Sullivan argues that the criteria of quality and normativity are problematic in reference to children's classics. In her view, the books published and marketed as 'classics' do not constitute a children's literary canon: "the corpus of so-called *classics* of international children's literature, actually present on the

²¹ "Vrij algemeen is men het erover eens dat het gaat om verhalen die generaties lang meegaan, die door de jaren heen een groep lezers weten te boeien en vandaar steeds opnieuw verteld worden, die op allerlei manieren her- of verwerkt zijn of waarvan verhaalthema en/of -figuren model hebben gestaan voor vele andere kinder- en jeugdboeken (de 'robinsonade' b.v.)" (Lannoy 1993, 210).

²² "boeken [die] zich middels lovende recensies, verkoopcijfers en lange duur bewezen [hebben]" (Linders 1994, 151).

²³ *Kinderliterarische Komparatistik* (O'Sullivan 2000a).

²⁴ "unabhängig von der Wirkung die besonderen (historischen, ästhetischen, innovativen oder repräsentativen) Leistungen der Werke würdigt" (O'Sullivan 2000a, 426).

market and the subject of *long transmission*, cannot be equated with a *canon* of children's literature" (O'Sullivan 2005, 148; emphasis added). Instead, she believes them to be "books that have *sold* over a long period rather than being a selection of authors and works regarded as *exemplary* by a community" (O'Sullivan 2005, 148; emphasis added). One can derive from O'Sullivan's coupling of "canon" and "exemplary" that she values the model role of canonical works, whereas she looks upon longevity as a less positive feature because of its economical connotation. However, this conflicts with earlier instances of her downright rejection of this criterion, for example evidenced in sharp criticism she uttered against Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer's method:

The property of (aesthetic) quality as a stipulating attribute of the classics does not have a long range in the children's literary debate – as opposed to within general literature. [...] Thus, Kümmerling-Meibauer's attempt [...] to emphasise 'their literary quality as [...] a [...] criterion' to separate classic children's books from 'bestsellers' is problematic. (O'Sullivan 2000a, 397)²⁵

Although I agree with Emer O'Sullivan that objections can be made to Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer's unequivocal preference for synchronic features, to me, her own strict distinction between *commercial* "classics" and *exemplary* "canonical works" seems equally untenable. Underlying both researchers' stance is a strict separation of a work's nature and its function within a literary field. As will become clear further on, I do not believe that such a dichotomous approach to canonicity is practicable.

A division similar to Emer O'Sullivan's is discussed by Ann Haugland in "The Crack in the Old Canon" (1994), which deals with the separation of "culture" and "commerce" in (children's) literature. Haugland cites Barbara Herrnstein Smith from her seminal *Contingencies of Value* (1988), in which the latter "claims that literary critics have traditionally constructed [an] artificial distinction between a work's aesthetic value and its value in the marketplace" (Haugland 1994, 55). Nevertheless, a rigid contrast is not defensible, because, as Haugland shows, the "double discourse of value [...] denies the reality that all books are commodities; [that] all books are products of both a literary and an economic market" (Haugland 1994, 55). Therefore, no literary work can ever be considered from a purely 'cultural' perspective without its 'commercial' side being taken into account – and vice versa. Similarly, in a canonical work, the synchronic feature of originality can never truly be separated from diachronic factors such as its lifespan and dissemination. In fact, it is my conviction that the crux of canonicity lies in the equilibrium of synchronic and diachronic factors, and that one paradigm cannot exist

²⁵ "Das (ästhetische) Qualitätsmerkmal als Bestimmungsmerkmal des Klassikers trägt in der kinderliterarischen – im Gegensatz zur allgemeinliterarischen – Diskussion nicht weit. [...] Problematisch ist deshalb der Versuch von Kümmerling-Meibauer [...], zur Unterscheidung der klassischen Kinderbücher von 'Bestsellern' 'als [...] Kriterium [...] ihre literarische Qualität' zu betonen" (O'Sullivan 2000a, 397).

without the other. It is so difficult to divorce the two mindsets from each other, that one is almost led to conclude that canonical works are inherently contradictory, combining apparently irreconcilable properties.

On the whole, a canonical text can be characterised as embodying a certain duality, because “it epitomises the [highbrow; svdb] Romantic ideal of a unique and innovative piece of art, a quality which grants it esteem and creates an artistic standard for the following generations to live up to” (Geerts and Van den Bossche 2014, 10), without being hindered by the burden of that ideal. Quite on the contrary, “it is by no means hampered by the boundaries of these dominant circles and succeeds in making a broader cultural impact, appealing to the common reader” (Geerts and Van den Bossche 2014, 10). One could even argue that canonical works represent a contradiction in terms, as they make one wonder how a bestseller can be unique? Deborah Stevenson also ponders this ambivalence inherent in works belonging to the canon and notes,

The idea is that the classics are the best representatives of the genre of children’s literature – books published to respect and acclaim (most of them were, indeed, well received and well reviewed on their first appearance) as well as popularity; subsequently, their fine qualities have been proven by these texts’ continued prominence. (Stevenson 2009, 115)

She comes to the conclusion that “[u]ltimately, they are classics because they are still here, just as much as they are still here because they are classics” (Stevenson 2009, 115). In my view, the vicious circle evoked here neatly captures the dualism characteristic of a canonical work as seen from a perspective in line with the internal/external-dichotomy.

However, considering the two types of arguments not isolated but within a broader framework provides a means of separating them and hence circumventing the cul-de-sac illustrated above. To my mind, the aspects categorised as synchronic and diachronic can in fact be seen as part of a larger whole, as dimensions of a canonical work which are separate but not mutually exclusive. In order to make this work, one ought to look upon a canonical work not as self-contradictory but as *multidimensional* and conceive of its components as representative of different stages in the process of its canonisation. Within this mindset, on the one hand, synchronic, “essentialist” elements seem to be of greatest importance in the initial phase of the canonisation process of a work, which I would like to call the *establishment* stage. What is at stake here, is the making of a name for an author. The canonising agents attempt to call the readers’ attention to a particular book, generally by pointing out what intrinsic features make it worthwhile reading. Typically, at this point in the canonisation process great store is set by synchronic factors such as originality, universality, and literary value. Diachronic, “functionalist” elements, on the other hand, usually come into play later on and mark the transition to a subsequent stage, which I will refer to as the *confirmation* phase. During this period, it becomes clear that the work has been accepted and that it is getting a grip on its context, viz. the socio-

cultural field it is received in. It is acquiring significance for its readers, which is evidenced by the fact that it is kept in print, passed on, studied, and hence in turn reaching new readers. The evolution could stop here, but I would like to argue that canonised works eventually evolve into a third level of canonisation, which could be seen as part of the functionalist dimension but in effect goes beyond the proper work and its own lifespan. The third stage relates to the text's *extra-textual* dimension: intertextual relationship with other texts and its transfer across different media, all of which allow it to be disseminated widely and leave its mark on society. For this reason, this final stage, which I would term the *dissemination* stage, bears witness to far-reaching canonicity.

In conclusion, canonisation on a macro-level can be seen as a winnowing process, in which an extremely large number of potentially canonical works is narrowed down to a selective canon (Fowler 1979, 99), consisting of restricted number of works which are available and approved. On a micro-level, conversely, canonisation can be characterised as a process involving a broadening movement, meaning that the range of influence of a specific canonical work grows ever wider. Globally, the different processes of canonisation regarding one author's body of work may in fact occur simultaneously and overlap, and some may reach much further than others. As a result, the aggregate of the canonisation processes involving individual works in fact may resemble a horizontal tree structure, with different branches evolving at their own pace and some outgrowing others over time. What is relevant for the investigation at hand are the questions what type of argument would appear to have been decisive in the canonisation of Astrid Lindgren in Flanders and The Netherlands and if and to what extent her works have reached the dissemination phase.

1.5 Outlook and Methodology

The issues I am addressing here resemble the questions advanced by Bruce A. Ronda in "An American Canon of Children's Literature": "What are the merits on which a text is recommended? Which communities of readers and critics are competent to judge works that appear to come from outside the canonical mainstream?" (Ronda 1992, 33) I too regard canonisation as a matter of interplay between different spheres and different types of actors within the literary field. Therefore, in accordance with Heinrich Kaulen's plea for carrying out research into the evolution of canonisation as well as with my adoption of the notion of the interpretative canon as a guiding principle, I choose to concentrate on the *processes* of canonisation at play with regard to Astrid Lindgren's body of work. For this purpose I am tying in with the opinion on the nature of canonisation held by Meyer Howard Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham. In the entry "Canon of

literature” in their handbook *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (2012), the notion of canonicity as a label to be acquired reverberates clearly:

The *social process* by which an author or a literary work comes to be widely although *tacitly* recognized as canonical has come to be called ‘*canon formation*.’ The factors in this formative process are complex and disputed. It seems clear, however, that the process involves, among other conditions, a *broad concurrence* of critics, scholars, and authors with diverse viewpoints and sensibilities; the *persistent influence* of, and reference to, an author in the work of other authors; the *frequent reference* to an author or work within the *discourse* of a cultural community; and the widespread assignment of an author or text in school and college curricula. Such factors are of course mutually interactive, and they need to be sustained over a period of time. (Abrams and Harpham 2012, 41-42; emphasis added)

First and foremost, they refer to canonisation as a *social* process, which results in a writer’s or a book’s becoming *acknowledged* as canonical. What is more, they point out that this recognition is very likely to be *tacit*. In addition, the appreciation for the author or work should be *broadly based*.²⁶ Moreover, Abram and Harpham maintain that the writer or book should exert a demonstrable influence on contemporary literature, and, most importantly, they should be alluded to regularly in the discourse within that culture. Just like Peter Hunt, who argued for taking into consideration *who* is reading instead of *what* is being read, they set great store by the impact of the readers, rather than by the author or the work as such.

In accordance with this perspective of Abrams’ and Harpham’s, and in conjunction with John Stephens and Robyn McCallum’s finding that discourse is of vital importance, studying the “buzz” about the figure of the writer and/or his or her oeuvre appears to be a viable approach for inquiring into the significance of an author. When one aims at tracing the origins and evolutions of the awareness of Astrid Lindgren in the Dutch language area, that is to say, when one is dealing with the impact of a literary figure and a body of works on a specific culture, an approach focusing on the interface between literature and society is called for. This is where literary sociology comes into play. According to Hans Norbert Fügen, a consequence of the fact that it is a sociological discipline is that it researches into “intersubjective acts” and is “not concerned with the literary work as an aesthetic object” (quoted in (Rosengren 1968, 19)).²⁷ To be precise, “[in sociology] literature is only deemed meaningful to the extent that special interpersonal

²⁶ Compare the conception of a canon held by John Guillory, Renate von Heydebrand, and Rita Ghesquière, expounded in section 1.3.

²⁷ “intersubjektive Handeln”; “nicht am literarischen Werk als ästhetischem Gegenstand interessiert” (quoted in (Rosengren, *Sociological Aspects of the Literary System* 1968, 19)).

acts are performed with it, on it and for it” (quoted in (Rosengren 1968, 19)).²⁸ Hence, as Fügen argues, the essence of literary sociology is that it “deals with acts of people concerned with literature; its object is the interaction between people concerned with literature” (quoted in (Rosengren 1968, 19))²⁹ From a sociological perspective, literature is merely considered to be relevant insofar as it involves people interacting through, about and because of it. As was shown above, the social factor is of crucial importance in canonisation, which centres on the “buzz” created about an author or work.

German literary theorist Hans-Heino Ewers, director of the Centre for Children’s Literature Research,³⁰ maintains that “literary canons are governed by conscious stipulations, which are defended by arguments” (Ewers 2007a, 97).³¹ Borrowing a concept from Renate von Heydebrand, Ewers goes on to argue, “Canons are bound to specific *supporting groups*” (Ewers 2007a, 97; emphasis added).³² Von Heydebrand herself elucidates that the latter are responsible for providing the maintenance a canon requires: “Not until a supporting group is delineated and one of its recognised representatives foregrounds and defends the best can the label of a ‘canon’ be used rightfully” (von Heydebrand 1993, 5).³³ Put differently, canonisation is precisely a matter of “interaction between people concerned with literature” (Rosengren 1968, 19). Therefore, what will be under scrutiny in this dissertation is the *literary field*, and more specifically the opinions and communicative acts of the different players and supporting groups in it.

A pioneering study of the literary sociological kind was Karl Erik Rosengren’s *Sociological Aspects of the Literary System* (1968), which was conceived as an investigation of the “literary climate” (Rosengren 1968, 22), and designed for “the study of certain aspects of the verbal behaviour of [...] the literary reviewer” (Rosengren 1968, 24). Similarly, the study at hand tackles the written (verbal) output of actors in the Dutch-speaking children’s literary field involved in canonisation. Therefore, I will not be looking into

²⁸ “Literatur wird nur insofern für [die Soziologie] bedeutsam, als sich mit ihr, an ihr und für sie spezielles zwischenmenschliches Handeln vollzieht” (quoted in (Rosengren, *Sociological Aspects of the Literary System* 1968, 19)).

²⁹ “hat es demnach mit dem Handeln der an der Literatur beteiligten Menschen zu tun; ihr Gegenstand ist die Interaktion der an der Literatur beteiligten Personen” (quoted in (Rosengren, *Sociological Aspects of the Literary System* 1968, 19)).

³⁰ The German Centre for Children’s Literature Research is integrated in the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University of Frankfurt am Main.

³¹ “es [handelt] sich bei literarischen Kanones um bewusste Setzungen, die mit Argumenten verteidigt werden” (Ewers 2007a, 97).

³² “(vgl. von Heydebrand 1993, 4f). Kanones sind gebunden an bestimmte Trägergruppen” (Ewers 2007a, 97; emphasis added).

³³ “Erst wenn sich eine Trägergruppe abgrenzen läßt und von ihr anerkannte Sprecher die Heraushebung des Besten besorgen und verteidigen, kann mit Recht von ‘Kanon’ die Rede sein” (von Heydebrand 1993, 5). Compare (Kaulen 2007, 110).

signs of attention paid to Astrid Lindgren and her oeuvre randomly but will limit myself to the discourse in specialist literature. As mentioned before, the purpose is to look into textual as well as contextual factors. As M.O. Grenby in *Popular Children's Literature in Britain* (2008) contends, "Both text and context are evidently important [...], but other factors can also mediate between the text and the reader, and [...] these can be equally effective in establishing to popularity of a particular book" (Grenby 2008, 17).³⁴ With reference to Gérard Genette, Grenby highlights the particular potential influence of the "epitext", that is, "reviews, authorial interviews and letters and so on" (Grenby 2008, 17). It is by means of such secondary, "epitextual" material that I will verify which textual and contextual factors affect the processes of canonisation involving Astrid Lindgren and her works. The data to be studied here, then, will consist of texts taken from literary and academic journals, anthologies, theoretical works of children's literature as well as from daily newspapers.³⁵ It is in focusing on the acts of those readers who have explicitly presented their judgments of Astrid Lindgren and her works that this endeavour to uncover the patterns of evaluation will remain feasible. Astrid Lindgren's own epitexts will only be considered if and when they are referred to in the critical discourse. As such, the survey at hand is not concerned with the way in which an author makes a public appearance but rather revolves around how attention is being drawn to the author and how he or she is brought into the limelight.

Given the literary sociological take on canonisation which is at the basis of this study, as well as the emphasis on the social, communicative acts of the players in the literary field, Content Analysis (CA) comes to mind as a plausible approach. CA is defined by Klaus Krippendorff as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (quoted in (Domas White and Marsh 2006, 23-4)). What I will borrow from this methodology is the idea of an "agenda-setting perspective" in communication. As Kimberley A. Neuendorf suggests in *The Content Analysis Guidebook*, it can be valuable to approach communication from this angle seeing that

[t]his theoretic perspective proposes that media content doesn't so much tell the audience *what* to think as it tells the audience what to think *about*. The news sets the public opinion agenda, bringing some issues to the forefront and minimizing others. (Neuendorf 2002, 205; emphasis added)

In a way, what we are dealing with here is a canonisation of ideas. One could argue that foregrounding subjects and manipulating topicality is exactly what players in the literary field do whenever they discuss a certain author and his or her works. The media through

³⁴ Grenby co-edited *Popular Children's Literature in Britain* (2008) with Julia Briggs and Dennis Butts.

³⁵ See section 2.2 for a detailed description of the corpus materials.

which the agents distribute their opinions thus exert a strong influence on canonisation: whatever one decides to write about is shown to be relevant.

What is needed in order to reveal the value judgments – both overt and covert – informing the canonisation of Astrid Lindgren’s oeuvre is a method that would allow me to deduce these from the written output of the canonising agents. A requisite tool for a study of this kind is a method that, rather than analysing the author or the works themselves, tackles the way in which people have responded to Astrid Lindgren’s works. Phenomenography, an empirical method principally employed within educational research,³⁶ fulfils these requirements. As Funda Ornek elucidates, “its aim is to discover the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualize, realize and understand various aspects of phenomena in the world around them” (Ornek 2008, n.p.).³⁷ An underlying thought which in fact compares with the agenda-setting focus of Content Analysis is that subjects’ convictions are possibly influenced by what they have come across elsewhere: “What people think may be clouded by rhetoric that they have been told or read” (Mann n.d., n.p.). However, “their experiences reveal more about their understandings of the aspect of the world of interest” (Mann n.d., n.p.). Looking into the subjects’ own experience of the object may in fact facilitate the identification of patterns of (mutual) influence among them.

In Content Analysis, a fixed number of topics to be analysed is established beforehand, and hypotheses are tested by means of “relevant and valid” thematic categories (Domas White and Marsh 2006, 29). Put differently, it is a top-down kind of method, in which commonality is emphasised. Phenomenographical research does not look to exclude or eliminate difference either. One of its main goals is to identify collective meaning in the experience of a phenomenon, as well as the “architecture” of its variation (Ornek 2008, n.p.). In fact, as Gerlese Åkerlind argues, it “provides a way of looking at collective human experience of phenomena holistically despite the fact that such phenomena may be perceived differently by different people and under different circumstances” (cited in (Mann n.d., n.p.)). What sets apart phenomenographical research from CA is that it is conducted in a bottom-up fashion, not by imposing a priori categories but – on the contrary – by distilling from the studied subjects’ experiences categories which reflect the subjects’ (possibly tacit) opinions on the object. Usually performed on interviews with respondents in educational settings, phenomenographical analysis considers the answers of all participants with a view to “identify the most significant elements in answers given by participants”, which it intends to do by means of “a condensation, or reduction, of the individual answers to find the central parts of a dialogue” (Ornek 2008, n.p.). The

³⁶ See for instance (Ornek 2008).

³⁷ In this passage, Ornek paraphrases insights from the following article: Martin et al. “Displacement, velocity, and frames of reference: Phenomenographic studies of students’ understanding and some implications for teaching and assessment”. In *American Journal of Physics* 60, 1992: 262-269.

remaining stages in the analysis consist of grouping and classifying similar answers, which subsequently are named and compared contrastively.

The major advantage of this approach, which at the same time differentiates it from other methods, is that

it takes a relational [...] qualitative, second-order perspective, that it aims to describe the key aspects of the variation of the experience of a phenomenon rather than the richness of individual experiences, and that it yields a limited number of internally related, hierarchical categories of description of the variation. (Mann n.d., n.p.)³⁸

The fact that the results rendered are interrelated and that they can be compared easily entails that they may be suitable to uncover signs of what Pierre Bourdieu in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977 [2003]) termed “orchestration”. In Bourdieu’s view, orchestration may “account for what [...] appears as objective meaning [...] or the objective coordination which the concordant or conflicting practices of the members of the same group or class at once manifest and presuppose” (Bourdieu 1977 [2003], 79). What Bourdieu suggests, is that any group of agents creates and shares a communal world view which, due to the fact that it emanates from consensus, appears to be objective. Orchestration “in other words [is] the harmonization of agents’ experiences and the continuous reinforcement that each of them receives from the expression [...] of similar or identical experiences” (Bourdieu 1977 [2003], 80). Each unit of agents develops a characteristic set of norms and values which together constitute the unit’s way of thinking about the world. This shared world view serves as an easily manageable gauge, the application of which “causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted” (Bourdieu 1977 [2003], 80). Moreover, if a group member gives utterance to an opinion which is aligned with the accepted judgment on that particular topic, the member’s relation with its peers will be confirmed and its position within that group reinforced. Expressing a dissenting view, on the other hand, may cause one to burn one’s bridges. Thus, orchestration affects the internal dynamics of the class as well as the object under discussion.

Although no interviews will be conducted within the framework of the present study, the epitextual sources are comparable to typical phenomenographical research materials in the sense that in these sources individual subjects’ ways of experiencing the object at hand are voiced. I will apply a phenomenographical approach and identify common denominators in the argumentations on the chosen object a posteriori. Moreover, my

³⁸ The quotation featured in (Mann n.d.) is taken from Trigwell, Keith, “Chapter 5: A Phenomenographic Interview on Phenomenography”. In *Phenomenography*, by J. A. Bowden & E. Walsh (eds.), 19-33. Melbourne: RMIT Publishing, 2000.

intention to comply with Heinrich Kaulen's plea to focus on canonisation as a process implies the adoption of a critical attitude towards these very processes. As Kaulen rightly points out, they should be studied not just in themselves, but also within a broader context. In Kaulen's opinion, "what the scientific treatment of children's literature [...] essentially cannot abandon is the reconstruction and critical reflection of historical as well as existent canonical processes, their special mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion and the therein involved criteria for selection" (Kaulen 2007, 112).³⁹ As it so happens, from the start my ambition has been to scrutinise not only the actual response to Lindgren's body of work in the Dutch language area, but equally to frame it within a broader discourse, namely the theoretical engagements with the topic of the literary canon within children's literature research. A phenomenographical take provides an easily manoeuvrable framework for tackling both desired components of my study. The theoretical discourse on the literary canon in fact can be regarded as an expression of subjects' experiences of that object, just as the discourse on the reception of Astrid Lindgren can be seen as such. Studying the canon debate from a phenomenographical point of view will enable me to look for commonalities in historically and culturally different contexts, in accordance with the critical stance advocated by Heinrich Kaulen.

Hence, I have decided to apply the same phenomenographical approach throughout the entire study, thus enhancing consistency as well as setting forth a possibility to logically compare the outcome of both legs of the analysis. Furthermore, it will allow me to test the theory – canon discourse – against the practice – the case of Astrid Lindgren's reception in Flanders and the Netherlands. My aim is to interweave the theoretical and practical perspectives by grouping theoretical concepts thematically and illustrating them with examples from my inquiry into Lindgren's Dutch-language reception throughout. Starting from the conception of "canonicity" as an awareness discernible in discourse, the main question to be dealt with in this practical component of the present study is how consciousness of Astrid Lindgren as indispensable came into being. The epitextual sources for the empirical inquiry will cover six decades, from the publication of the first *Pippi Longstocking*-book in 1952 until 2012, the year which marked the tenth anniversary of Lindgren's decease. One of my main assumptions is that the choice to study the reception of a widely acclaimed author such as Astrid Lindgren, whose canonisation has been successful, will allow me to extrapolate conclusions which could potentially hold true for processes of canonisation in the field of children's literature at large – to a certain degree at least.

³⁹ "Worauf der wissenschaftliche Umgang mit KJL [...] prinzipiell nicht verzichten kann, ist die Rekonstruktion und kritische Reflexion historischer wie aktueller Kanonisierungsprozesse, ihrer speziellen Einschluss- bzw. Ausschlussmechanismen und der dabei verwendeten Selektionskriterien" (Kaulen 2007, 112).

Furthermore, in connection with the cultural analytical perspective I am adopting, the fact that I am not dealing with the source culture in which Astrid Lindgren's oeuvre originally appeared can be seen as an asset. As Helene Høyrup suggests, "a classic can be studied beneficially in a *cultural analytical fashion* – e.g. as translations into different target cultures or as 'circulation' of different versions and forms of transfer" (Høyrup 2008, 224; emphasis in original).⁴⁰ In this respect, it is an advantage that this study is concerned with a target culture as this adds an extra perspective to the matter of canonisation. As far as the selection of relevant epitexts is concerned, the main question to be addressed is *how* an author or work gets canonised. Therefore, in chapter Two, I will look into the possible channels canonical status can be acquired through, and which make up the boundaries within which canonisation processes occur.

The ultimate aim of this study is to lay bare the parameters which are prevailing in the canonisation of Astrid Lindgren and her works, as well as the value criteria which are of overriding importance in it. To this end, the theoretical concepts will serve as guidelines. As a whole, this dissertation is conceived as a collection of individual case studies which deal with interrelated topics, and in which surveys of theoretical discussions are alternated with discussions of their practical applications. Each chapter corresponds with one such case. In what follows, before delving into the analysis of the impact of the different paradigms informing canonical discourse presented above, some general questions with respect to the domain of *children's* literature need to be addressed. In the third chapter, I will pay attention to aspects particular to the field which may affect the way in which processes of canonisation are unfolded within it. This discussion will centre around the main issues which are at play in canonisation in the field of children's literature. By means of examples from the corpus materials, I will demonstrate whether or not these issues have affected the reception and canonisation of Astrid Lindgren's works in Flanders and the Netherlands. The account in the remaining chapters of this study is devised to reflect the multiple dimensions involved in the process of canonising a (body of) work. Seeing that the synchronic, diachronic, and extra-textual paradigms represent different phases in the process of canonisation, I will use a three-part structure mirroring this threefold classification to organise the discussion of theoretical concepts. The latter will therefore be presented as thematic clusters related to each of the dimensions, and illustrated with examples taken from the Flemish and Dutch epitexts on Astrid Lindgren. Firstly, I will discuss synchronic characteristics discernible in the canon debate as well as in the Dutch-language discourse on Astrid Lindgren, after which diachronic elements will be dealt with in an analogous fashion. The final topics to be

⁴⁰ "klassikeren kan med udbytte studeres kulturanalytisk – f.eks. som oversættelser ind i forskellige mållitteraturer og som 'cirkulation' af forskellige versioner og traderingsformer" (Høyrup 2008, 224; emphasis in original)

treated are the theoretical consideration given to extra-textual factors, and their impact on Lindgren's reception and canonisation.

Chapter 2

The Perks of Being Talked About: The Outlines of Canonisation Processes

Sometimes I can really feel sorrow about the fact that so many people, endlessly many, lived on our earth and died without having left behind any traces, nothing which can proclaim to us, who are living now: I, too, lived!
(Lindgren, Astrid, cited in (Werkelid 2002, n.p.))¹

Astrid Lindgren may have been worried about people whose lives were spent without any shred of evidence of their existence, she herself left an array of traces behind. Part of the aim of this study is to uncover the marks she left on the Dutch-language field of children's literature. In the current chapter, I will set out the parameters for my inquiry and explain where I will look for these traces. Furthermore, after having scrutinised the selected materials, I will identify in them the main opportunities Astrid Lindgren was given to leave an impression. In doing so, I will in effect be delineating the primary factors guiding the processes of canonisation concerning Lindgren's oeuvre in Flanders and the Netherlands.

¹ "Ibland kan jag riktigt sörja över detta, att så många människor, så oändligt många, har levat på vår jord och dött utan att lämna några spår efter sig, ingenting som kan förkunna för oss som lever nu: Jag har också levat!"
(Lindgren, cited in (Werkelid 2002, n.p.))

2.1 Literary Sociological Context: Channels of Canonisation

A Blueprint for Canonisation Processes

Following the outline of the main issues concerning canonisation laid out in the previous chapter, this section deals with the *how* – the literary sociological context – of canonisation. As Wolfgang Iser stressed, canonisation is a matter of selection, and the authority to canonise lies with the agents carrying out the selective process. As one of the basic assumptions in this study is that the contents of the concept “canonical” are historically and culturally defined, it should consequently be assumed that the channels deployed for canonisation are variable as well. However, if we compare different theories on canon formation, it appears that the number of factors in the literary field able to exert influence on canonisation is fairly stable. Effective processes of canonical selection generally occur within predictable boundaries, and through a more or less fixed set of channels in which the canonising agents act. Below are quoted two definitions of the concept of a canon which aptly capture the majority of the issues of canonisation discussed in research on the literary canon. To my mind, they present an accurate overview of a generalisable pattern of interplay between different factors in processes of canonisation. Therefore, the descriptions will serve as a starting point for determining the parameters of processes of canonisation in general, on the basis of which I will establish what sources to draw on in order to compose a comprehensive body of secondary literature on Astrid Lindgren to be studied.

The first definition was coined by Flemish professor in the didactics of literature Ronald Soetaert. In “What is Classic? On Youth and Tradition” (1994),² published in children’s literature journal *Leesgoed*,³ he explains that he sees as an ideal canonical work “a work which is available and which is being read within a certain cultural community; a work which plays an important role within a certain cultural history, and which is

² “Wat heet klassiek? Over jeugd en traditie” (Soetaert 1994).

³ In Dutch, the title of the journal, literally translated as “reading goods”, can be read in different ways, depending on how one interprets the lexeme “goed” in this compound noun. The meaning of the lexeme “lees” is fixed, it can only be understood as having to do with the verb “to read”. A first possible meaning of “goed” is that of “goods; wares”, in which case the expression “reading goods” refers to books as the material for a person’s reading. “Goed” can, however, also be read as an adverb qualifying “lees”, which would imply that the phrase “leesgoed” denotes “things which are good to read”, which is a plausible pun in the case of a journal dealing with (children’s) books.

recognised and acknowledged as such by experts” (Soetaert 1994, 138).⁴ In Soetaert’s understanding, recognition entails intertextuality and dissemination: “Authors refer directly or indirectly to the canonical works of their culture. Academics and/or critics study the work, and make it available for the general public as well” (Soetaert 1994, 138).⁵

Quite similar, in fact, is the description under the heading “Canon of literature” in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (2012) compiled by Meyer Howard Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, which was discussed in the previous chapter already. Abrams and Harpham furthermore write the following:

In recent decades, the phrase literary canon has come to designate – in world literature, or in European literature, but most frequently in a national literature – those authors who, by a cumulative consensus of critics, scholars, and teachers, have come to be widely recognized as ‘major,’ and to have written works often hailed as literary classics. (Abrams and Harpham 2012, 41)

They continue to state which properties they consider to be characteristic of canonised works. In their view, “The literary works by canonical authors are the ones which, at a given time, are most kept in print, most frequently and fully discussed by literary critics and historians” (Abrams and Harpham 2012, 41). These features signal the importance of certain channels of canonisation, as does the authors’ concluding remark, in which a recent phenomenon indicating canonicity is foregrounded: they round off their definition by stating that canonised books are those which are “most likely to be included in anthologies and in the syllabi of college courses with titles such as ‘World Masterpieces,’ ‘Major English Authors,’ or ‘Great American Writers’” (Abrams and Harpham 2012, 41). With their concurrent mentioning of literary criticism, literary historiography, and academic interest as means of canonisation, Abrams and Harpham as well as Soetaert clearly emphasise the interplay between the literary work and its cultural context.

Models for Canonisation Processes within Children’s Literary Theory

Within children’s literature studies, too, we can find arguments in favour of the embedding of processes of canonisation in literary sociology. In what follows, I will single out such reasons from relevant samples of critical discourse, starting from general,

⁴ “een werk dat beschikbaar is en gelezen wordt binnen een cultuurgemeenschap; een werk dat binnen een cultuurgeschiedenis een belangrijke rol speelt, en door specialisten als zodanig (h)erkend wordt” (Soetaert 1994, 138).

⁵ “De schrijvers verwijzen direct of indirect naar de canonwerken van hun cultuur. Academi en/of critici bestuderen het werk, en maken het ook beschikbaar voor het publiek” (Soetaert 1994, 138).

comprehensive discussions and eventually turning to considerations of particular aspects of these processes.⁶ Among the first to adopt an approach of a literary sociological kind was Zohar Shavit (1986), who – as mentioned before – carried out a groundbreaking study of the field of children’s literature and its position within the general literary field. Although Shavit in her account leaves no room for doubt as to whether children’s writers and books can ever reach the same status as adult ones, her argumentation does reveal what instances, related both to literary works and to their authors, she deems to be indicative of their level of canonicity. Just like Soetaert and Abrams and Harpham did later on, Shavit considered inclusion in literary history, academic research and teaching, and awarding of prizes as tokens of canonicity, which attest to the canonised writer’s and work’s function “as the frame of reference of the literary establishment” (Shavit 1986, 37). Furthermore, the author should “enjoy the status of [a] serious [member] of society” (Shavit 1986, 37). An indicator of the social standing an author has attained is the fact that their “views on societal issues are warmly welcomed and even encouraged” (Shavit 1986, 37), ultimately resulting in their finding themselves “considered part of the literary establishment” (Shavit 1986, 37).

In *Children’s Literature, Canon Formation and Literary Evaluation* (2003), Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer identifies a number of canonisation processes in children’s literature which closely resemble those recognised by Zohar Shavit. These comprise the awarding of prizes, the recommendation of certain children’s books, the reviewing of newly published titles, the selection of children’s books for school reading, and the inclusion of children’s books in lexicons and literary histories (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 274).⁷ Peter Hunt’s view on canonisation as it manifests itself in “How Not to Read a Children’s Book” (1995) also corresponds with Zohar Shavit’s – at least to a certain extent. As was shown before, Hunt sets great store by literariness with respect to canonicity. However, other vital factors indicating canonical status are disclosed in his description of the “serious writing” available on Kenneth Grahame and *The Wind in the Willows* in the opening paragraph to his article: he writes that the body of criticism of Grahame includes “two volumes of biography; [...] Lois Kuznet’s full-length critical work; a huge array of paragraphs from virtually every reference book on children’s literature; thirty-five scholarly articles [...]; and [...] Jan Needle’s brilliant anti-reading, *Wild Wood*” (Hunt 1995, 231). Since the examples he mentions chiefly pertain to literary criticism and scholarship, one can derive that Hunt sees these means as decisive in processes of canonisation. He

⁶ Arguments of a different kind, e.g. regarding characteristics of canonical works themselves, will be discussed in detail further on in this study, in section Chapter 4.

⁷ These channels in effect support Kümmerling-Meibauer’s definition of a canon as “a selection of well-known texts, which are considered valuable, are used in education, and serve as a framework of reference for literary critics.” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999a, 13)

continues to state that he considers *The Wind in the Willows* to be a “classic landmark in world children’s literature” because it is

a book that is still in print (in whole or in parts) in well over a dozen editions, probably still selling over 100,000 copies a year, and whose sequels and distant relations [...] have a firm hold on the contemporary market. (Hunt 1995, 231)

As such, qualities such as availability, popularity, and dissemination supplement Hunt’s point of view on canonicity.

Arguments about canonicity of a literary sociological kind can also be discerned in *Kiddie Lit. The Cultural Construction of Children’s Literature in America* (2003) by Beverly Lyon Clark, professor of English with a particular interest in children’s literature and women’s studies at Wheaton College (Mass.). The larger part of Clark’s monograph consists of five case studies in which she analyses the reception of a number of well-known books representing different genres of children’s literature, all of which are canonised to varying degrees.⁸ As one reads through the consecutive chapters, it quickly becomes apparent which features Clark deems indispensable for a canonical work within the American literary field, with academic interest ranking first among them (Clark 2003, 95, 122-123, 137, 148, 159, 162). Another factor Clark mentions is a certain omnipresence in the media, among which are also counted remediations and references to the work in popular culture (Clark 2003, 79, 103, 145, 151, 153, 166-167). Thirdly, it is essential for canonical works to be taken seriously and to be treated “with the same kind of respect and attention accorded to books for adults” (Clark 2003, 82, 83-84, 90). Critical esteem, too, is of pivotal importance (Clark 2003, 93, 110, 151, 171), as are recommendations by librarians marking the works as suitable reading material for children (Clark 2003, 107, 132, 151). Moreover, as “the classic status of an American text is peculiarly related to its being taught to young people” (Clark 2003, 98), the works should be taught in schools (Clark 2003, 95, 107). Furthermore, reader participation (including phenomena such as fan fiction) (Clark 2003, 140-141) and quotations (Clark 2003, 151) can be seen as instances of canonicity. Finally, Clark regularly refers to the works she takes up as best-sellers, which leads to the conclusion that commercial success is important as well (Clark 2003, 102, 136, 139, 151, 163, 167). This does not only entail success on the market for the book

⁸ The subjects of these case studies are Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*, Frank. L. Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series respectively. Furthermore, Clark devotes attention to film versions of famous children’s stories (such as *Pinocchio* and *Snow White*) by Walt Disney, and the evolution of Disney’s own Mickey Mouse.

itself, but also the emergence of merchandising, tie-ins, and other derivatives.⁹ To sum up, Beverly Lyon Clark pays attention to literary sociological factors mainly.

Sandra Beckett in the introduction to the aforementioned canon list *Beyond Babar* (2006) enumerates a number of arguments intended to characterise classic children's books, much in the same way as Peter Hunt does. She recounts the reasons she and Maria Nikolajeva saw for choosing the works to be included in their collection, indicating that they "used very similar criteria to those applied for the original *Touchstones* volumes, that is to say, excellence, importance, distinctiveness, and popularity" (Beckett 2006, ix). Her discussion of specific selection criteria discloses what they postulate as essential factors in canonisation. Beckett expounds that the selected books "are written by some of the most important twentieth-century children's authors", and that "[v]ery prestigious literary prizes were awarded to many of [them]" (Beckett 2006, x-xi). Moreover, she stresses that they are "favorites with young readers, parents, educators, and publishers in their own countries and in many other parts of the world", which is demonstrated by their being "firmly established in school curricula", and by the fact that they are "highly regarded by critics at home and [that they] have engendered a substantial body of highly reputable scholarship and criticism" (Beckett 2006, xi). Scrutiny of Sandra Beckett's argumentation reveals that the following elements had an impact on their selective, canonising process: education, academic attention, critical esteem, and literary awards.

The latter are in fact generally accepted as a significant gauge of cultural capital. In the North American context, discussions of the import of the Newbery Medal illustrate the canonising potential of such a prize. Claudia Nelson,¹⁰ for example, in a contribution to *The Oxford Handbook of Children's Literature* (2011) characterises the award as a "marker of canonicity for children's books" and emphasises that she sees it "as shorthand for cultural approval" (Nelson 2011, 499). Childhood studies expert Kenneth Kidd,¹¹ too, sees the Medal as "part of the canonical architecture of children's literature" and considers the effects it can produce: "Although the Medal carries no cash prize, it can more than double the sales of a book, as well as increase sales of the author's other books. More important, the Medal keeps titles and authors in circulation for decades" (Kidd 2009, 158). Moreover, he argues that "Medal books are instant classics, the selection process an ostensible simulation of the test of time" (Kidd 2009, 158). Apparently, he deems a long lifespan and

⁹ Clark stresses, though, that the predominance of commercial success only counts for children's literature, due to the evolution in which popularity and quality became all the more dissociated from one another (Clark 2003, 137). Compare section 5.1.

¹⁰ Claudia Nelson is professor of English at Texas A&M University and an expert in Victorian literature. She has shown a particular interest in theories of gender and childhood.

¹¹ Kenneth Kidd is the head of the Center for the Study of Children's Literature & Culture at the University of Florida.

commercial success to be signs of canonicity as well. In this his chapter in *Children's Literature: Approaches and Territories* (2009), Kidd also contemplates the significance of children's literature awards in general. Engaging in a "dialogue with more recent theorizations of cultural capital and literary value" (Kidd 2009, 157), he writes, "Prizing [...] encourages both the making and unmaking of canons" (Kidd 2009, 156). He furthermore discusses the effect literary prizes can procure for children's literature as a whole, again using the Newbery Medal as a case in point, arguing that "it attempts to generate merit, thereby establishing children's literature not only as a form of legitimate culture but also as a vital component of public life" (Kidd 2009, 166).¹² Also, he points out the inherently paradoxical nature of the impact of such prizes, seeing that they single out the excellent and simultaneously "get the word out" (Kidd 2009, 166). He explains, "Such is the paradox that prizing represents, at once the stuff of distinction and democratization" (Kidd 2009, 166).

Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer focuses on the role of children's book critics in canon creation. In her opinion, beyond their task to inform readers about new publications, reviewers have a "canon making" part to play: "It is also [their] responsibility to point out the significance of those works with respect to developments within children's literature. By situating a newly published book in the literary tradition, the critic makes an active contribution to canon formation" (van Lierop-Debrauwer 2004, 33).¹³ Moreover, Van Lierop-Debrauwer quotes renowned Dutch children's literature critic Bregje Boonstra, who considered her role in an article in scholarly journal *Literature Without Age*,¹⁴ asserting that "[r]eviewing equals comparing. A reviewer is always looking for frameworks and connections and is engaged in changing the hierarchy within the children's literary corpus" (van Lierop-Debrauwer 2004, 34).¹⁵ Rita Ghesquière, a pioneer of children's literature research in Flanders, equally highlights the influence of reflective discourse in processes of canonisation. "From the nineteenth century onwards," she writes, "*meta texts* in the form of literary criticism and historiography play an important role in the

¹² Kenneth Kidd's argumentation in fact mirrors a debate on the significance of canon formation at large for the field of children's literature (compare the concluding chapter of this study).

¹³ "Het is ook [hun] verantwoordelijkheid de betekenis aan te geven van die werken voor de ontwikkelingen binnen de jeugdliteratuur. Met het inpassen van een pas verschenen boek in de literaire traditie levert de criticus een actieve bijdrage aan canonvorming" (van Lierop-Debrauwer 2004, 33).

¹⁴ *Literatuur zonder leeftijd*. The journal's title literally translates as "Literature Without Age", and alludes to two possible ways of reading "without age": intended for readers of all ages on the one hand or ageless, timeless on the other. The article by Bregje Boonstra referred to is titled "Free-ranging Thoughts on the Phenomenon of the Children's Books Critic" [Loslopende gedachten over het verschijnsel kinderboekenrecensent] and appeared in issue 13:48, 1999: 110-111.

¹⁵ "Recenseren is vergelijken. De recensent is altijd op zoek naar kaders en verbanden en doende om de hiërarchie te wijzigen binnen het jeugdliteraire corpus" (van Lierop-Debrauwer 2004, 34).

process of canonising literary works. Literary criticism, in particular, constitutes an ingenious multi-stage system which acts as a filter” (Ghesquiere 2004, 55; emphasis added).¹⁶ Furthermore, she refers to Karl Erik Rosengren’s work in which he “emphasises the predictive function of literary criticism, which to a large extent determines which texts will enter into historiography and education” (Ghesquiere 2004, 55).¹⁷

As mentioned earlier in this section, Beverly Lyon Clark sees the support of librarians as a vital component in the canonisation of a children’s book. In fact, in *Kiddie Lit* (2003) she highlights the role of the public library network as fertile soil for children’s literature during the first half of the twentieth century. She shows that a few ardent advocates of children’s books, among whom Anne Carroll Moore was a pioneer, did whatever lay in their effort to enhance the position of children’s books and their writers. They succeeded in coupling critical with commercial success, which was not at all self-evident (as will be shown in section 5.1). By establishing literary prizes like the Newbery and Caldecott Medals, whose winners often went on to become best-sellers, these women librarians managed to found some substantial channels of canonisation of their own. Another American scholar writing in this tradition is Anne Lundin. She, too, emphasises the game-changing contribution of (especially female) librarians to the development of children’s literature in the United States in *Constructing the canon of children's literature. Beyond library walls and ivory towers* (2004).

Lundin believes the roots of processes of canonisation to lie in librarianship. In the first chapter of her book, she recounts the history of American librarians’ rise to fame (and cultural authority) in the nineteenth century. She explains that the women working in libraries at that time, driven by a romanticised, idealised vision of childhood, created a set of extremely high standards for selecting the best books for child readers. In an effort to pass on tradition, they drew up lists of books children should read (consisting mainly of books originally written for adults) and considered to be classics. These overviews constituted the very first attempts at canon construction in the United States. Slowly but surely, as universities were founded and literary research started to expand, the canonical power then lying in librarians shifted to academics “with cultural authority to establish a body of literature and a canon of writers to be included” (Lundin 2004, 16). Although the influence of librarians appears to have waned, their part in the formalisation of processes of canonisation in children’s literature in the Anglo-Saxon world was undeniably large. As will be explained further on, similar interventions on the

¹⁶ “Vanaf de negentiende eeuw spelen *metateksten* in de vorm van literaire kritiek en geschiedschrijving een belangrijke rol in het canoniseringsproces van literaire werken. Vooral de literaire kritiek vormt een ingenieus getrappt systeem dat filterend werkt” (Ghesquière 2004, 55; emphasis added).

¹⁷ “beklemtoont de voorspellende functie van de literaire kritiek, die in hoge mate bepaalt welke teksten zullen doordringen in de geschiedschrijving en in het onderwijs” (Ghesquière 2004, 55). Ghesquière refers to the following article: Rosengren, Karl Erik, “Literary Criticism: Future invented”. In *Poetics*, 1987: 295-325.

part of librarians or overarching library services can be observed in the Dutch-language area around that time (cf. section 3.2).

It is evident from the studies quoted thus far that the channels in the field of children's literature exerting the largest influence are those of academia (including literary historiography), literary criticism (including awards), and librarianship. There is, however, one more dimension involved in canonisation, one which is highlighted by Deborah Stevenson (1997). She approaches the notion of the literary canon from a rather uncommon angle: she discusses what attempts one can make at recovering a forgotten author's works. In a compelling article in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, Stevenson wonders how one could try to make a lost book fit amongst the canonical works of children's literature again, that is to say, how one could accomplish "a return to broad awareness of a book as indispensable, as, in short, a children's literature classic to be passed on to ensuing generations" (Stevenson 1997, 112). She uses Charles Kingsley's novel *The Water-Babies*, first published in 1863, as a case in point and sketches the lines along which its possible return to the foreground could occur. In her outline of a hypothetical redemption, one can discern five factors which Stevenson deems to be vital in the process of canonisation. To begin with, she attaches importance to critical attention and academic relevance, just like the other scholars cited in the current section do. This is evident from the following excerpt:

A hypothetical version of recovery works something like this: a critic writes a brilliant new book on Charles Kingsley's *The Water-Babies* (1863), causing people to reassess its importance. The book is favorably reviewed not only in academic journals, but in 'gatekeeper' periodicals such as the *New York Times Book Review* and the *New York Review of Books*. Other scholars find this work relevant to their own, and *Water-Babies* articles begin to appear in PMLA, contesting, restructuring, and expanding on the original pivotal volume. (Stevenson 1997, 112)

In addition, Deborah Stevenson stresses the impact of commercial success and mainstream media attention: "At the same time, non-academics who have read the monograph's reviews and seen the author on the *Today* show exhibit heightened interest in *The Water-Babies* itself, buying it in greater numbers for their children" (Stevenson 1997, 112). Finally, she also takes into account the effect of adaptation, and imagines Steven Spielberg adapting it for the big screen, resulting in the book's being "repackaged with a flashy film tie-in" (Stevenson 1997, 112). In particular, Stevenson dwells upon the possible boost such adapted versions can provide, seeing that the effect they produce is that "the children and scholars of the 1990s rediscover the magic and/or import of Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby and Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid and then pass them onto the next generations as treasures of their own childhood" (Stevenson 1997, 112). The latter three

factors are in fact not considered in critical discourse all that often:¹⁸ besides Deborah Stevenson, only a limited number of researchers acknowledges the influence of popular media. Beverly Lyon Clark, for example, mentions as a characteristic of a canonical work or author ubiquity in the media (Clark 2003, 79; 103; 145; 151; 153; 166-167). In much the same way, Ronald Soetaert points out, “certain classic works are not only cherished in elitist circles, they are also of importance for a larger audience and are often part of popular culture” (Soetaert 1994, 138).¹⁹ In Soetaert’s view, this implies that processes of canonisation have a more or less democratic component: “The classic texts are namely chosen by many readers who have attributed many – both ‘academic’ and ‘popular’ – meanings to the works” (Soetaert 1994, 138).²⁰ Finally, Abrams and Harpham, too, hint at this broader factor, albeit not in a sense restricted to children’s literature. They write, “the process [of canon formation; svdb] involves, among other conditions, [...] the frequent reference to an author or work within the discourse of a cultural community” (Abrams and Harpham 2012, 42). For all of the reasons cited above, academia, literary criticism, librarianship, and popular media should be considered the foremost channels of canonisation in the domain of children’s literature. Hence, these will serve to streamline the compilation of the corpus of epitexts to be studied here, which will be expounded in the following sections.

Children’s Literature and its Processes of Canonisation

The Position of Children’s Literature in the Literary Field and its Implications in terms of Field-Internal Canonisation²¹

Before I set out to select relevant epitexts to be included in the corpus, though, I should pay attention to the position children’s literature occupies in the literary field at large, which is defined by its relation with adult literature. In what follows, I will trace the impact of this connection as it manifests itself within the field. A first step is to establish the nature of the link between the two fields. Then, I will present the main conditions that shaped it, as advanced in scholarly discourse.

¹⁸ I will discuss the factors of commercial success, media attention, and adaptations in detail in section 5.1.

¹⁹ “bepaalde klassieke werken worden niet alleen gekoesterd in elitaire kringen maar ze spelen ook een belangrijke rol voor een groter publiek, en zijn vaak een onderdeel van de populaire cultuur” (Soetaert 1994, 138).

²⁰ “De klassieke teksten zijn immers uitverkoren door vele lezers die aan de werken vele – zowel ‘academische’ als ‘populaire’ – betekenissen hebben toegekend” (Soetaert 1994, 138).

²¹ The field-external processes of canonisation will be discussed in the section titled “Canonising Children’s Literature”.

A majority of children's literature researchers describe the relationship between children's literature and its adult counterpart as unbalanced and experience the position of children's literature as secondary. This distorted relationship heavily influences canonisation processes internal to the field, because some channels of canonisation are not available or belong to a parallel system, or because these are not taken seriously by canonising agents operating in the umbrella field. In this connection, Astrid Surmatz observes that, in comparison with adult literature, children's literature in the overarching literary field is marginalised, "in the spheres of production and recognition as well as in the sphere of literary theoretical research" (Surmatz 2005, 24-25).²² She concludes that it "mostly enjoys evidently less esteem with respect to its literary-aesthetic value", and indicates that Klaus Doderer characterises the situation as one in which children's literature is "ghettoised" (Surmatz 2005, 25).²³

Beverly Lyon Clark has shown a great deal of interest in the stature of children's literature and deplors the omnipresent conviction that works of children's literature be in need of "[redemption] from their pitiable status as children's literature" (Clark 2006, 251). In her 2003 monograph *Kiddie Lit. The Cultural Construction of Children's Literature in America* she argues that children's literature as a whole is marginalised in the academic and critical fields. Her observation is founded on an examination of the history of children's literature in the United States, which in turn is based on scrutiny of the shifting responses to several more or less canonical works from the late nineteenth up to the early twenty-first century. In effect, the very title of her book hints at the peripheral position children's literature occupies: it is no coincidence that Clark chose to incorporate in it the highly charged label "kiddie lit". As she herself puts it, "The term kiddie lit captures our culture's ambivalence toward children and children's literature: dismissive? self-mocking? pejorative? ironical?" (Clark 2003, 2) Danish researcher Helene Høyrup (2006), too, refers to the pejorative undertone of the phrase. She argues that the term represents a process in which children's literature was neglected, occurring in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century, when "the literary institute was marginalising children's literature as *kiddie lit*" (Høyrup 2006, 97; emphasis in original).²⁴

Children's literature is not the only domain to be marginalised in the general literary field. Beverly Lyon Clark points out (as does, in fact, Maria Nikolajeva (2004)) that its humble position is a feature which children's literature shares with those other types of

²² "im Bereich der Produktion und der Honorierung sowie im Bereich der literaturwissenschaftlichen Forschung" (Surmatz 2005, 24-25).

²³ "genießt häufig ein deutlich geringeres Ansehen, was ihren literarästhetischen Wert betrifft" (Surmatz 2005, 25).

²⁴ "litteraturinstitutionen var i fuld gang med at marginalisere børnelitteraturen som *kiddie lit*" (Høyrup 2006, 97).

literature associated with specific liminal social groups.²⁵ According to Clark, the link with women's books is particularly strong, seeing that both juvenility and maternity have been treated ambivalently. Despite this parallel, though, children's and women's literature are received in severely different ways. The phenomenon of women's literature is a common topic of scholarly research, often within the framework of studies concerned with "the parameters of marginality" which, apart from gender, also encompass race and class (Clark 2003, 8). Clark finds it utterly strange that theorists dealing with similar "marginal" subjects do not at all address the criterion of age, which would involve children's literature.

The phenomenon of childism, as described by Elizabeth Young-Bruehl (2009), captures precisely this exclusion of young people. In effect, Young-Bruehl, too, points out parallels as well differences in the treatment of women and children. In her view, focusing on prejudice studies, the main disparity between the two is that women as a social group were recognised as a viable subject of research whereas children were not.²⁶ She explains, "When the discovery of sexism did finally call into question the idea that prejudice is always against a (usually minority) out-group, this rethinking did not extend to children, only to older people" (Young-Bruehl 2009, 257). Both Clark and Young-Bruehl highlight the need for age to be taken into account as a factor in (literary) sociological studies. Beverly Lyon Clark goes on to argue that childhood generally is regarded as something negative and impermanent, "something that needs to be grown out of" (Clark 2003, 11). Hence, it can by no means count as a norm, as a result of which children are ignored by sociologically oriented scholars. Again in Clark's view, this dismissive attitude towards childhood reflects onto children's literature as a whole. The fact that children's literature has been deemed inferior by scholars and literary critics entails that "[s]tudy of children's literature also raises questions about canonicity, commodification, censorship – to mention only three rich cruxes" (Clark 2003, 14). All of these issues indeed will prove to be relevant to this study.

However, children's literature did not have such a low status from the beginning and it definitely "hasn't always been designated kiddie lit", as Clark indicates (Clark 2003, 15). Therefore, many children's literature researchers have looked into observable changes in historical and contemporary preconditions affecting the position of children's literature in the literary field at large. One possible point of view is a polysystemic one, such as the one Zohar Shavit applies in her aforementioned book *Poetics of Children's Literature* (1986). The semiotic perspective (Shavit 1986, 177) from which she analyses the field of children's

²⁵ See section 3.1.

²⁶ Initially, though, women were not studied within prejudice studies either. Young-Bruehl writes, "In the 1950s, neither women nor children, because they are in every familial or tribal or community or national group and thus not out-groups, were qualified to be victims of ethnocentric prejudice" (Young-Bruehl 2009, 257).

literature fits the topic well as it enables her to capture the variability of the connection between children's and adult literature. As explained in section 1.1, Shavit looks upon children's literature as a subsystem that came into being in the periphery of the overarching literary system, making it inferior to the central system of adult literature.

The trigger for the emergence of children's literature was, according to Shavit, a changed notion of childhood, resulting in adults' becoming more interested in children's needs. Heather Montgomery and Nicola J. Watson in *Children's Literature: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends* likewise maintain, "In general, the origins of a literature designed specifically for children [...] is in large part attributed to a new sense of childhood as a special state distinct from adulthood" (Montgomery and Watson 2009, 3). Perry Nodelman equally points to this evolution and claims, "There would be no children's books if we didn't believe children to be different enough from adults to need their own special kinds of books" (Nodelman 1997, 8). All of these stances are aligned with French historian Philippe Ariès' famous observation, taken from his influential study *Centuries of Childhood* (transl. 1962),²⁷ that the definition of children as a social group in its own right was a precondition for the start of children's literature. What Ariès identified, J.D. Stahl writes in "Canon Formation: A Historical and Psychological Perspective", was "the discovery of childhood" which he situated in the Renaissance (Stahl 1992, 13). Vanessa Joosen and Katrien Vloeberghs rephrase Ariès' main point as follows: "Along with modernisation, a division between adults and children came into being and the exclusion of children from adults' social environment increased. As a result, the autonomy of children's social environment and living spaces expanded" (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 29).²⁸ This altered conception, Zohar Shavit maintains, entailed an increasing focus on children's upbringing and resulted in stories for children becoming ever more strongly defined by an educational aim. She sees the perpetual connection of children's literature with pedagogy as one of the main reasons for its inability to acquire a central position within general literature (cf. section 1.1).

In *Children's Literature in Perspective* (2009),²⁹ Flemish emeritus professor of children's literature Rita Ghesquière aligns herself with Shavit's take on polysystem theory, arguing that "such a descriptive model [allows] us to see literature as a conglomerate of texts in which children's literature has a place of its own beside adult literature" (Ghesquière

²⁷ It was originally published as *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* in 1960.

²⁸ "Met de modernisering ontstond er een opsplitsing tussen volwassenen en kinderen en groeide de uitsluiting van de kinderen uit de leefwereld van de volwassenen. Bijgevolg vergrootte de autonomie van de leefwereld en de leefruimtes van kinderen" (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 29). Compare (Bekkering 1989, 1).

²⁹ *Jeugdliteratuur in perspectief* (Ghesquière 2009). This book is a revised and updated edition of Ghesquière's groundbreaking monograph *The Phenomenon of Children's Literature* [*Het verschijnsel jeugdliteratuur*] (Ghesquière 1982).

2009, 19).³⁰ To Ghesquière it is clear, though, that the position occupied by the children's literary system in the polysystem is marginal: "Although [children's literature] as a subsystem is developing a canon of its own which distances itself from non-canonised children's literature, it behaves chiefly as non-canonised adult literature", which obviously exists in the periphery of the literary polysystem (Ghesquiere 2009, 20).³¹ She goes on to mention a few indications of the marginalisation of the children's literary subsystem, among which the absence of children's books in general literary histories and the "relatively small number of meta-texts (reviews, studies) available" on children's books are the main ones (Ghesquiere 2009, 20).³²

In *Children's Literature Comes of Age. Towards a New Aesthetic* (1996), Maria Nikolajeva, too, contends that children's literature has not always been taken seriously by critics and researchers. Just like Shavit, she believes that the derisive attitude ensues from the disproportionate emphasis put on the pedagogical function of children's literature. If only one focused on the artistic aspects of children's books instead of on their child suitability, Nikolajeva asserts, one could easily find some literary value in most of them. In her view, at the time of writing, viz. the mid-1990s, the field was in desperate need of such a reassessment (Nikolajeva 1996, 10). A similar strand of thought is pursued by Ruth B. Bottigheimer, who equally points out the impact of the didactic label on the status of children's literature: "There has always existed a tension between aesthetic autonomy and the need to provide workable models for a child's future life. This tension is, in my view, the defining point that separates children's literature from the adult literary enterprise" (Bottigheimer 2006, 125).

Another researcher discussing the status of children's literature is Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer. An entire chapter of her 2003 monograph *Children's Literature, Canon Formation and Literary Evaluation* is devoted to the changing position of children's literature. Kümmerling-Meibauer shows how in Germany at the turn of the nineteenth

³⁰ "een dergelijk beschrijvend model ons in staat [stelt] om literatuur te zien als een conglomeraat van teksten waarin jeugdliteratuur een eigen plaats heeft naast volwassenenliteratuur" (Ghesquière 2009, 19). This entails the following depiction of the polysystem in its entirety: "The patterns which prevail in the literary polysystem also apply within the numerous subsystems, amongst which children's literature. Text models and qualities move from the periphery to the centre, thus raising their status, whilst others slowly drift off from the canon to the periphery" [De wetmatigheden die binnen het literaire polysysteem gelden, zijn ook van kracht binnen de vele subsystemen, zoals de jeugdliteratuur er een is. Tekstmodellen en eigenschappen bewegen zich vanuit de periferie naar het centrum en verhogen zo hun status, terwijl andere langzaam vanuit de canon naar de periferie afdrijven] (Ghesquière 2009, 20).

³¹ "Hoewel [de jeugdliteratuur] als subsysteem zelf een canon ontwikkelt die zich distantieert van de niet-gecanoniseerde jeugdliteratuur, gedraagt ze zich toch vooral zoals de niet-gecanoniseerde volwassenenliteratuur" (Ghesquière 2009, 20). In comparing canonised children's literature to peripheral adult literature, Ghesquière's approach bears an overt resemblance to Shavit's analysis of the literary polysystem.

³² "relatief weinig metateksten (recensies, studies) beschikbaar" (Ghesquière 2009, 20). Cf. (Ghesquiere 2004, 56).

century children's literature slowly but steadily gained recognition, as the concept of the classic was starting to be applied to children's books. At that point, she notes, "The idea that there could be separate children's literature classics and in a next step even a canon of children's literature no longer seemed far off" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 272).³³ Nevertheless, this incipient uprating was not followed through: "That image changed, however, at the threshold of the 1800s. Children's literature was shut out from general literature and took up a humble rank in the literary hierarchy beside popular and trivial literature" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 272).³⁴ Due to an equation of children's literature with educational literature and hence a decline of the norm of aesthetic or literary quality, children's literature was no longer considered in canon debates from then on. Furthermore, Kümmerling-Meibauer indicates the impact the diversification of the book market had, resulting in a disjunction between entertaining serial literature for children and refined children's literature (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 273). She even draws the conclusion that by the end of the nineteenth century, the issue of a canon of children's literature no longer was topical:

These reasons have chiefly contributed to the fact that children's literature does not take up a high position within general literature. That one could rank children's books as classics or even formulate a separate children's literature canon was no longer considered by the majority of (children's) literary critics. (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 273)³⁵

The topic of marginalisation is also taken up by Eva-Maria Metcalf in "The Changing Status of Children and Children's Literature" (2006).³⁶ In Metcalf's opinion, in the first half of the twentieth century, evidence of the low status of children's literature could be found in the fact that children's books were mainly written by teachers, amateurs, and housewives, whereas only a handful of children's writers entirely devoted themselves to the profession and could make a living of it. Moreover, she corroborates the idea that the focus on its educational purposes and a perceived lack of literary quality and creativity

³³ "Die Idee, dass es eigene Kinderklassiker und sogar in einem weiteren Schritt einen Kanon der Kinderliteratur geben könnte, schien da nicht mehr fern" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 272).

³⁴ "Doch das Bild wandelte sich an der Epochenschwelle um 1800. Kinderliteratur wurde aus der Allgemeinliteratur ausgeschlossen und nahm in der literarischen Hierarchie neben der Volksliteratur und der Trivialliteratur einen niedrigen Rang ein" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 272).

³⁵ "Diese Gründe haben hauptsächlich dazu beigetragen, dass Kinderliteratur innerhalb der Allgemeinliteratur keinen hohen Stellenwert einnimmt. Dass man Kinderbücher als Klassiker einstufen oder sogar einen eigenen Kinderliteraturkanon aufstellen könnte, wurde von der Mehrzahl der (Kinder)Literaturkritiker nicht mehr in Betracht gezogen" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 273). Cf. (Høyrup 2006, 97).

³⁶ Metcalf's article was originally included in Sandra L. Beckett's collection of essays *Reflections of Change: Children's Literature Since 1945* (1997). The article was reprinted in Peter Hunt's four-volume *Children's Literature: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* in 2006. It is the latter version of the text I will be referring to.

contributed to the low prestige of children's books. Children's literature was generally considered unoriginal and uninspired (routine work, if you will) and therefore "unworthy of attention by any serious, self-respecting author" (Metcalf 2006, 212).

Finally, a proper attempt at explaining the low status of children's literature is made by Beverly Lyon Clark. As she indicates in *Kiddie Lit* (2003), one of her aims in writing that book was precisely to try and "reveal the complexity of changing attitudes toward children and children's literature" (Clark 2003, 15). Clark holds that its decrease in stature in the U.S. can be traced back to the late nineteenth century (slightly later than in Europe), when the increasing institutionalisation and professionalisation of literature in general brought about children's literature's decline. Before that, however, the circumstances for children's books were actually quite promising. Clark quotes historian Henry Steele Commager to characterise the nineteenth century as "a time 'when majors wrote for minors, [...] [when] almost every major writer ... wrote for children as well as adults, and [when] the line between juvenile and adult literature was all but invisible[']'" (Clark 2003, 48). Moreover, at the time, children's books were regularly discussed and reviewed in adult journals, by the grace of a number of influential editors who believed that

the best literature had a high moral purpose [and that] [t]he goals of the best literature for adults were congruent [...] with the goals of the best literature for children: the best literature for adults was in fact the best literature for children.
(Clark 2003, 53)

Yet, slowly but steadily, during the next century, those people disappeared from the highbrow radar as they were displaced by a new intelligentsia, which no longer solely consisted of literary critics but also of people who had a foot behind the door in the recently arisen universities. This newly emerged group of players on the literary field gradually came to influence the literary canon by means of its selection of reading material. Unfortunately, Clark asserts, most of the new (white male) academics despised all things childish (and for that matter feminine) and consequently did not consider children's literature worthy of academic attention. Hence, a decisive process took place in which child and adult audiences were bifurcated (Clark 2003, 16), prohibiting children's literature to pass the threshold of the new American canon. In Clark's opinion, this is evidenced by the fact that between the late 1800s and the mid-1960s, only very few scholarly works on children's literature were published. It should be added that, although Beverly Lyon Clark keeps referring to this separation as pivotal with respect to the subsequent disdainful treatment of children's literature throughout the entire book, it never becomes entirely clear what exactly *initiated* it. In any case, the parallels to the evolution in Germany described by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer are easy to recognise.

In addition, as Clark indicates, the divergence of child and adult readers coincided with the beginning separation of serious and popular literature (Clark 2003, 19). The reception

of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy* is cited as a case in point, which Clark uses to illustrate the increasing discrepancy. She shows that transmedial adaptations as well as derivatives,³⁷ such as playing cards and candy, contributed to the book's popularity. In fact, as Clark puts it, "Fauntleroy was an early merchandising phenomenon" (Clark 2003, 19), therein providing evidence of the important commercial side to children's literature.³⁸ However, Clark maintains, despite the tokens of critical recognition and the fact that *Fauntleroy* appealed to both children and adults, Burnett did not succeed in capitalising on her canonical position precisely because of the widening gap between children's and adult literature. She argues, "at this time when 'serious' and 'popular' literature were beginning to separate, the popular success of Fauntleroy pushed someone who had previously been able to combine critical acclaim and a modicum of popular success into the second camp" (Clark 2003, 19).

Burnett was sharply criticised by Henry James, amongst others. James himself was a canonical author as well as an influential literary theorist ardently opposed to popular literature. He is said to have "played a key role at the turn of the [twentieth] century in the separating out of literature for children and literature for adults", because he disparaged the readers of children's literature (mainly women and children) for being childish (Clark 2003, 33).³⁹ Hence, it comes as no surprise that he did not think highly of Frances Hodgson Burnett, a woman producing books for children. Clark observes, "Between her writing for children and her writing for women – not to mention her popularity and marketability – Burnett was all that James was rebelling against" (Clark 2003, 32).⁴⁰ Overall, it is crystal-clear to Clark that children's literature came to be considered inferior from the late nineteenth century onwards (Clark 2003, 90; 127; 160; 163), and that it was barred from the canon in an evolution she refers to as "a canonical winnowing process" (Clark 2003, 116). Similarly, Anne Lundin in *Constructing the Canon of Children's Literature. Beyond Library Walls and Ivory Towers* finds that children's literature had been a self-evident and even well-respected phenomenon in the last decades of the nineteenth century, generally denoted as "The Golden Age of Children's Literature" (Lundin 2004, 61), but that it became a field much in need of support in the early stages

³⁷ Compare section 2.3.

³⁸ Compare section 5.1.

³⁹ See also (Hughes 1978).

⁴⁰ As Beverly Lyon Clark points out, it is therefore all the more striking that some of James' most widely acclaimed works aimed at adults featured child protagonists whom he depicted "with considerable insight" (Clark 2003, 38). This actually says something about the way in which the general attitude towards children in that period evolved. According to Clark, "Maisie [...] represents, implicitly, an important shift at the turn of the century in the relationship between childhood and serious fiction", namely, "an increasing dissociation" between the two (Clark 2003, 38).

of the twentieth century. The field of children's literature is not central in the general literary field, and therefore not canonical in itself.

Obstacles Impeding Canonisation Processes within Children's Literature

Some scholars see the lack of a strong position as a cause for the fact that neither of the three key means of canonisation – academic attention, literary criticism, and literary historiography – is unproblematic within children's literature. For instance, mid-way through the first decade of the twenty-first century, Rita Ghesquière observes, "Both the criticism and the historiography of children's literature are still in their infancy, in comparison with adult literature" (Ghesquiere 2004, 56).⁴¹ What is more, she claims that critical discourse, or "the machinery of meta texts", in the children's literary field was "less well developed" (Ghesquiere 2004, 56).⁴² In keeping with her polysystemic approach to children's literature, Ghesquière sees this as the result of the comparatively low status of the field as a whole. Beverly Lyon Clark (2003), for her part, argues that in present-day children's literature matters are complicated by the inherent contradiction between its commercial value on the one hand and its critical merit on the other.⁴³ "In the realm of children's literature," she writes, "trade publishers happily turn to children's books to bolster their revenues, yet contemporary critics have been slow to take children's literature seriously and treat it canonically" (Clark 2003, 2). Moreover, within academia the amount of attention given to children's literature is sparse to such an extent that Clark makes mention of "academic evasion and condescension" (Clark 2003, 4).

Likewise, Torben Weinreich points to the academic attitude with respect to children's literature as a major negative factor impacting processes of canonisation. He notes, "Children's literature has not – to the same degree as adult literature – had textbooks and anthologies as a greenhouse where texts have been able to survive, well protected from the market conditions of the outside world" (Weinreich 2004, 24).⁴⁴ This leads him to conclude that the canon of children's literature is "hidden" [skjult] (Weinreich 2004, 21). A concealed canon of this kind should be seen as the body of literary works that people actually are familiar with and read, as opposed to an "open" [åben] canon, which is laid down and made public, usually as an inventory of some sort, by publishing houses, governments, or institutions (Weinreich 2004, 21). A hidden canon does not exist as a list as such, but can be recorded and uncovered.

⁴¹ "Zowel de jeugdliteraire kritiek als de geschiedschrijving staat in vergelijking met de volwassenenliteratuur in de kinderschoenen" (Ghesquière 2004, 56).

⁴² "het minder goed ontwikkelde apparaat van metateksten" (Ghesquière 2004, 56). Cf. (Ghesquière 2009, 20).

⁴³ Compare section 5.1.

⁴⁴ "Børnelitteraturen har altså ikke – i samme grad som voksenlitteraturen – haft læsebøger og antologier som drivhus, hvor tekster, godt beskyttet mod omverdenens markedsvilkår, har kunnet overleve" (Weinreich 2004, 24).

The outlook on the matter held by German comparatist Emer O'Sullivan is similar in its gist. In *Comparative Children's Literature* (2005) she, too, singles out the educational and academic systems as primordial in matters of canonisation, as is demonstrated by the following excerpt:

Since schools and universities, with their need to impart exemplary values, have been and still are the main agencies in canon formation, one can understand why, although some individual works of children's literature have been acknowledged as classics, there is no canon of children's literature based on the authority of carefully cultivated tradition. (O'Sullivan 2005, 131)

Because she sets great store by the academic pillar of canonisation, O'Sullivan is convinced that the way towards such a canon currently is being paved by "endeavors to make the subject academically respectable" (O'Sullivan 2005, 131). Not until one starts teaching and investigating children's books at universities for real, she argues, will one be able to assign important works the status they deserve and to conserve them. Self-evidently, the circumstances described by Ghesquière, Clark, Weinreich, and O'Sullivan may obstruct canonisation processes within children's literature. It should be noted, however, that the emphasis Torben Weinreich and Emer O'Sullivan place on education as an important channel of canonisation is not relevant to the situation in Flanders and The Netherlands. Weinreich and O'Sullivan refer to the influence of curricula stating a list of works pupils should encounter during their education. However, such open, institutionalised canons do not exist as such in Flanders and The Netherlands.⁴⁵ Therefore, the impact of the educational system on processes of canonisation in the Dutch language area is considerably smaller.

Another important point made by Beverly Lyon Clark pertains to the advantages and drawbacks of keeping separate records of successful children's and adult books. Clark refers to the list of best-selling children's books of the *New York Times Books Review* in particular, and points out the risk of ghettoising children's literature that this phenomenon entails (Clark 2003, 164). Other scholars are also convinced that such separate best-selling lists, along with separate prizes, maintain and solidify the peripheral

⁴⁵ For the final attainment levels for literary education in Flemish secondary schools, see <<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/curriculum/secundair-onderwijs/derde-graad/aso/vakgebonden/nederlands/eindtermen.htm>> [Accessed 13 April 2015]. This system and its Dutch counterpart are described in a following report by the *Dutch Language Union* [De Nederlandse Taalunie] available at <<http://taalunieversum.org/sites/tuv/files/downloads/literatuuronderwijs.pdf>> [Accessed 13 April 2015]. There is such a thing as "The Canon of The Netherlands", which is a list of important historical facts and cultural milestones that define Dutch society (see <<http://www.entoen.nu/>> [Accessed 25 May 2015]). Its main focus is not on literature, although a limited number of literary works feature in the list.

position of children's literature.⁴⁶ This position is exemplified by the following question raised by Kenneth Kidd: "Given that children's literature is not generally held in high regard, does prizing boost its status or contribute to its devaluation?" (Kidd 2009, 156) Zohar Shavit, too, calls attention to the negative effects of those phenomena. She sees the awarding of literary prizes as an essential criterion related to the canonical work's or author's literary context, but deplores that authors of children's books are hardly taken into consideration as possible laureates for mainstream awards. In her view, the fact that this has led supporters of children's literature to call into being separate awards for children's books again sustains its writers' low status. She explains, "What is actually implied by such a phenomenon is the belief that children's literature is something 'different' that cannot be judged by 'normal' literary criteria and thus needs special criteria of its own" (Shavit 1986, 36).

Multiple Roles for Canonising Agents and the Plural Canon of Children's Literature

The state of play in the fields of children's literature in contemporary Western societies, then, is that the crystallisation of the channels of canonisation is ongoing. Within the framework of general literature, the field-specific channels are not necessarily given even weight compared with their equivalents in adult literature, which are developed more fully. However, this does not mean that the channels of canonisation within children's literature in the field are insignificant. Within their own field, agents operating within the canonising channels possess authority. Much like their adult counterparts, the players guiding processes of canonisation in children's literature act as "gatekeepers", in the sense defined by social psychologist Kurt Lewin, as the "incumbents of certain key positions in [...] networks [of communication; svdb], deciding which goods, ideas, values etc. are allowed to pass by" (cited in (Rosengren 1983, 17)). It is the gatekeepers' impact which will be central in this study.

The gatekeepers of children's literature can be classed in different categories, based on the function they fulfil in terms of communication. Authors and publishers of children's books obviously serve as senders in the communication process, who aim their message at a child reader primarily. Joining together senders and receivers are linking agents such as critics, academics, teachers, librarians, booksellers, and parents, mediating the books to the receivers. A further distinction can be made between critics and academics analysing, discussing, and assessing the works, and teachers, parents, caretakers, librarians, and booksellers, seeing that the latter actually play a part in selecting children's reading materials, which the former usually do not. These two categories may,

⁴⁶ In adopting this stance, these scholars are countering arguments in favour of the rise in prestige of children's literature, due to (the increase in) literary awards expounded in section 5.2.

however, overlap as different roles can be taken up by one and the same person. In the visualisation of the communication process in the field of children’s literature rendered below, the vertical line represents the possibility of multiple types of roles for adult mediators (hence the dotted line; moreover, a full line would preclude any form of adult-to-adult influencing which might take place).⁴⁷

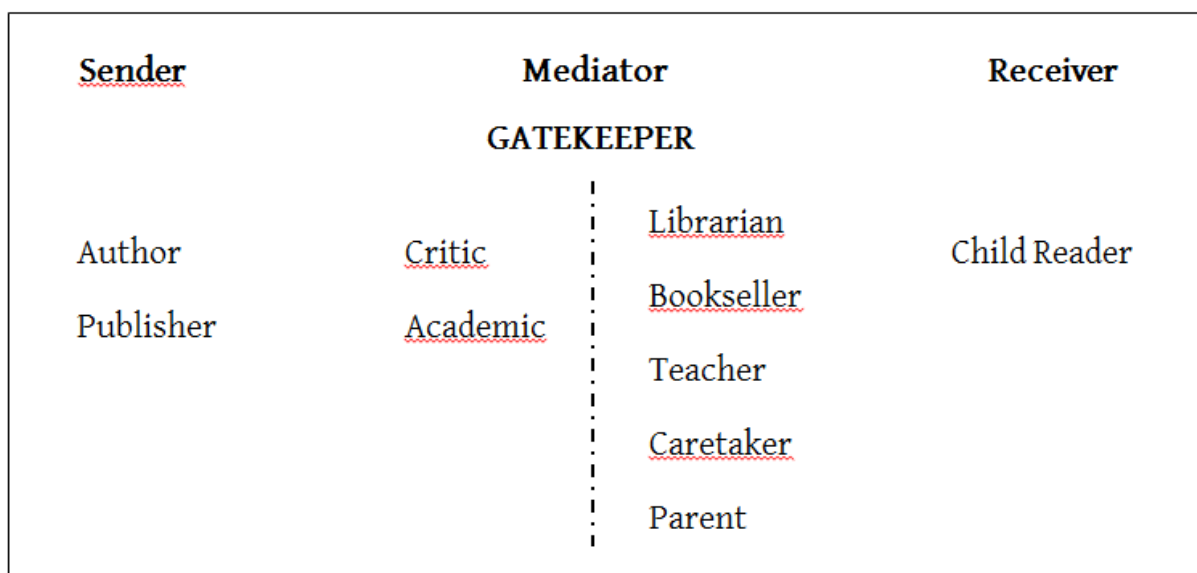


Figure 1 Communicative Roles in the Field of Children’s Literature

⁴⁷ It should be noted that Astrid Lindgren’s contribution to the Swedish field of children’s literature was not restricted to her role as an author. She also acted as a gatekeeper through her (part time) position as chief editor of children’s books at publishing house Rabén & Sjögren in Stockholm. She worked as head of Rabén & Sjögren’s children’s book distribution between 1946 and 1970 (see <<http://astridlindgren.se/sv/manniskan/yrkeslivet/tiden-pa-raben-sjogren>> [Accessed 22 October 2014]). As Helene Ehriander sets forth in “Values and Evaluations of Editor Astrid Lindgren and Publishing House Rabén & Sjögren” [Värden och värderingar hos förlagsredaktör Astrid Lindgren och Rabén & Sjögren förlag], Lindgren’s guiding principles were that a narrative ought to be consistent in its construction, credible in its psychological characterisation, and partial to children in regard to their relationship with non-sympathetic adults (Ehriander 2012, 89). These are some of the properties which in the Dutch-language reviews under scrutiny are strongly valued in the works of Lindgren *the author* (see section 3.1). However, Ehriander furthermore shows that Lindgren *as an editor* did not fully agree with the progressive pursuit of radical subject matter in children’s books common in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, and that she herself stood for rather reactionary values (Ehriander 2012, 93). The position Astrid Lindgren held was a powerful, twofold role as an author *and* an editor, the latter of which gave her the opportunity to influence the literary field, which is meaningful with respect to canonisation. It turns out that the Dutch and Flemish critics are aware of this particular situation to a very limited extent only. It is mentioned in a mere six articles ((LzL 7 2007, 163); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 471 2002, 1); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 518 2002, 3); (News 681 2007, 10-11)). It shows that, unsurprisingly, the specific bearing that Lindgren as a gatekeeper had on children’s literature in Sweden did not extend to the Dutch-language field of children’s literature.

Several researchers have considered the influence of these various kinds of gatekeepers. Firstly, with respect to processes of canonisation, the publisher's import is undeniably large, as he or she expresses a value judgment by simply issuing a book, indicating that he or she "deems the book to be worth the effort and the investment involved in releasing it", as Joke Linders phrases it (Linders 1994, 151).⁴⁸ Of overriding importance, however, is the impact of the adults acting as mediators, as they have the ability to influence other people's opinions by publicly expressing their own, creating the essential "buzz" about a book or a writer.⁴⁹ Flemish literary critic Luc Lannoy in "The Secret of the Classic" (1993)⁵⁰ draws attention to the potential effect these mediators have. Lannoy elaborates on a delineation of the notion "classic" as "something of earlier days which people time and again display an interest in" (Lannoy 1993, 210).⁵¹ If one accepts that various "trendsetters" [smaakmakers] serve as links between sender and receiver, Lannoy asks himself, what effect does that have on the "interest" exhibited in the classic (Lannoy 1993, 210)? "[D]oes this mean an interest which is innately present or is not that interest rather fostered by third parties, and is not that fostering subject to many other [...] factors?" (Lannoy 1993, 210)⁵² The fact that the "third parties" arguably exert the largest influence on canonisation is the reason why their mediation is of primary interest for the purpose of this study.

Within the category of the mediators, the distinction made between the (potentially overlapping) groups of literary scholars and critics on the one hand and librarians, booksellers, teachers, caretakers, and parents on the other, is based not only on their communicative roles in the field but also on their potential to canonise, which ensues from their access to channels of canonisation. Arguably, this is the largest in the former case and the smallest with caretakers such as parents or relatives. The professional mediators of children's literature, then again, steer a middle course. In this connection, Hans-Heino Ewers argues that the group of non-professional go-betweens is unable to act as a "supporting group" [Trägergruppe] for a canon of children's literature due to the fact that they are confronted with children's literature only for a limited amount of time, while the child they are "co-reading" with is young (Ewers 2007a, 98).⁵³ In Ewers' view,

⁴⁸ "het boek de moeite en de investering van het uitgeven waard acht" (Linders 1994, 151).

⁴⁹ Compare the following observation by M.O. Grenby: "To a large extent, access to children's books has been determined by publishers, who decide what to keep in print and what prices to charge, and by parents, teachers and librarians, who regularly attempt to supervise distribution" (Grenby 2008, 4).

⁵⁰ "Het geheim van de klassieker" (Lannoy 1993).

⁵¹ "iets van vroeger waarvoor mensen steeds weer belangstelling hebben" (Lannoy 1993, 210). Lannoy borrowed this definition from *Van Dale's Basic Dictionary of Dutch* [*Van Dales Basiswoordenboek Nederlands*].

⁵² "gaat het hier om een belangstelling die intrinsiek aanwezig is of wordt die belangstelling niet veeleer door derden gevoed en is dat voeden niet van nog veel andere factoren [...] afhankelijk?" (Lannoy 1993, 210)

⁵³ Ewers furthermore argues that this also holds true for the child audience itself, see section 3.2.

the only viable potential “supporting group” is the one comprising professional producers and mediators of children’s literature (Ewers 2007a, 98). However, although the non-professional intermediaries do not employ traditionally sanctioned means of canonisation, they do provide an important basis for canonicity by making sure that the books actually reach their audience.

Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer and Gerard de Vriend also discuss this topic in an article on the ascent of children’s literature studies at the turn of the twenty-first century (2001). They draw attention to the way in which levels of appreciation vis-à-vis children’s books may differ among adults,⁵⁴ and refer to this phenomenon as the “plural canon of children’s literature” (van Lierop-Debrauwer and de Vriend 2001, 294).⁵⁵ The separation of the two extreme types of mediators, the academics versus the caretakers, is also reflected in the distinction proposed by Deborah Stevenson (1997) between a canon of *significance* and one of *sentiment*. She terms the canon formed by reviewers and academics that of significance, due to its comprising the “historically significant or the forgotten” (Stevenson 1997, 115). Furthermore, she contends that the gatekeeping mediators who deal with children’s books directly “hand down the familiar and beloved” mostly, thus creating a canon of sentiment beside the canon of significance (Stevenson 1997, 115). As far as the influence of both canons is concerned, the property of “significance” seems to suggest that this specific canon could go a long way. However, Stevenson is convinced that the impact of academic readers on the popularity of a certain author or work is limited. She argues that children’s literature scholarship is important, albeit not of overriding importance in processes of canonisation in the field. She states,

its power to affect the literature it studies is slight compared to the effect of criticism on other contemporary genres, and its judgment over the literature is not supreme. Ultimately, popular judgments of sentimental regard, not academic lists of significance, create and control the canon of children’s literature. (Stevenson 1997, 114)

The above quote shows that Stevenson is convinced that the canon of sentiment prevails in the field of children’s literature. In her opinion, there is a rather big gap between this canon and the canon of significance, and the two canons do not interfere and cannot influence each other.

With respect to the sentimental canon, Stevenson draws attention to the fact that “popular” might be an epithet that does not go well with “canon”, which usually is considered to be an elitist concept essentially. In her view, the canon of sentiment is a rather “accidental” one, which “[u]nlike the canon of significance [...] makes no attempt

⁵⁴ Compare section 3.2.

⁵⁵ “de meervoudige canon voor de jeugdliteratuur” (van Lierop-Debrauwer and de Vriend 2001, 294).

at breadth, considers no issues of representation (in fact, is wildly non-representative in many ways), and suffers from few exigencies of time and space” (Stevenson 1997, 115). Thus, seeing that she recognises the ascendance of the sentimental children’s literature canon, Stevenson seems to discard so-called “essence” criteria and attaches importance to the “functional” dimension primarily. Moreover, she associates scholarly and critical interest with a concept of canonicity whereas she uses the phrase “classic status” in her discourse on the sentimental canon (Stevenson 1997, 119).⁵⁶ I myself have chosen not to use two terms but to employ the label “canonical” to include the commercial and sentimental connotations linked with works belonging to the canon as well.

A concept comparable to the sentimental canon is that of a “paracanon”, coined by Catharine R. Stimpson in “Reading for Love: Canons, Paracanons, and Whistling Jo March” (1990).⁵⁷ Stimpson launches the notion in an attempt to counter the controversial nature of the elitist, resilient and tenacious literary canon (Stimpson 1990, 957). (That is, the canon of significance Stevenson hinted at.) What Stimpson deems to be problematic about traditional canon formation is that it is chiefly governed by a scientific (i.e. impersonal and conceptualising) approach to literary critique, which debars a large quantity of works which are widely popular but do not meet all of the literary requirements. However, Stimpson regards such works as worthy of canonisation. She observes “a routine distinction [...] between the text that provokes official respect and the text that provokes unofficial love” (Stimpson 1990, 960). This can in turn be compared with binary oppositions such as admiration versus affection and authority versus dearness. Stimpson draws a further parallel with the opposing concepts of rational, formal and public (generally denoting masculine qualities) and emotional, informal and private (typically female features). Ultimately, she sees the chasm between the aforementioned twin concepts as underlying the “gap between high and popular culture” (Stimpson 1990, 962).

Stimpson seeks to circumvent the heavily criticised process of selection involved in canon formation by complementing the traditional canon with a canon consisting of “paracanonical” texts, which “some people have loved and do love” (Stimpson 1990, 958). In Stimpson’s view, literary value is no necessary characteristic of a paracanonical work. The paracanon, which largely overlaps with Stevenson’s canon of sentiment, precludes exclusion, as it

is a tenet that neither ranks cultural works nor travels a compromised *via media* among them. [...] No matter how difficult or how accessible, how ‘high’ or ‘low’, any text is eligible for inclusion in a paracanon if it is beloved. (Stimpson 1990, 958)

⁵⁶ Compare (Nelson 2011, 498).

⁵⁷ Anne Lundin (2004, 110) also refers to this concept of Stimpson’s.

Thus, she sees the paracanon as a product of individual readers' preferences: what a person loves to read is what counts. Building on the respect/love-antithesis, she considers the idea of criticism, associated with the literary canon to be related to nurture, whereas paracanonical affection is a matter of nature. She stresses, though, that this alternative canon is not entirely arbitrary but that certain social and cultural forces are involved in processes of paracanonisation as well. Some degree of popularity (of the work) and collectivity (of the readers) is required in order to distinguish the paracanon from a random collection of all-time favourites.

Still, a concept which is a kind of subliminal fusion of idiosyncratic canons is perhaps too sentimental and in all probability not viable. Although "reading for love" may seem like a workable counterweight for some of the difficulties arising with regard to the literary canon, Stimpson points out some of the weaknesses of her own concept, the main of which is the plethora of meanings associated with the terms "to love" or "a book". It is extremely difficult to pinpoint a single definition for either one of them. Moreover, as the noun "paracanon" lexically derives from "canon", it can never be dissociated from it, despite its being inherently "*suspicious of canonical practices*" (Stimpson 1990, 965; emphasis added). This being said, the paracanon *can* include both canonical and non-canonical works and thus goes beyond the commonly accepted binary opposition between the two categories. Ultimately, it could become a complement to the canonical works of a certain culture. In the given context, it is primarily the linking of the canon to a notion of sentiment and nostalgia which is important and useful. As this diachronic concept so closely resembles that of the sentimental canon, it may well prove to be applicable to this study.

Two main types of canon were identified by Deborah Stevenson, a significant and a sentimental (or paracanonical, to use Catharine Stimpson's terminology). To these I would add – in line with Hans-Heino Ewers' argumentation – a third canon, namely that of the professional mediators of children's literature, whose approach to children's books is more or less devoid of sentiment but whose activities do not fit in with an academic context either. To my mind, a conception of a multiple canon of this kind is more accurate as it mirrors the three-part structure of the mediators' sphere of influence in the field, with each type of mediator being related to a particular channel of canonisation. This would then leave us with a three-part canon, consisting of three subcanons, viz. an academic, a sentimental, and a professional. It is in accordance with the threefold classification of the gatekeepers that the sources for this study are to be selected, as I will clarify further in the following sections.

2.2 Astrid Lindgren's Oeuvre in Flanders and the Netherlands 1952-2012

The Composition of the Corpus

Language-Political Parameters

Apart from the aim to convey the workings of different channels and agents of canonisation, the demarcation of suitable material for the corpus is also affected by matters pertaining to language policy. The study at hand does not – perhaps contrary to expectation – deal with the canonisation of Astrid Lindgren's works in *Belgium* and *The Netherlands*, but is confined to Belgium's northern part, viz. Flanders. This decision is informed by the language-political reality in this region. Flanders is the largest of three language areas *within* Belgium, and shares the Dutch tongue with its Northern neighbour, The Netherlands. The Belgian geographical borders enclose the dividing line between the Germanic and the Romance cultures and languages, which makes the country quite unique in terms of language policy and distribution of literary fields. Rather than creating a melting pot, the linguistic situation has resulted in a separation of the individual cultures. What is more, besides Flanders in the North, in which Dutch is the official language, and the francophone Walloon region in the South, Belgium also comprises a small German-speaking community in the East of the country.⁵⁸ As I expounded elsewhere, although Belgium is trilingual (technically speaking), one could even argue that it is *tricultural*, seeing that the influence the three separate cultural subfields have over each other is non-reciprocal:

The three cultures do not so much cross as brush past each other. Inhabitants of the three regions watch separate TV channels, read different newspapers and listen to disparate music. [...] The literary systems, too, are completely unrelated to each other, and writers seldom succeed in breaking through the language boundaries. (Van den Bossche 2011c, 53)⁵⁹

As a result of the cultural bifurcation of the Flemish, Walloon, and German cultures and literatures, the literary canons in these individual regions do not overlap.

⁵⁸ The number of inhabitants in Flanders is approximately 6 million, in the Walloon provinces circa 3 million, and around 75,000 in the German-speaking community.

⁵⁹ It should be added that the “overwhelming cultural rivalries are those between Flanders and the Walloon provinces, and [that] the German culture is barely visible in the rest of the country” (Van den Bossche 2011c, 53).

However, Flanders shares a literary canon with The Netherlands. Similarly, there are close affinities between the Walloon region and France, and between the German-speaking area and Germany. In a language-political view, all three Belgian regions are subordinate to their foreign counterpart, which not only outnumbers them in terms of speakers, but also outranks them in terms of linguistic and cultural impact. The relationship between the Flemish, Walloon, and German regions in Belgium on the one hand and the dominant language areas on the other was termed “pluricentric”.⁶⁰ As I wrote in the article cited above,

In the case of Flanders, this entails the Flemish literary field being strongly defined by its Dutch counterpart. Dutch authors and publishing houses rule even the Flemish literary system, and one might in fact even argue that the region is suffering from a literary inferiority complex toward the Netherlands. (Van den Bossche 2011c, 53)⁶¹

Hence, this study focuses on the reception of Astrid Lindgren’s works in the Netherlands and Flanders, rather than in Belgium in its entirety.

Field-Structural Parameters

One of the very first steps taken in pursuit of the research question at hand was to establish in what kind of sources epitexts on Astrid Lindgren were available, in order to determine which ones could be used. The chosen materials ought to reflect the different channels of canonisation, identified on the basis of the literature review. Apart from the aim to reflect the ways in which processes of canonisation are channelled, the selection was guided by the aspiration to cover as broad a spectrum of the children’s literary field as possible, and to mirror the three different subcanons. Hence the choice to include material from three spheres of influence within that field: the academic, the professional, and the popular. The second subfield should be understood to encompass both literary criticism and librarianship. The third area covers literary criticism as well as news stories.

⁶⁰ This was for instance the case in (Bijvoet 2001, 177-178). In a pluricentric language situation, one single language has the status of national language in several countries. Typically, one can distinguish one dominant country, which determines the linguistic norms in all of the other subordinate nations. Dutch also has official status in Suriname, Aruba, Curaçao, and Saint Martin (see <<http://taalunieversum.org/inhoud/feiten-en-cijfers#feitencijfers>> [Accessed 14 November 2014]), but the cultural affinity between Holland and these former colonies is not as strong as that between Holland and Flanders, which is why I chose not to include them in this study.

⁶¹ For a specific discussion of canon formation in a similar subordinate language area (viz. the Fenno-Swedish) see (Schybergson 2000, 8; 10).

The selection of the sources was made in keeping with the objective, expounded in section 1.5, to capture the written (verbal) output of the actors in that field who have the authority to canonise. When it comes to periodicals, preference was given to sources which already existed when Astrid Lindgren's works first reached the Low Countries in the 1950s. In terms of life span, for many of the journals as well as most of the newspapers counts that they have been published up until the present, thus enabling, to the largest degree possible, the adoption of a longitudinal perspective. As a guideline, I used the selection of journals present in the archive of *Focuspunt Jeugdliteratuur*,⁶² the research library for children's literature at *Stichting Lezen Vlaanderen*, the reading promotion organisation. This I complemented with a choice of journals available at the department of children's literature studies at Tilburg University, which offers the only master's programme in children's literature in the Dutch language area.⁶³ The scrutiny of the archives of the literary and bibliographical journals accessible at these influential institutions rendered a large amount of usable material. For reasons of feasibility mainly, I opted against including *all* available periodicals.⁶⁴ In compiling the corpus and making these decisions, I kept in mind the distinction of textual versus contextual factors in processes of canonisation (or, instances of literary criticism versus epitexts related to news facts or extra-textual phenomena linked with Astrid Lindgren's works). Seeing that I approach canonicity from a broad angle, transgressing the limits of traditionally sanctioned channels of canonisation, I wanted to ensure that epitexts from the last named would not dominate the corpus material.

The Corpus

In this section, the selected epitextual sources are presented, arranged by sphere of influence, and within these categories, ordered alphabetically by title. The titles marked in grey prove *not* to include any references to Astrid Lindgren and her works and will therefore not be taken into account any further.

- (1) Education and Academia

⁶² <<http://stichtinglezen.be/content.aspx?l=006.003.001>> [Accessed 18 November 2014.]

⁶³ <<https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/nl/onderwijs/masteropleidingen/jeugdliteratuur/>> [Accessed 25 May 2015.]

⁶⁴ If one wanted to consider expanding the corpus, the following periodicals could be taken into consideration (in alphabetical order): *Documentatieblad kinder- en jeugdliteratuur*, *Heibel*, *Leestekens*, *Project Jeugdliteratuur*, and *Uit de boeken*.

The output of the academic segment of the field consists of journals, course books used in literary studies,⁶⁵ and published studies. Seeing that I assume publication as a criterion, Bachelor or Master dissertations are not taken into account.

Table 1 Academic Sources

Title	Type	Author(s) (if relevant)	Region of Publication
<i>De hele Bibelebontse berg. De geschiedenis van het kinderboek in Nederland & Vlaanderen van de middeleeuwen tot heden</i> (1989) ⁶⁶	Literary History	Bekkering, Harry (et. al.)	The Netherlands/Flanders
<i>Grensverkeer. Over jeugdliteratuur</i> (1994)	Textbook	Van den Hoven, Peter	Flanders
<i>Jeugdliteratuur bestaat niet. Of de voort-durende strijd om het kinderboek</i> (2011)	Textbook	Van den Hoven, Peter	Flanders
<i>Het verschijnsel jeugdliteratuur</i> (1982) / <i>Jeugdliteratuur in perspectief</i> (2009)	Textbook	Ghesquière, Rita	Flanders
<i>Leesbeesten en boekenfeesten. Hoe werken (met) kinder- en jeugdboeken?</i> (1999 [2007])	Textbook	Van Coillie, Jan	Flanders
<i>Literatuur zonder leeftijd</i>	Journal		The Netherlands
<i>Tot volle waschdom. Bijdragen aan de geschiedenis van de kinder- en jeugdliteratuur</i> (2000)	Anthology	Dongelmans, Berry, Netty van Rotterdam, Jeroen Salman & Janneke van der Veer (eds.)	The Netherlands
<i>Uit de schaduw. Een beknopte geschiedenis van de West-Vlaamse en de Westfaalse jeugd- en kinderliteratuur</i> (1997)	Literary History	Ghesquière, Rita, Jan Van Coillie, Walter Gödden & Iris Nölle-Hornkamp	Flanders
<i>Uitgelezen jeugdliteratuur</i> (2008)	Textbook	Joosen, Vanessa & Katrien Vloeberghs	Flanders
<i>Wie zoet is, krijgt lekkers. Oude kinderboeken, nieuwe illustraties</i> (2002)	Anthology	Vermeulen, Marita & Peter Balcaen (eds.)	Flanders

⁶⁵ Teacher training programmes are not included, due to the lack of institutionalised canons for education in the Dutch language area.

⁶⁶ In 2014, a new comprehensive overview of the history of Dutch-language children's literature was published (Ghesquière, Joosen and van Lierop-Debrauwer (eds) 2014). Seeing that 2012 marks the final year of the period to be studied here, it could not be included in the corpus.

(2) Literary Criticism, Literary Historiography, and Bibliography

Anthologies, articles and reviews from journals for literary criticism or bibliography represent the professional sphere. The latter type of journal is aimed explicitly at teachers and librarians, who are deemed to be important canonising agents.⁶⁷ By studying the coverage of Astrid Lindgren's works in these periodicals, I will at least be able to gain an idea of what is recommended through these channels and what, hence, can be expected to be used. In some cases, the periodical underwent a change of name. The subsequent titles are mentioned in chronological order. The anthology titles marked with an asterisk (*) are reference works which are not restricted to children's literature but where a number of children's book authors feature in overviews of general literature.

Table 2 Professional Sources

Title	Type	Author(s) (if relevant)	Region of Publication
<i>Boekengids / Lektuurgids / Jeugdboekengids / Leesidee Jeugdliteratuur / De Leeswelp</i> (1952-2012)	Journal		Flanders
<i>Bureau Boek en Jeugd</i> (1952-2012)	Journal		The Netherlands
<i>En nu over jeugdliteratuur / Leesgoed</i> (1974-2012)	Journal		The Netherlands
<i>Encyclopedie van de Jeugdliteratuur</i> (2004)	Anthology	Van Coillie, Jan, Joke Linders, Selma Niewold & Jos Staal (eds.)	The Netherlands/Flanders
<i>IDIL-Gids voor jeugdlectuur</i> (jaartallen)	Journal		The Netherlands
<i>Het ABC van de jeugdliteratuur. In 250 schrijversportretten van Abkoude naar Zonderland</i> (1995)	Anthology	Linders, Joke; Jos Staal & Herman Tromp (eds.)	The Netherlands
<i>Het kinderboek vanuit een andere hoek</i> (1974)	Anthology		The Netherlands
<i>Het kinderboek vanuit een andere hoek 2</i> (1976)	Anthology		The Netherlands
<i>Het kinderboek vanuit een andere hoek 3</i> (1979)	Anthology		The Netherlands
<i>Het kinderboek vanuit een andere hoek 4</i> (1980)	Anthology		The Netherlands
<i>Lezen &cetera. Gids voor de wereldliteratuur*</i> (2004)	Anthology	Steinz, Pieter	The Netherlands

⁶⁷ See (Clark 2003, 107, 132, 151); (Lundin 2004, 16).

<i>Lexicon van de jeugdliteratuur</i> (1982)	Anthology	Verschuren, Herman & Jacques Vos (eds.)	The Netherlands
<i>Rafaël-Catalogus</i> (1952-1974)	Journal		The Netherlands
<i>Schrijver gezocht. Encyclopedie van de jeugdliteratuur</i> (1988) ⁶⁸	Anthology	De Sterck, Marita (et. al.)	Flanders
<i>Schrijver gevonden. Encyclopedie van de jeugdliteratuur</i> (1999)	Anthology	De Sterck, Marita (et. al.)	Flanders
<i>Wonderland. De wereld van het kinderboek</i> (2002)	Anthology	Van Delft, Marieke; Reinder Storm & Theo Vermeulen (eds.)	The Netherlands
<i>Zo goed als klassiek. De 100 mooiste jeugdboeken van de laatste 50 jaar volgens Bregje Boonstra</i> (1999)	Anthology	Boonstra, Bregje	The Netherlands
<i>1001 boeken die je gelezen moet hebben!</i> * (2010)	Anthology	Boxall, Peter (ed.)	The Netherlands

(3) Popular Media

An important share of literary critics' output is published in daily newspapers, which is why this type of source is indispensable to my analysis of the discourse on Astrid Lindgren. Moreover, the actors in the field of the popular media may have a different background than those operating within the professional and academic spheres, whose expertise presumably is specialised to a much greater extent. With a larger array of opportunities for players to publish their opinions and a larger scope in terms of readership, the popular field is in addition less confined than the latter two, hence forming a valuable complement to the epitexts to be gathered from the professional and academic fields. Finally, I decided not to restrict the selection of newspaper material to reviews, but to also take into consideration articles which present news facts related to the author or her works. In doing so, I will hopefully be able to record any relevance they might have in people's everyday lives.

In compiling a corpus of texts from newspaper sources, I applied two different procedures, which resulted in a division of this part of the corpus into two subcategories. Firstly, I consulted the collections of newspaper cuttings on Astrid Lindgren collected by the children's literature department at the Royal Library in The Hague, which is available at the research library at *Stichting Lezen Vlaanderen*. The texts were taken from various

⁶⁸ Both *Schrijver gezocht* (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988) and its revised edition *Schrijver gevonden* (de Sterck, Franck and Kakebeeke (eds.) 1999) were published under the aegis of the journal *Jeugdboekengids*.

local and national newspapers (chiefly Dutch) and the oldest articles in the files date to 1959. For the collection of newer materials, I turned to digital databases in which publications from national newspapers are collected.⁶⁹ The Flemish platform, *Mediargus*, covers a time span from 1998 up until the present. Its Dutch counterpart, *LexisNexis*, allows archive searches starting from 1990. In order to maintain analogy, however, I chose to limit the time frame and decided not go any further back in time than 1998. So, the inquiry presented here covers a period from 1959 until and including 2012, the postulated end point for the study.

2.3 Quantitative Analysis

In order to create a comprehensive picture of the way in which Astrid Lindgren's works were received in Flanders and the Netherlands during the relevant time frame, I compiled an overview of the Dutch translations of Lindgren's books. It can be found in the Appendix. For means of reference, the publication dates of the original Swedish books are included. The table also includes English-language titles of the books, which will in fact be used throughout this study so as to avoid interference with the English text.

Categorisation of the Epitexts: Context and Causes

The question to be tackled in this section is what induced the authors to devote a piece in the secondary sources to Astrid Lindgren and her authorship. I scrutinised what caused the contributors to write about Lindgren and her works. What reasons did they see for bringing them up? This part of the investigation is designed to record the evolution in the way in which Lindgren and her body of work were treated over the years, so as to disclose the processes of canonisation at work. The procedure employed is inspired by phenomenography.⁷⁰

The literary sociological perspective I chose influenced the way in which I managed the collection of epitexts. The three spheres that my material covers can be seen to reflect different stages in literary criticism. Popular and professional epitexts are more closely related to their objects than works literary historiography or academic studies. Seeing that literary value in effect is crystallised in the latter and that my focus lies with the

⁶⁹ In order to keep the size of the corpus manageable, I decided to limit myself to *national* editions, and not to include the various local editions of the available newspapers.

⁷⁰ See also section 1.4.

dynamics underlying the canonisation of Lindgren's works, I have chosen to work with the "flexible" epitexts first and foremost. I will be using the journal and newspaper *articles* as the fundamental material underlying the largest part of this study and will not discuss the selected *books* until the ultimate chapter of this dissertation. In addition, when relevant, I will distinguish between the reception in newspapers versus journals so as to capture the difference between these two types of criticism. Treating the evaluations presented in a "fixed" form last will allow me to establish whether the professional and academic players' assessment of Lindgren's oeuvre is in agreement with the evolutions discernible in the epitexts connected with the more dynamic areas in the literary field. Hence, the analysis of this particular segment of the epitextual material will serve to summarise the main findings of this study at large.

In order to draw a clear picture of the motivations behind the journal and newspaper contributions included in the corpus, the articles were first grouped in accordance with recurring reasons. These causes were labelled a posteriori, resulting in categories consisting of texts which emanated from similar drives. The tags eventually used to class the different articles are the following:⁷¹

- (1) Recommendation: any article in which one or several of Astrid Lindgren's works is/are named as favourite(s) or worthwhile reading;
- (2) Theme: any article in which one or several of Astrid Lindgren's works is/are cited in order to illustrate the occurrence of a certain literary theme or motif;
- (3) Review General: any article in which one or several regular edition(s) of Astrid Lindgren's works is/are reviewed;
- (4) Review Adaptation: any article in which one or more adapted versions of one or several of Astrid Lindgren's works is/are reviewed (see explanation below);
- (5) Review Consumable: any article in which one or more consumables based on one or several of Astrid Lindgren's works is/are reviewed (see explanation below);
- (6) Review Derivative: any article in which one or more derivatives based on one or several of Astrid Lindgren's works is/are reviewed (see explanation below);
- (7) Prize Awarded: any article in which Astrid Lindgren herself or (one of) her works are named because of a literary prize they were awarded;
- (8) Prize Commemorative: any article which is concerned with winners of or nominees for a literary prize awarded in commemoration of Astrid Lindgren;
- (9) Author: any article which is devoted to Astrid Lindgren and her works in connection with causes related to the author herself (such as events in her life, her opinion on social

⁷¹ The order in which the final categories are presented is random. To some extent, it was prompted by the order in which the types of articles appeared during the analysis of the corpus articles in chronological order.

matters, or her influence on other authors), or articles which contain “mentions”, which situate Astrid Lindgren and her books in relation to other authors or works.⁷²

The choice to distinguish between reviews of “regular” book editions and those of derived publications, which I further divided into three subcategories, was prompted by my intention to encapsulate the impact of the commercial side of the children’s literary field, which will be discussed at length in section 5.3. In this study, I consider as an “adaptation” any edition of an Astrid Lindgren book which deviates from the original form of the work, but which remains within the boundaries of the medium of the book in its broadest possible sense. Typical examples are the numerous transpositions from novel chapter to picture books. The novel *Seacrow Island*, which is a revised version of the television script for the TV series, also falls under this category. Finally, omnibus editions involving intramedial transpositions are regarded as regular editions. Secondly, “consumables” imply an intermedial shift, involving “a crossing of borders between media” (Rajewsky 2005, 46). This label is applied either to any version of a book of Lindgren’s in a medium other than the book (e.g. film adaptations), or to spin-offs such as audio books, prequels, and cookery books, as well as tie-in books related to film versions of her work. Lastly, the category of “derivatives” encompasses all references to Astrid Lindgren’s works in tangible, non-medial forms, such as allusions in daily language use, toys, accessories, or theme parks. *Junibacken* in Stockholm and *Astrid Lindgren’s World* [Astrid Lindgrens Värld] in Vimmerby are examples par excellence of the latter group.

A final issue with respect to corpus management is of a more pragmatic kind: it pertains to referencing. In the remainder of this dissertation, I will be referring to the newspapers and journal articles by means of specific labels, indicating the type of source they derive from. Categorising all of them by their author’s name proved to be impossible, as many of them were published anonymously. Especially in the literary and bibliographical journals of the 1950s and 1960s, signing one’s review did not yet seem to be a custom among the critics. The matter was furthermore complicated by the fact that the articles retrieved from the records kept by the Dutch Royal Library were stripped from a great deal of essential information. In many cases, neither their titles, page numbers, nor authors were included. What remained of the otherwise neatly categorised articles was the core text, with a uniform indication of their source and date of publication.⁷³ The label I am using consists of an abbreviation denoting the source and a

⁷² My use of the term “mention” is analogous to Karl Erik Rosengren’s (1968). In *Sociological Aspects of the Literary System*, he defines it as follows: “Regard as a mention the name of a writer, or any paraphrase of such a name, or a book title, a figure from a given book, a quotation from or an illusion to a given writer; always in a review concerning a writer other than the one mentioned”, which is “supposed to be the expression of an association by the reviewer” (Rosengren 1968, 161).

⁷³ Seeing that a considerable amount of the epitexts was not signed, I was unable, unfortunately, to conduct further research into role of individual reviewers and the possible interrelations between them.

serial number. The full in-text citation is designed by analogy with the format applied throughout this study: ([author] [year], [page]), and will therefore look like this: ([label] [number] [year], [page]).

The following are the abbreviations used to label the epitexts:

Table 3 Labels

Source	Abbreviation
<i>Boekengids / Lektuurgids / Jeugdboekengids / Leesidee Jeugdliteratuur / De Leeswelp</i>	JBG
<i>Bureau Boek en Jeugd</i>	BBJ
<i>En nu over jeugdliteratuur / Leesgoed</i>	En nu
<i>Literatuur zonder leeftijd</i>	LzL
<i>IDIL-Gids voor jeugdlectuur</i>	IDIL
<i>Rafaël-Catalogus</i>	Raf
Newspapers	News

Evolution in the Distribution of the *Journal* Articles

In what follows, I scrutinise the reasons the corpus article authors had to write about Astrid Lindgren. What prompted them to discuss the author or her works? This part of the analysis, then, centres around the question *what* the reviewers set on the agenda. Globally speaking, the overview is conceived as a quantitative analysis presenting the facts and figures about the corpus from a diachronic, longitudinal perspective. In this the first part of the quantitative analysis, the details from the journal contributions will be expounded. The articles published in newspapers will be dealt with in the following section.

The Dutch translation of *Pippi Longstocking* was actually issued before some of the relevant sources specifically dedicated to children's literature were established in the Dutch-language area. Some of the journals which have proven to be useful for this study date back to the middle of the 1950s. *Bureau Boek en Jeugd* was founded in 1953, *Jeugdboekengids* in 1959, and the Catholic Information Service Concerning Reading (also known as IDIL)⁷⁴ started publishing the so-called *Rafaël*-catalogue parallel to its own children's book periodical in 1954. *Lektuurgids*, the general literary journal which also included reviews of children's books, was started in the same year. Unfortunately, this means that the very first responses to the book were hard to trace. The IDIL had established a guide for children's books (*IDIL-Gids voor jeugdlectuur*) in 1949 already, so that could have been a useful source of information on the earliest reactions to *Pippi*

⁷⁴ *Informatie Dienst Inzake Lectuur*.

Longstocking. Yet, I found that *Mio, my Son* was the first book of Lindgren’s to be reviewed in 1957. Some discussions of subsequent editions of *Pippi Longstocking* in this and other journals contain references to earlier notices and hence give us some idea as to how the book was received initially.

It turns out that the critics writing for the selected journals were discussing Astrid Lindgren and her works continuously, although coverage in some years was less intense than in others. Between 1952 and 2012, a total number of 285 notices appeared in the selected journals, averaging a number of 4.7 articles a year. The graph below shows how the yearly number evolved over the decades within the designated time span:

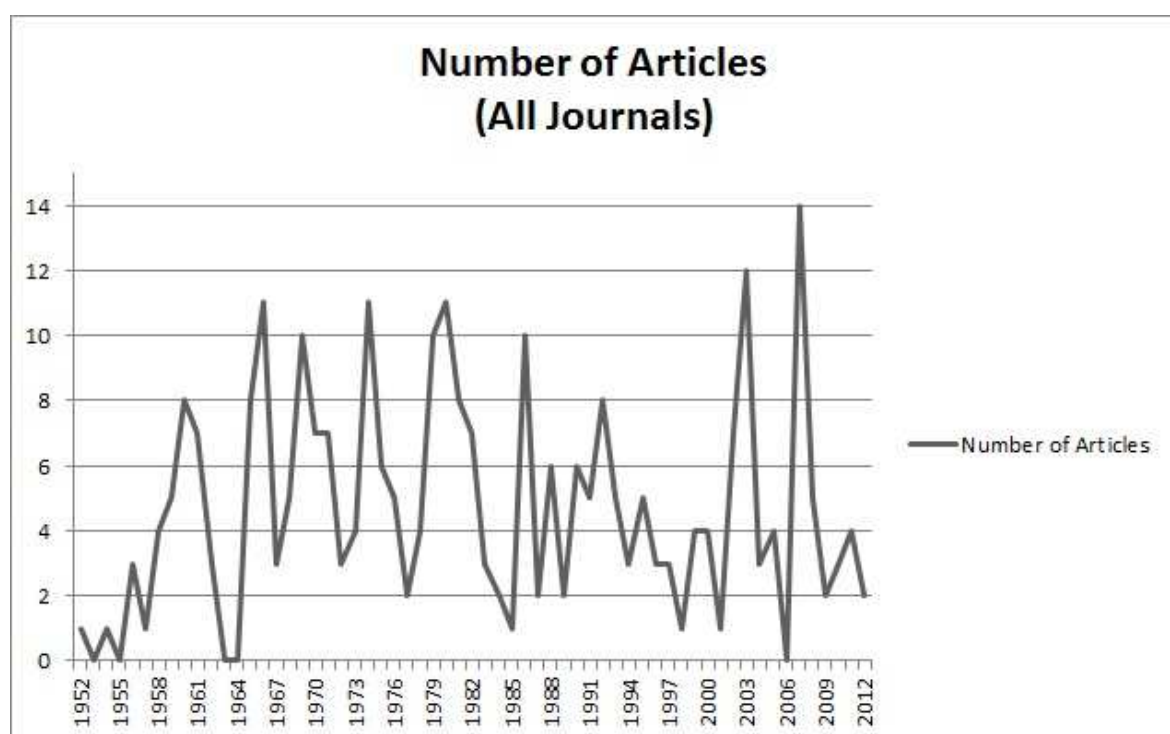


Figure 2 Graph: Number of Articles per Year (Journals 1952-2012)

Broken down into categories depending on the occasion the articles relate to (in descending order), the picture is as follows:⁷⁵

Table 4 Journals: Overview of Causes

Review	150	52.6 %
Review Adaptation	64	22.5 %
Author	19	6.7 %
Theme	14	4.9 %
Review Consumable	12	4.2 %
Recommendation	7	2.5 %

⁷⁵ A graph visualising the actual evolution in the distribution of the articles among the different categories is included in the appendix.

Prize Awarded	7	2.5 %
Prize Commemorative	7	2.5 %
Review Derivative	5	1.8 %

Reviews are the “core business” of (critical-)bibliographical and literary journals such as the ones included in the corpus, which tend to monitor the publication of new titles in the field quite meticulously. Therefore, the patterns in the reviewing behaviour in the journals provide us with a good picture as to the role which publishing houses play in canonisation processes. As is evident from the overview above (Table 4), the publication of one of Lindgren’s books is indeed the prime reason for the journal contributors to set the author and/or works on the agenda. 226 out of the total of 285 articles, or nearly 80 %, dealt with newly issued books, adaptations, and consumables. The remaining fifth of the journal articles was incited by reasons other than the publication of a book. Hence, the primary impulse for the journal contributors was *content*-related, having to do with what Astrid Lindgren actually wrote. This finding is demonstrative of the large impact which strategies pursued by publishing houses have on processes of canonisation in the professional subfield. Out of the 130 separate titles of Lindgren’s published in the Dutch language area during the designated 60-year period (1952-2012), a mere nine were not reviewed.⁷⁶ This minority of neglected works notwithstanding, it appears to have been self-evident that Astrid Lindgren’s books were worthy of the journal critics’ attention.

Due to its primacy in this type of publications, a closer look at the number of articles in the “reviews”-category is called for. The evolution in the studied time span is rendered in the graph below:

⁷⁶ The titles which were not taken into consideration in the journal reviews are *Sia Lives on Kilimandjaro* (Dutch translation published with a protestant organisation called *Raad voor zending der Ned. Hervormde Kerk* in 1959); *The Pippi Longstocking Collection* (Vanderhout, 1972); *Rasmus Runs Away* (Wolters-Noordhoff, 1974); *Do You Know Pippi Longstocking?* (Zuidnederlandse Uitgeverij, 1979); *Rasmus and the Tramp* (Grote Letter Bibliotheek, 1980); *The Pippi Longstocking Collection* (Gary Publishing, 1983); *And He Saw that it Was Not Good* (Ploegsma, 1989); *Pippi Is (Not) Going to School and Other Stories* (Ploegsma, 1999); *Pippi Does as She Pleases* (Ploegsma, 2000).

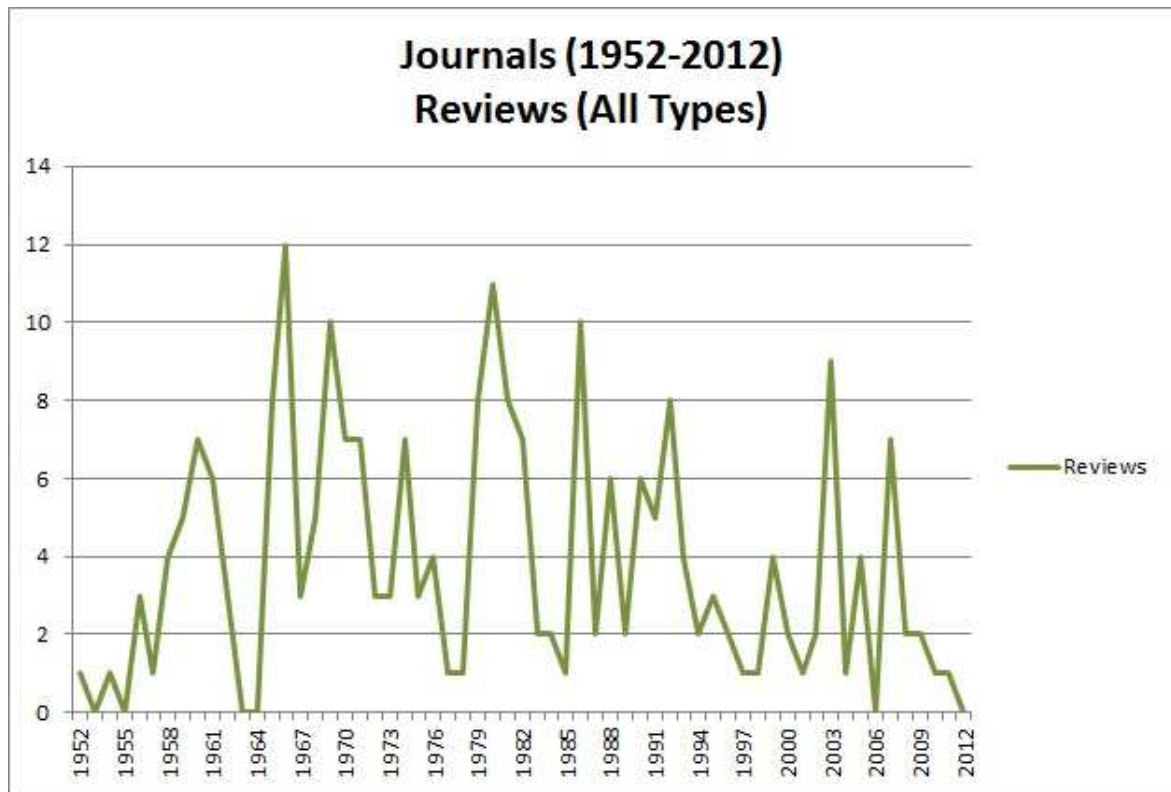


Figure 3 Graph: Reviews (Journals 1952-2012)

A general tendency is that Astrid Lindgren’s works were under almost relentless scrutiny during the entire period. Especially midway through the 1960s and during the 1980s, her work got reviewed frequently and extensively. More and more of her works were published in Dutch during the 1960s, which resulted in a high level of books reviewed in the latter half of the decade. As a result, the yearly number, as the graph shows, first peaked in 1966, reaching a high point at twelve articles. In 1969, too, it was high, amounting to ten articles. It appears that, at that point in the reception of Astrid Lindgren’s books in Flanders and The Netherlands, the making of her name was still in progress, but that it was gaining in importance. Moreover, the number of reviews rose from one in 1978 to eight in 1979, and went on to reach a high point at eleven articles in 1980. It remained at a high level during 1981 (eight) and 1982 (seven). After that, it plummeted to between one and two between 1983 and 1985, only to dramatically increase again in 1986 (ten articles). It once more reached a relatively high total in 1992, when eight reviews were published. After relapsing to a fairly steady level of between one and four reviews a year between 1993 and 2002, the number peaked again in 2003, yet again reaching a high level at nine reviews. The final (minor) apex to be observed occurred in 2007, when seven reviews appeared.

If we focus on the final numbers for the separate subcategories of reviews, we are able to determine the publication of what type of work precisely guided the processes of canonisation involving Astrid Lindgren’s oeuvre in Flanders and The Netherlands. As Table 4 indicates, the largest share of work that was reviewed in the journals – besides

“regular” book editions – were intramedial adaptations. Considering the graph below (Figure 4), we find that the 1980 and 1986 apices (eleven and ten reviews respectively) can both be attributed to sudden surges in the publication of adapted works. To be precise, we are dealing with novel chapters reworked into picture books, such as *Lotta’s Christmas Surprise*, *Springtime in Noisy Village*, *Emil’s Little Sister*, or a reissue of *The Runaway Sleigh Ride*. Publishers’ decisions such as these clearly work to keep Astrid Lindgren’s works on the radar, making them available for new generations of readers. It is furthermore clear that the pinnacle in 2003 can be related to the response by publishing houses to the overall increase in attention for Lindgren following her death in 2002. Lindgren’s main Dutch publisher, Ploegsma, in particular aimed to capitalise on it by releasing new versions of older work as well as new picture book projects such as *The Red Bird*.

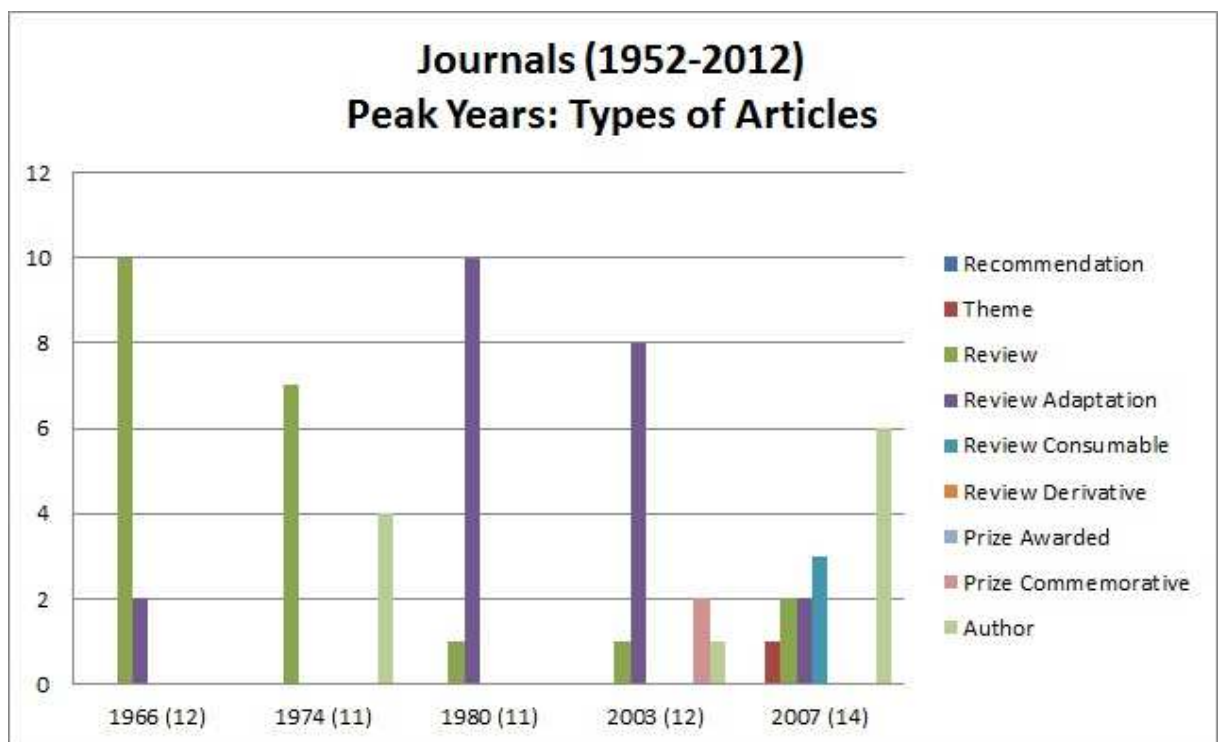


Figure 4 Graph: Types of Articles in Peak Years (Journals 1952-2012)

The third most important category comprises pieces on Astrid Lindgren prompted by contextual reasons pertaining to the figure of the author herself, which was the case in 19 of the journal articles (6.7 %). This is in fact a significantly smaller number than the total of 226 in the “reviews”-category, which can be described as having a textual impetus. Clear high points in the distribution of author-related articles are 1974 (four contributions) and 2002 (likewise four) as well as an apex in 2007 (six pieces). The latter two peaks can easily be traced back to the occasions of Lindgren’s decease in 2002 and the commemoration of the centenary of her birth five years later. At both occasions, publishing houses seemed to be eager to get a piece of the pie, and they attempted to do so by reissuing existing titles. The sudden surge in interest in 1974, by contrast, is less readily explained. What is remarkable about the four 1974 articles is that, although they

seem to have arisen out of totally separate impulses, they eventually worked together to bring Astrid Lindgren into a strong limelight that year.

Two of these author-related pieces appeared in *Jeugdboekengids*, which at that point was well into its sixteenth volume. In the journal's May issue, Astrid Lindgren features in an author presentation displayed prominently on the back cover (JBG 18 1974, n.p.). In addition, the volume's final issue comprises a comprehensive article on Astrid Lindgren covering an appearance she made on Dutch television in connection with the publication of *The Brothers Lionheart* (JBG 19 1974, 145-148). The amount of fame that Lindgren had acquired by that time seems to have prompted a need to devote some serious attention to her. The fact that in *Lektuurgids* the only substantial piece on Astrid Lindgren, amounting to two pages instead of the usual 100 words available for reviews, was devoted to this book in the very same year demonstrates that Lindgren's fame was at a height at that point. The remaining two articles in the "author"-category dating from 1974 were published in *En nu over jeugdliteratuur*, in the journal's very first volume. The editors' choice to elaborately discuss her works this early on in the existence of the newly-founded periodical is indicative of the fact that Astrid Lindgren had already become a given by the mid-1970s.

Furthermore, the general overview of the distribution of articles among the different categories (Table 4) shows that recommendations and literary prizes (both awarded and commemorative) are occasions which are of minor importance for the journal contributors, with less than ten instances accounted for in each of these categories. Nevertheless, some relevant conclusions on the canonisation processes involving Astrid Lindgren's oeuvre can be drawn from the trends which the occurrence of these articles reveal. For instance, the pattern of occurrence of recommendations, although in general rather low in number, tells us something about the evolution in the canonisation processes. Relatively speaking, Lindgren's works were recommended most frequently between 1977 and 1979 (with the exception of single instances in 1961, 2000, and 2011), underscoring the amount of reverence she had earned with the reviewers by then. A similar model can be discerned in the discussion of prizes Lindgren was awarded, which peaked in 1975 and 1983 (following the Silver-Slate Pencil Awards [Zilveren Griffel]⁷⁷ for *The Brothers Lionheart* and *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* respectively). These, too, signal the capitalisation of her acclaim. Overall, though, the category of "awarded literary prizes", which is fairly prominent in the theoretical discussions of canonisation, in practice proves to be far less important. The commemorative Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) turns out to have resulted in a modest, yet almost unremitting stream of attention ever since it was founded in 2002, thus making a small contribution to the solidification of Astrid Lindgren's legacy.

⁷⁷ The "Silver-Slate Pencil"-award is granted by CPNB, Collective Promotion for the Dutch Book.

As for the distribution of the different types of articles among the separate publications, a few rather clearly delineated trends emerge from the corpus material. For one thing, there are some strong similarities between the *academic* journal *Literatuur zonder leeftijd* (abbreviation LzL) and *professional* periodical *En nu over jeugdliteratuur / Leesgoed* (abbrev. En nu). In the former, Astrid Lindgren's works are most frequently dealt with within a broader framework, for instance as a case in point in a translation study, or in connection with a discussion of characteristic themes or characters in children's literature. Four out of nine of the *Literatuur zonder leeftijd*-articles are thus classified as thematic pieces. Also in professional journal *En nu over jeugdliteratuur / Leesgoed* a couple of theme-based contributions appear (eight out of 46). The focus in the remaining articles in *Literatuur zonder leeftijd* is on the figure of Astrid Lindgren (three out of nine), and in *En nu over jeugdliteratuur / Leesgoed*, too, no less than ten contributions were devoted to the author as such. Moreover, the latter journal displays the highest number of recommendations (five) and articles on the occasion of awards won or granted in Lindgren's name (thirteen), whereas only ten of its 46 contributions qualify as reviews (of different kinds). Overall, in *En nu over jeugdliteratuur / Leesgoed* most attention is paid to the context surrounding Astrid Lindgren's works. *Professional* journal *Jeugdboekengids* (JBG), on the contrary, focuses almost entirely on the contents of those works: a vast majority of 89 of the journal's total of 105 articles are reviews. In the remaining professional periodicals *Bureau Boek en Jeugd* (BBJ), *IDIL-Gids voor jeugdlectuur* (IDIL), *Lektuurgids* (LG), and *Rafaël-catalogus* (Raf) as well, general reviews are of overriding – if not exclusive – interest.

Table 5 Distribution of the Categories among the Journals (1952-2012)

	BBJ	En nu	IDIL	JBG	LG	LzL	Raf
Recommendation	0	5	0	1	0	1	0
Theme	0	8	0	2	0	4	0
Review	18	3	22	46	40	0	21
Review Adaptation	11	4	1	38	10	0	0
Review Consumable	0	2	0	9	1	0	0
Review Derivative	0	4	0	0	0	1	0
Prize: Awarded	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
Prize: Commemorative	0	5	0	2	0	0	0
Author	0	8	1	7	0	3	0
Total	29	46	24	105	51	9	21

Evolution in the Distribution of the Newspapers Articles

This subdivision of the corpus is comprised of 891 newspaper articles, 796 of which were retrieved digitally. The remaining 95 were collected in print. The contributions are distributed among the different categories as follows:

Table 6 Newspapers: Overview of Causes

Author	287	32.2 %
Review Consumable	198	22.2 %
Review Derivative	111	12.5 %
Prize Commemorative	105	11.8 %
Recommendation	75	8.4 %
Review	62	7.0 %
Review Adaptation	23	2.6 %
Theme	17	1.9 %
Prize Awarded	13	1.5 %

As far as the discussion of Astrid Lindgren and her works in Dutch and Flemish newspapers is concerned, the fact that author-related pieces constitute a clear majority demonstrates that the coverage was *context*-driven, as opposed to the *content*-driven nature of the journal coverage. Moreover, the small percentage of reviews of regular book editions and adaptations indicates that newspapers, as opposed to journals, are no self-evident site for intensive literary criticism in which reviewers keep a finger on the pulse of children’s literature. Rather, priority is given to examples of the way in which Lindgren’s books interact with other media (exemplified by the category of “consumable” reviews) and impact daily life through “derivatives”. Amounting to nearly 45 % of the newspaper contributions, the preponderance of this type of content illustrates how the study of newspaper coverage gives us an idea of the dissemination of canonical works beyond the confined boundaries of the academic and professional subfields.

The longitudinal evolution of the coverage is rendered in three different graphs, the first of which gives an overview of the entire collection of newspaper articles, whereas the second and thirds graphs visualise the developments in the non-digitalised and the digitalised parts of the corpus respectively. I will discuss the impetus behind increased coverage in the peak years in each of these periods separately.

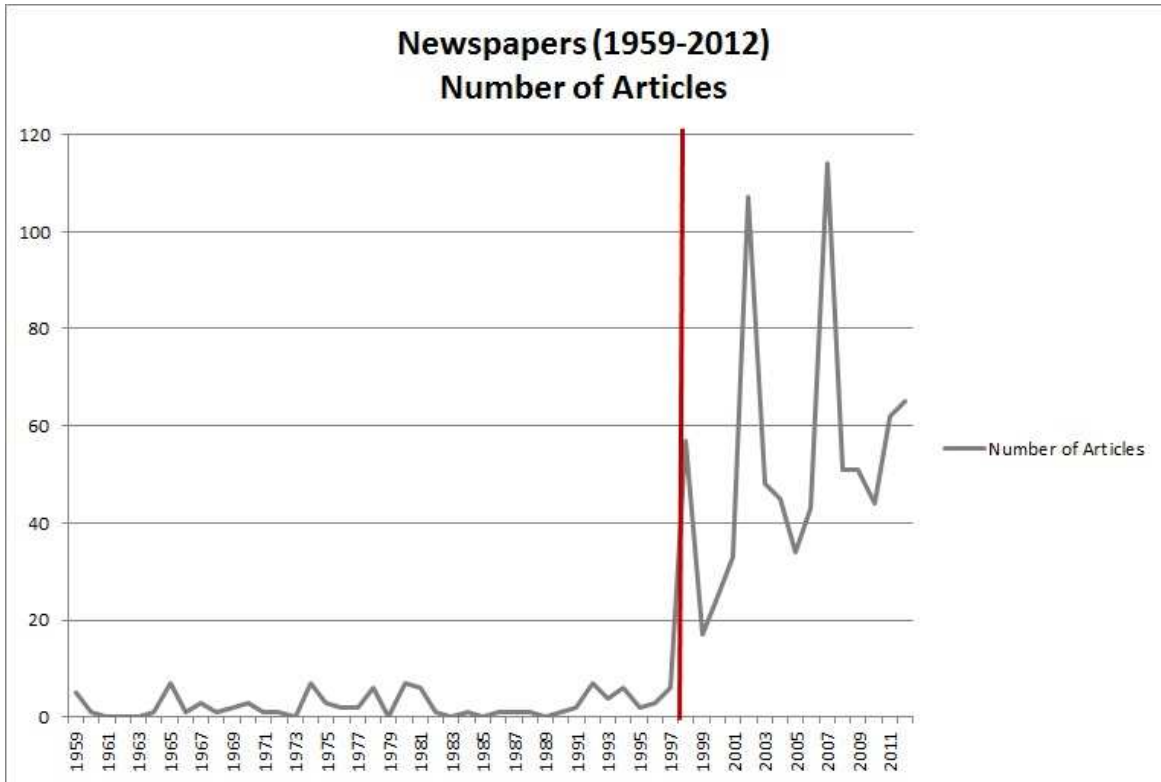


Figure 5 Graph: Number of Newspaper Articles (1959-2012)

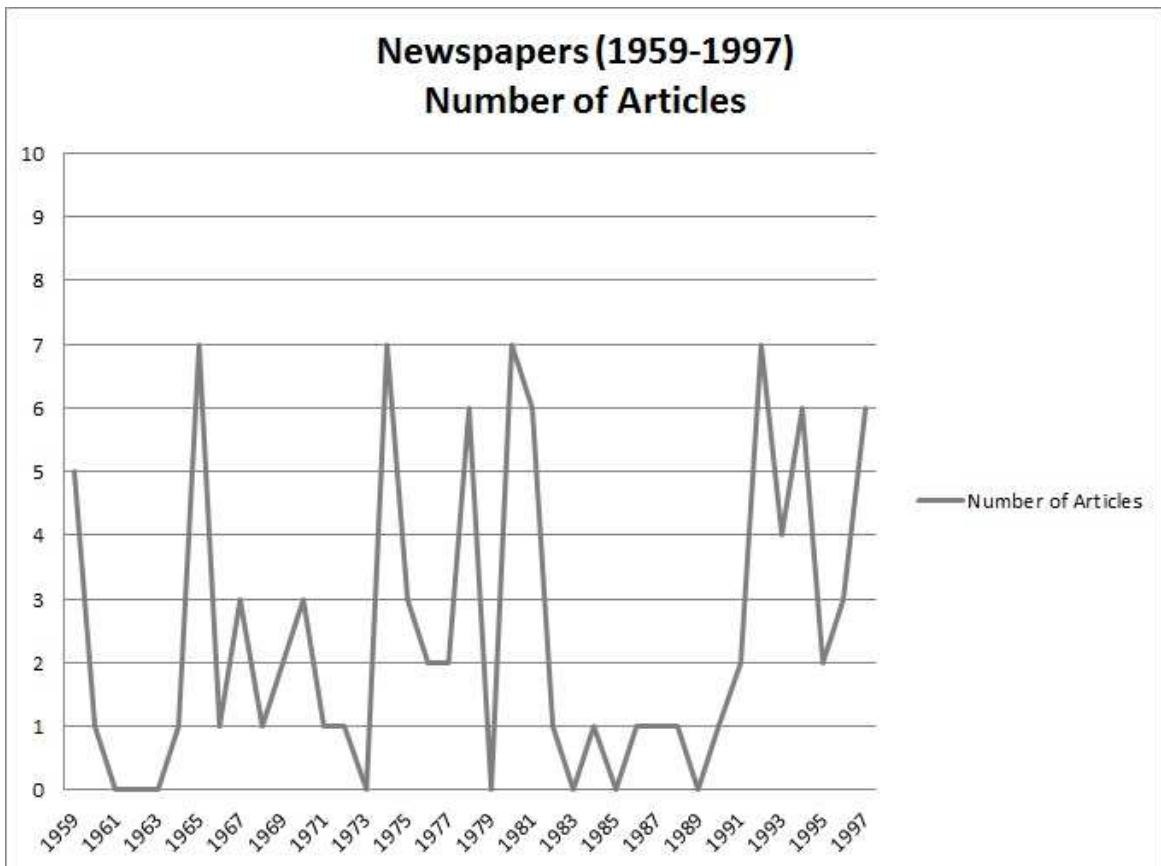


Figure 6 Graph: Number of Newspaper Articles (1959-1997)

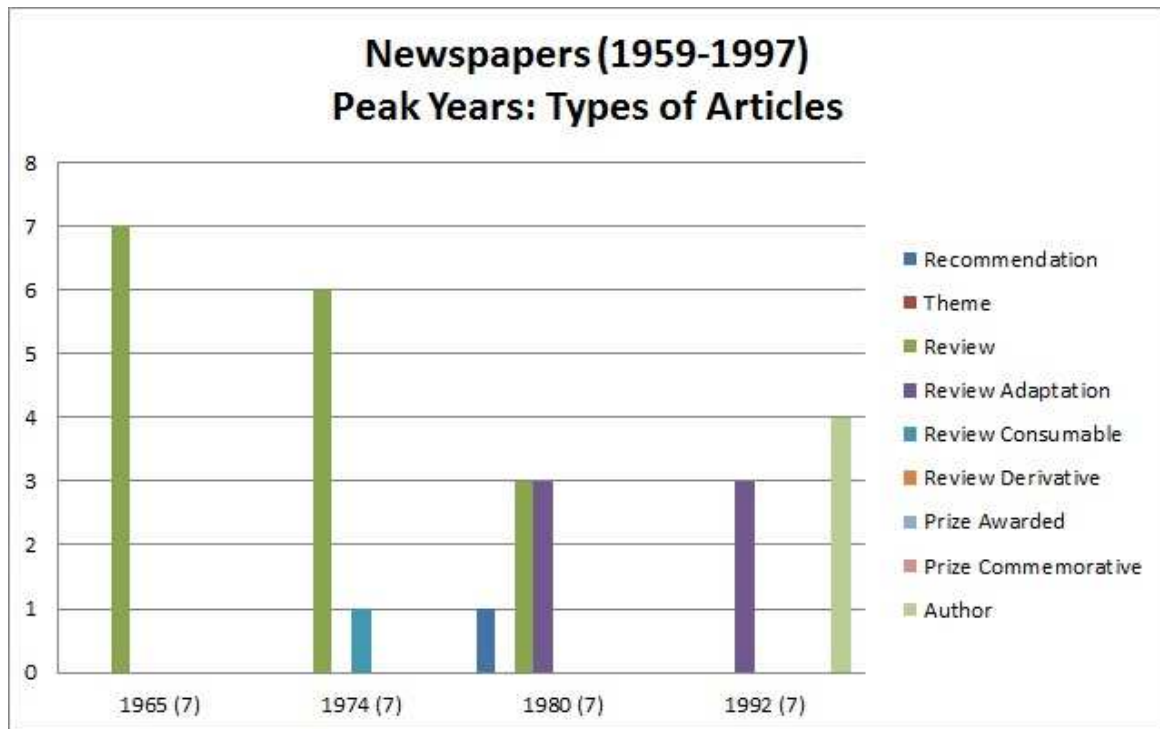


Figure 7 Graph: Types of Articles in Peak Years (Newspapers 1959-1997)

The average number of articles published per year is 2.5, the highest recorded amount is seven. The 1960s saw a constant flow of Lindgren-publications, with second and third editions of the *Noisy Village*-, *Pippi Longstocking*-, *Emil*-, and *Karlsson*-books, as well as a new version of *Rasmus and the Tramp*. Furthermore, new titles such as *Seacrow Island* and the *Kati*-books were readily translated. This steady supply explains the first height in the 1959-1997 coverage in 1965 with seven articles. Over 50 % of the 1974-peak can be ascribed to the success of *The Brothers Lionheart*, whereas the high point in 1980 partly was the result of a sudden injection of adapted publications. Notably, these were not issued and marketed by Ploegsma, Astrid Lindgren's main Dutch publisher, but by Deltas instead. Deltas' involvement in the publication of Lindgren's works proved to be non-recurring. Ploegsma made another effort to issue several adaptations, which, coupled with articles celebrating Lindgren's 85th birthday, accounts for the final apex in 1992 (seven articles). The pattern discernible in the distribution of the articles during these peak years neatly illustrates how attention shifted as Lindgren's career evolved. It moved away from reviews of regular book editions to include discussions of adaptations and contextual aspects, such as biographical facts. This is a shift which in fact became even stronger in the second period (compare Figure 9 below).

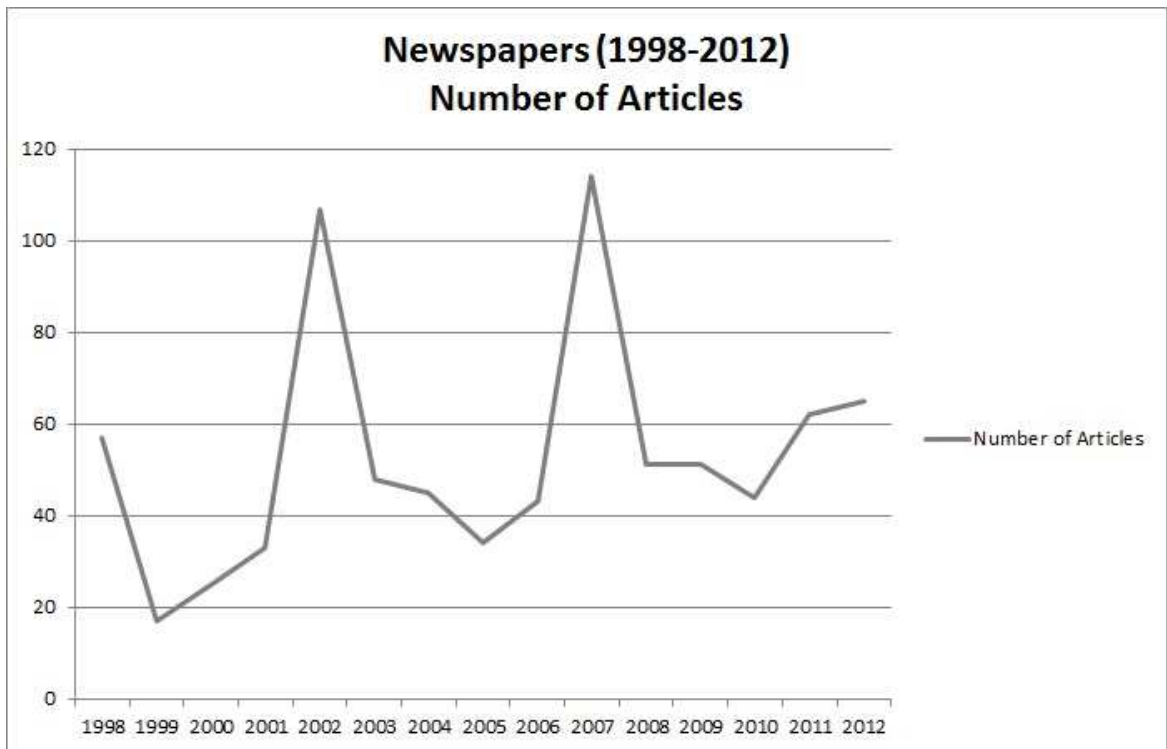


Figure 8 Graph: Number of Newspaper Articles (1998-2012)

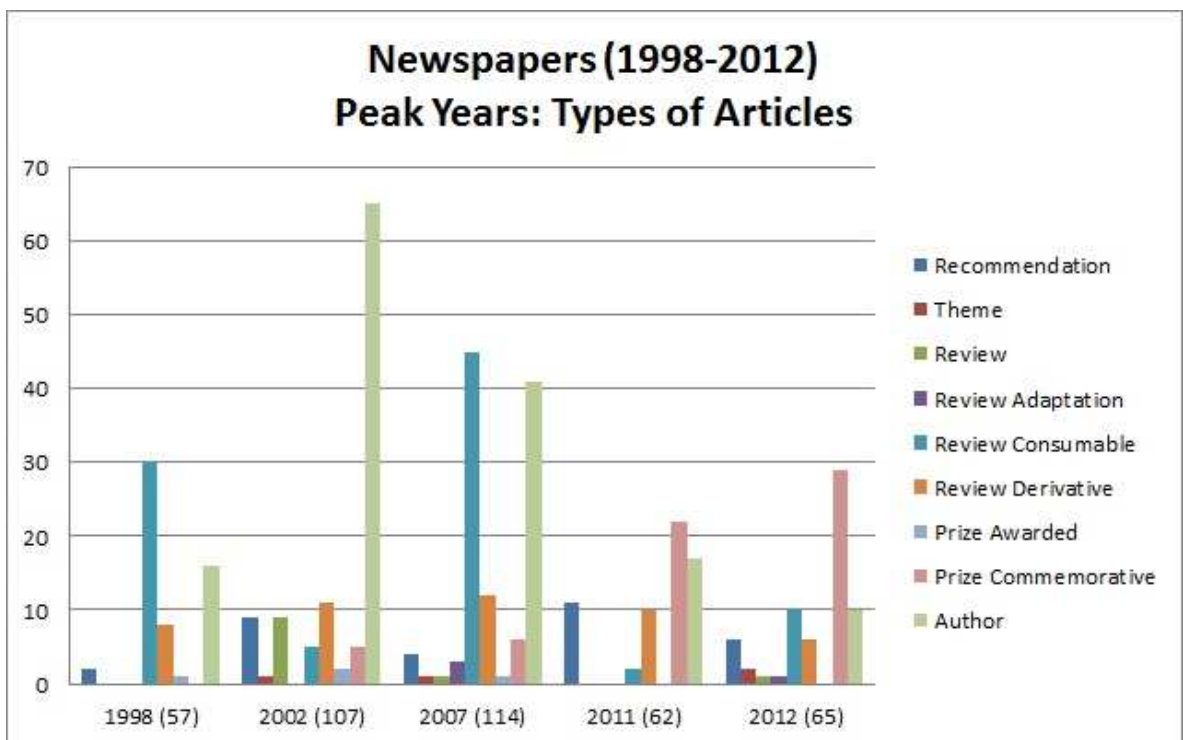


Figure 9 Graph: Types of Articles in Peak Years (Newspapers 1998-2012)

The results for the digital part of the corpus, roughly covering the first decade of the twenty-first century, stand out as far less steady than those for the pre-1998 materials. On average, 53 articles were published per year, a number which is quite high mainly due to the surges in coverage in 2002 and 2007 primarily. These peaks, amounting to 107 and

114 articles respectively, correspond directly to the two major biographical facts which likewise were shown to play a large role in the journal coverage, namely the author's decease and the centenary of her birth. In 2002, obituaries and reports of Lindgren's funeral form the bulk of the coverage, whereas retrospective articles honouring the author as well as accounts of commemorative screenings of some of the most famous movie versions of her works account for the 2007 apex.

In addition, the other high points in this period all emanate from causes other than book publications. For instance, a 1998 musical based on the Pippi Longstocking-stories, the first of its kind in the Dutch language area, attracted a great deal of attention, which explains that year's fairly high total of 57 articles. The relative height in 2011 can be ascribed to several causes, as the graph shows. The hype surrounding the late Stieg Larsson's *Millennium*-trilogy, the protagonist of which is a tribute to Pippi Longstocking, is one of these reasons, as is the centenary of children's author Annie M.G. Schmidt, who is considered to be Astrid Lindgren's Dutch counterpart (cf. section 5.4). Lastly, 2011 saw a surge in the amount of attention devoted to the ALMA. After the 2010 ALMA was granted Belgian artist Kitty Crowther, the prize clearly became a factor to be reckoned with, judging by the Flemish and Dutch journalists' elaborate discussions of the oeuvre of 2011's awardee Shaun Tan, a world-renowned dual-audience illustrator from Australia. In 2012, when acclaimed Dutch writer Guus Kuijer took the accolade, attention increased even further. All in all, the global picture of the newspaper coverage, with its clearly visible development from a textual to a contextual focus, neatly illustrates how processes of canonisation involve a transgression of boundaries: in becoming canonised, literary works ideally exceed the limits of the pages of the book, and impact an audience in other ways than merely through being read.

2.4 Qualitative Analysis

The Evaluation of Astrid Lindgren's Works

From a qualitative point of view, the issue of interest is the way in which Lindgren's works are assessed in the different sources. In this connection, I will focus on those publications in which the individual books' value is marked in some way or another. A clear example can be found in Flemish critical-bibliographical journal *Jeugdboekengids*, in which a tagging system is applied, foregrounding "top-quality books" [keurboeken], viz. "the

publications to be recommended most highly among the books reviewed in [that] issue”.⁷⁸ In total, 71 reviews of Lindgren-titles appeared in *Jeugdboekengids*, thirteen of which were foregrounded as “top-quality books”.⁷⁹ What is more, in the second volume the editors publish an extensive canon list of their own, titled “Selection of Recreational Reading for Children between 6 and 15” (JBG 1 1961, 117-127).⁸⁰ Five of Lindgren’s works, *Mio, my Son*, *Rasmus and the Tramp*, and the Pippi Longstocking-trilogy, are included, alongside well-known books by (a.o.) Hans Christian Andersen, Carlo Collodi, Miguel de Cervantes, the Grimm brothers, Erich Kästner, Hector Malot, A.A. Milne, Charles Perrault, and Jonathan Swift (JBG 1 1960, 117-127). The fact that the Pippi-books are considered to be “top-quality” works suggests that they may have been less controversial in the Dutch language area than in Sweden. I will elaborate on the initial reactions to *Pippi Longstocking* in section 3.2. Here, I will outline the most prominent trends in the reception of Lindgren’s body of work in its entirety.

There is a fair amount of appreciation shown for Lindgren’s oeuvre in *Jeugdboekengids*, but the praise her works gained in Dutch Catholic annual *Rafaël-catalogus* is far more substantial. In all but one of the 21 instances where Lindgren’s books are reviewed, the work is labelled as “recreative”, a label which refers to a work which is read for entertainment purposes primarily.⁸¹ In the journal’s 1959 issue, a small yet significant clause is added to the description of the category. It reads, “including those which are of more lasting value due to their artistic standard”.⁸² Hence, Astrid Lindgren’s works are clearly strongly appreciated by the editors of the *Rafaël-catalogus*. This also shows in the assessment of *Rasmus and the Tramp* as “educative”, which entails that it has an “outspokenly formative value and bias”,⁸³ and that it is found to complement the “recreative” dimension with a “positive, constructive, and edifying element”.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ “de meest aan te bevelen publicaties onder de in deze aflevering besproken boeken” (Keurboeken 1961, 1).

⁷⁹ The books deemed to be excellent are *Circus Child* (JBG 2 1961, 79); *Seacrow Island* (JBG 3 1966, 115); *Emil Gets into Mischief* (JBG 9 1969, 108); [*Getting Away with Pippi Longstocking*] (JBG 13 1973, 44); *The World’s Best Karlsson* (JBG 17 1974, 9); *The Brothers Lionheart* (JBG 19 1974, 145-148); *Pippi goes on Board* (JBG 25 1979, 157); *Emil*-omnibus (JBG 1981, 57); *The Runaway Sleigh Ride* (JBG 41 1984, 145-146) (cf. (JBG 63 1991, 113)); *Mardie* (JBG 42 1985, n.p.); *My Nightingale is Singing* (JBG 43 1986, 26); [*Money Is No Object, Said Emil*] (JBG 48 1988, 61); [*Winter Tales*] (JBG 50 1988, 88).

⁸⁰ “Keuze van ontspanningslectuur voor kinderen van 6 tot 15 jaar”(JBG 1 1960, 117-127).

⁸¹ As can be derived from the key to the symbols used in the journal on the inside cover of the 1954 issue: “recreativa = op de eerste plaats amusementsverhaal”. Other possible labels were “educative”, “geo-historical”, “nature-related”, “religious”, and “miscellaneous”.

⁸² Cf. the inside cover of the 1959 issue: “daarbij inbegrepen die welke door artistiek peil van meer blijvende waarde zijn”.

⁸³ Cf. the inside cover of the 1954 issue: “met uitgesproken opvoedende waarde en inslag”.

⁸⁴ Cf. the inside cover of the 1959 issue: “bovendien met een positief, opbouwend of karaktervormend element”.

In *Lektuurgids*, the Flemish bibliographical journal for adult and children's literature, the value of the critiqued books is expressed in terms of the size of a library's collection. Labels range from "A", designating exceptional books which should be included in every library, even the smallest ones, to "D", used for books which are merely worth acquiring in case the library has a large budget and can afford to spend money on low-priority works (Boekbesprekingen 1954, 5). In 41 out of 51 cases, Lindgren's books are judged to be indispensable and are labelled "A".⁸⁵ Leo Roelants wrote the majority of the reviews of Lindgren's books for this journal and proves to be a devoted fan of the author. His assessments were always founded in careful analyses of the works. Tellingly, Roelants in a lengthy article on *The Brothers Lionheart* admits, "In *Lektuurgids* we have already had the opportunity to discuss a few dozens of her books and have never made a secret of our admiration" (LG 21 1975, 85).⁸⁶ The vast amount of "A"-rated books (80 %) indeed corroborates Roelants' statement. On the strength of the above overview of the assessments of Astrid Lindgren's books, it is safe to state that the Dutch and Flemish journal critics set great store by them.

This also becomes evident from an analysis of the argumentations in the corpus articles themselves. The earliest reviews date from the mid-1950s, but it is not until a few years later, when several of her titles have been published, that the critics start to bring evaluations of the author's entire oeuvre into the equation. In 1959, for example, *Karlsson on the Roof* is recommended as an excellent gift for Saint Nicholas Day (6 December), when Dutch and Flemish children traditionally are rewarded for their good behaviour with presents. The unnamed critic praises the book and maintains that it should come as no surprise that it was written by Astrid Lindgren: "Not that I made an unexpected discovery, seeing that the author of this book already has several 'best-sellers' to her name, and she has won awards as well" (News 3 1959, n.p.).⁸⁷ Moreover, he or she adds that Lindgren "doesn't really need this publicity" (News 3 1959, n.p.),⁸⁸ which demonstrates that in professional circles at least Lindgren was starting to make headway.

During the 1960s, the quantitative analysis revealed, the translation and distribution of more and more of her books reverberates in the daily newspapers as well as in the

⁸⁵ The works which are found to be less essential are *Karlsson Flies Again* "B" (LG 11 1970, 50); *Happy Times in Noisy Village* "C" (LG 14 1971, 51-52); *The Children on Troublemaker Street* "C" (LG 14 1979, 442-443); [Nils Karlsson-Pyssling] "C" (LG 32 1980, 329); *Most Beloved Sister* "B" (LG 33 1980, 282-283); *Emil and the Bad Tooth* "B" (LG 36 1981, 423); *That Emil* "B" (LG 38 1982, 234); *The Dragon with Red Eyes* "B" (LG 41 1986, 470); *Brenda Brave* "C" (LG 44 1992, 140); *Lotta's Easter Surprise* "B" (LG 45 1992, 202-203).

⁸⁶ "We hebben in 'Lektuurgids' een paar tientallen boeken van haar mogen bespreken en nooit onze bewondering onder stoelen of banken gestoken" (LG 21 1975, 85).

⁸⁷ "Niet, dat ik een verrassende ontdekking heb gedaan want de schrijfster van dit boek heeft al verscheidene 'best-sellers' op haar naam staan, en bekroond is ze ook al" (News 3 1959, n.p.).

⁸⁸ "heeft deze publiciteit dus niet nodig" (News 3 1959, n.p.).

journals. Reviews are approving for the most part, and slowly but surely Astrid Lindgren's reputation is established. The fourth issue of the 1960 volume of *IDIL-Gids voor jeugdlectuur* includes an extensive interview titled "May We Introduce to You: Astrid Lindgren" (IDIL 9 1960, 74-75). In this portrait, Lindgren is referred to as "the well-known Swedish writer" (IDIL 9 1960, 74).⁸⁹ The article author, who goes by the signature R., rounds off as follows: "So much for Astrid Lindgren, whom we hope will *continue to take up* a large place in the Dutch book market" (IDIL 9 1960, 75; emphasis added).⁹⁰ This comment bears witness to the extent of Lindgren's significance at that point. The following quotation from a 1965 piece on *More about us Bullerby Children* likewise attests to her growing stature. The reviewer, who goes by the signature L.v.M., begins by stating that he or she cannot prove that Lindgren is the world's best children's book author, but goes on to laud her as follows: "that she is one of the truly great and that her work relatively speaking in terms of quality and significance is not inferior to that of renowned and rightly highly valued authors of adult literature is beyond doubt to me" (News 10 1965, n.p.).⁹¹ This reviewer deems Lindgren to be one of the best authors ever, but cannot substantiate this claim yet.

Nevertheless, Lindgren's fame and acclaim are ever growing. The growth is illustrated by a notice about *Emil Gets into Mischief* published in the IDIL-guide in 1968, which finds that *Pippi Longstocking* almost has become a classic (IDIL 22 1968, n.p.).⁹² The following remark taken from a 1971 critique of [*Nils Karlsson-Pyssling*] published in *NRC Handelsblad* proves the same point: "Dutch youths from the ages of seven to twelve have every right to be grateful to publishing house Ploegsma for introducing works by Swedish author Astrid Lindgren time and again. Because Astrid Lindgren understands her business like few others" (News 24 1971, n.p.).⁹³ In this review, Lindgren is commended for writing

with a lucid mind, a warm heart, and with a steady pen, alternately tenderly and boisterously, wittily and seriously, playfully and deeply. Her books on Pippi

⁸⁹ "de bekende Zweedse schrijfster" (IDIL 9 1960, 74).

⁹⁰ "Tot zover Astrid Lindgren, die naar wij hopen ook op de Nederlandse boekenmarkt een ruime plaats zal blijven innemen" (IDIL 9 1960, 75; emphasis added).

⁹¹ "Dat zij 's werelds beste auteur van kinderboeken is kan ik niet waar maken maar dat zij een der heel groten is en dat haar werk relatief gezien in kwaliteit en betekenis niet onderdoet voor dat van befaamde en recht hooggewaardeerde schrijvers van volwassen literatuur staat voor mij vast" (News 10 1965, n.p.).

⁹² "de bijna klassiek geworden Pippi Langkous" (IDIL 22 1968, n.p.).

⁹³ "De Nederlandsprekende jeugd van ongeveer zeven tot ongeveer twaalf jaar heeft alle reden om uitgeverij Ploegsma erkentelijk te zijn voor het keer op keer in ons land introduceren van werk van de Zweedse schrijfster Astrid Lindgren. Want Astrid Lindgren beheerst het vak als weinig anderen" (News 24 1971, n.p.).

Longstocking, the children from Noisy Village, Karlsson and Emil [...] prove it every one of them. (News 24 1971, n.p.)⁹⁴

It is furthermore indicative that this evidence of praise dates from the first half of the 1970s, as it coincides with the rise in attention observed in the quantitative analysis. The elaborate articles in *Jeugdboekengids*, *En nu over jeugdliteratuur*, and *Lektuurgids* on *The Brothers Lionheart* in 1974-5 account for part of that surge. In addition, Lindgren goes on to win the Silver-Slate Pencil Award [Zilveren Griffel] two years in a row, the first for *Lotta on Troublemaker Street* in 1973, and the second for *The Brothers Lionheart* in 1974. By the mid-1970s, Astrid Lindgren has already become quite well-known among professional children's literature critics, who value her books and make efforts to consolidate her position. They do so by bringing Lindgren's works to the attention of their readers and they hint at her importance by devoting attention to her books which gained recognition by means of literary accolades. Emphasis on the award-winning works also serves the purpose of justifying the choice to write about Astrid Lindgren, allowing her to set a firm foot ashore in the field of Dutch-speaking children's literature.

Moreover, the aftermath of the introduction of the television series based on the Pippi Longstocking-trilogy also appears to have affected the canonisation of Lindgren's works. Several critics indicate that the broadcasting of the series on Dutch television (which was likewise fervently watched in Flanders) worked to expand the character's fame and that it rekindled interest in the works behind the television show, and by extension in other works of Lindgren's as well. As one newspaper journalist notes in connection with a reissue of the Pippi-books,

Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren owes her international fame more to film, radio, and television (Pippi Longstocking, Karlsson), than to her books in themselves. [...] After her successes in the aforementioned media, her name of course stands out when a new book of hers appears in the shops. (News 38 1976, n.p.)⁹⁵

It might be an overstatement to ascribe Lindgren's renown to mediatised versions of her works exclusively, as the quantitative analysis showed that she acquired a firm base grounded on literary acclaim. Nevertheless, consumables such as the screen adaptations of the Pippi-stories undeniably influenced the canonisation of Lindgren's oeuvre at large.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ "ze schrijft met een helder verstand, met een warm hart, en met een vaste hand beurtelings gevoelig en baldadig, geestig en ernstig, speels en diep. Haar boeken over Pippi Langkous, de kinderen uit Bolderburen, over Karlsson en over Michiel [...] bewijzen het stuk voor stuk" (News 24 1971, n.p.).

⁹⁵ "De Zweedse schrijfster Astrid Lindgren dankt haar internationale bekendheid meer aan film, radio en televisie (Pippi Langkous, Karlsson) dan aan aan [sic] haar boeken zelf. [...] Na haar successen via de genoemde media valt haar naam natuurlijk wel op, als er een boek van haar in de winkel ligt" (News 38 1976, n.p.).

⁹⁶ The impact of such consumables will be discussed more elaborately in section 5.2.

One could safely state that the canonisation processes centring around Astrid Lindgren's works in the Dutch language area are at their apogee in the middle of the 1970s. The following years, the discourse on Lindgren evolves steadily. The *type* of articles that appeared starts to evolve around 1980, from which moment on the contributions deal with adaptations instead of "regular" book editions ever more often. In conjunction with the observation that the number of recommendations and references to awards won starts to decline from the early 1980s onwards, this trend suggests that the canonisation processes enter a new phase around that time. Prior to that, up until the late 1970s, the journal contributors appear to have been paving the way for Lindgren, seeking some limelight for her in various ways. During this *establishment* phase, the options for championing Lindgren and her works prove to have ranged from simply reviewing her books through advising readers to get acquainted with her books, to pointing out how important her books are judging by the number of prizes they won. Around 1980, a turning point seems to have occurred, allowing for the discourse on Astrid Lindgren to "mature" from seeking justification for the choice of subject matter. This *confirmation* stage saw argumentations moving away from the works as such and reviewers looking into the broader impact of Lindgren's authorship.

Ever since the late 1970s, Lindgren has been considered one of the great – if not the greatest – writers for children. During that decade, she gained recognition for her entire body of work and her popularity increased dramatically. Ever more tokens of deep respect crop up. A telling example is a critique of *Samuel August in Sevedstorp and Hanna in Hult*, the autobiographical book relating her parents' love story and pinpointing the roots of her career as a writer. The reviewer concludes that the book "excels due to its simplicity and authenticity", and notes that the adage "Those who are great needn't act great" most definitely holds true for Lindgren (JBG 23 1979, 1).⁹⁷ Thea Detiger likewise expresses great appreciation for the author in the following comment on the awarding of the German Peace Prize in 1978: "For the Swedish writer this is the umpteenth international accolade, and that is not surprising if one takes into consideration the fact that *no other author has influenced children's literature as deeply and as enduringly as her*" (News 43 1978, n.p.; emphasis added).⁹⁸ These are big words, which bear witness to Detiger's deep-found respect for Lindgren. She goes on to state why this high esteem is well-earned:

Throughout the world, 25 million copies of her 33 children's books have been sold.
In 60 countries and in 40 different languages her books [...] are devoured by

⁹⁷ "uitblinkt door eenvoud en waarachtigheid"; "Wie groot is moet niet groot-doen" (JBG 23 1979, 1).

⁹⁸ "Voor de Zweedse schrijfster is het de zoveelste internationale onderscheiding, en dat is niet zo verwonderlijk als je bedenkt dat er nauwelijks een auteur is te noemen, die de kinderliteratuur zo sterk en blijvend heeft beïnvloed als zij" (News 43 1978, n.p.).

children. In Russia, Japan, and Poland, children know the products of this modest writer's pen[.] (News 43 1978, n.p.)⁹⁹

The final phase of the canonisation processes, in which *dissemination* prevails, started in the early 1980s and continues to date. Since its onset, the acquired high status is reaffirmed regularly, perpetuated, and deepened by references to the broad dispersal of Lindgren's works. In this stage, the employed argumentations are diametrically opposed to those predominating in the early, establishing phase. Now, reviewers and journalists no longer need to convince their readers of the value of those books, but, on the contrary, quote the canonicity of the works and/or the author as a legitimate reason for writing about them. A perfect example of this evolution can be found with Karin van Camp, who in 1995, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the first Pippi Longstocking-novel, scrutinises its Dutch translation. In the introduction to her article Van Camp states, "During the fifty years of its existence, critics all over the world have come to consider *Pippi Longstocking* as one of the most important works of children's literature of the century" (LzL 2 1995, 165).¹⁰⁰ Due to its wide distribution and commercial success, she writes, "One assumes that the work will withstand the ravages of time and become a classic à la *Alice in Wonderland* or *Winnie-the-Pooh*" (LzL 2 1995, 165).¹⁰¹ Seeing that both books recently had been retranslated, Van Camp finds that *Pippi Longstocking*, too, ought to be revised. Such a revision, she feels, the book owes to its canonical status. Nearly a decade later, Kyra de Kruif observes that *all* of Lindgren's works "still are in eager demand with a large audience", which leads her to conclude, "It seems that Astrid Lindgren's name will never disappear from the children's literary field" (LzL 6 2004, 118).¹⁰²

The final two apogees in the corpus are 2002 and 2007, the years which marked Astrid Lindgren's death and the 100th anniversary of her birth respectively, which goes to show that an author's decease and the commemoration of their birth are important events in terms of canonisation. For a canonical author, dying ironically means "big business", at least as far as confirmation and even expansion of canonicity go. Moreover, these author-related peaks corroborate the trend that contextual factors are preponderant in the most recent stage of the canonisation processes under scrutiny. The fact of Astrid Lindgren's

⁹⁹ "Van haar 33 kinderboeken zijn er over de hele wereld 25 miljoen verkocht. In 60 landen en 40 verschillende talen worden haar boeken [...] door kinderen verslonden. Tot in Rusland, Japan en Polen kennen kinderen de pennevruchten van deze bescheiden schrijfster" (News 43 1978, n.p.).

¹⁰⁰ "In de vijftig jaren van haar bestaan zijn critici over heel de wereld *Pippi Langkous* gaan bestempelen als één van de belangrijkste werken in de kinderliteratuur van deze eeuw" (LzL 2 1995, 165).

¹⁰¹ "Men neemt dan ook aan dat het werk de tand des tijds zal doorstaan en een klassieker à la *Alice in Wonderland* of *Winnie de Poeh* zal worden" (LzL 2 1995, 165).

¹⁰² "vindt nog steeds gretig aftrek bij een groot publiek"; "De naam Astrid Lindgren lijkt nooit uit het jeugdliteraire veld te zullen verdwijnen" (LzL 6 2004, 118).

death is front page news in January 2002, and her name also appears in seven obituary lists published in newspapers at the end of the year.¹⁰³ Looking back on Lindgren's career, children's book critic Tilly Stuckens bears out the observation that the 1970s make up a defining moment, from which point onwards "she was a household name even here" (News 143 2002, 10).¹⁰⁴

Another passage from that same article, compiled by Marcel van Nieuwenborgh, neatly illustrates how Lindgren's death entailed a boost in the attention given to her and her oeuvre. "What happened when Astrid Lindgren passed away", Van Nieuwenborgh wondered (News 143 2002, 10).¹⁰⁵ As it turns out, "News agency Belga called her a Swiss writer out of desperation, [...] and bookshop owners were checking how many copies they had left" (News 143 2002, 10).¹⁰⁶ One such bookseller is Vera Geeraerts, who indeed indicates that a writer's decease often coincides with a surge in attention, and who furthermore – significantly – maintains, "It is impossible to imagine a contemporary bookshop without Lindgren" (News 143 2002, 10).¹⁰⁷ In connection with the centenary, emphasis is placed on the diachronic – i.e. longitudinal – dimension of her oeuvre. Critics praise the enduring appeal of Lindgren's works, for instance, observing that "[i]f she were still alive, Astrid Lindgren would have turned one hundred this year. One wouldn't be able to tell from her books, which are still being devoured" (News 649 2007, 99).¹⁰⁸ In addition, they comment on her "immortality" (News 649 2007, 99),¹⁰⁹ and it is found that "[d]espite the fact that the creator of Pippi Longstocking, Ronia the robber's daughter, and the brothers Lionheart died five years ago, she lives on in the hearts of children" (News 687 2007, 11).¹¹⁰ And that, making a lasting impression, is in fact what canonisation is all about.

The Evaluation of Children's Literature

The more or less generally accepted marginality of children's literature, discussed in section 2.1, is reflected in the corpus, albeit only in sparse instances. As a matter of fact,

¹⁰³ (News 179 2002, 49); (News 522 2002, 44); (News 523 2002, R7); (News 525 2002, 16); (News 526 2002, 12-13); (News 527 2002, 14-22); (News 528 2002, 15).

¹⁰⁴ "was ze ook hier een begrip" (News 143 2002, 10).

¹⁰⁵ "Wat gebeurde er toen Astrid Lindgren overleed" (News 143 2002, 10).

¹⁰⁶ "Persagentschap Belga noemde haar van ontreddeering een Zwitserse schrijfster, [...] en in de boekenwinkel gingen ze kijken hoeveel titels er nog in de rekken stonden" (News 143 2002, 10).

¹⁰⁷ "Lindgren is niet meer weg te denken uit de boekhandel" (News 143 2002, 10).

¹⁰⁸ "Als ze nog had geleefd, was Astrid Lindgren dit jaar honderd geworden. Aan haar boeken is het niet af te lezen, die worden nog steeds gevreten" (News 649 2007, 99).

¹⁰⁹ "onsterfelijkheid" (News 649 2007, 99).

¹¹⁰ "De bedenker van Pippi Langkous, Ronja de Roversdochter en de gebroeders Leeuwenhart mag dan vijf jaar geleden zijn overleden, in de harten van de kinderen leeft zij voort" (News 687 2007, 11).

on two occasions, Astrid Lindgren herself took the opportunity to defend the children's book. One such chance presented itself in 1974, when *The Brothers Lionheart* had just come out and Lindgren was interviewed by writer Gertie Evenhuis for daily newspaper *Trouw*. During the conversation, Evenhuis brings up the criticism uttered against the book and the accompanying demands made on children's books. As Evenhuis recounts, Lindgren ripostes as follows: "I have noticed that these 'requirements' are never thrust upon authors of novels for adults" (News 29 1974, n.p.).¹¹¹ Clearly, she is not pleased with the divergent amount of regard adult writers are granted in comparison with children's writers, as will also become evident in the debate on literary quality related in section 4.2. (It should be noted that "Children's Consul" Gerda Dendooven shares this concern with Lindgren: "Even we, who are sincere about children, are afraid to treat our offspring badly. We never call to account the novelist, only the children's writer" (News 258 2007, 50).¹¹² As regards the state of the art of children's literature in Sweden, Astrid Lindgren finds that the situation has improved a great deal. However, she remarks, "Some groups still find that children's books aren't necessary. Not even those by diva Lindgren" (News 29 1974, n.p.).¹¹³ The perception of Lindgren as a "diva" is a sign of disdain for children's literature, which according to her is grounded in contempt for children (News 29 1974, n.p.). She deplores that, in general, people do not take into consideration what children "require on a mental level" (News 29 1974, n.p.).¹¹⁴ She argues, "Of course children should read Chekhov. But not at age five" (News 29 1974, n.p.).¹¹⁵ Her main point is, keeping in mind children's specific life experience and interests, they need books written specifically for them, which definitely should not be looked down on.

Lindgren also argued in support of children's books in a 1987 interview with Bregje Boonstra, a household name in Dutch children's literature criticism. Boonstra suggests that those favouring Lindgren as a Nobel Prize laureate might be advocates of children's literature as a whole, who "probably will want to contest the idea that children's book

¹¹¹ "t Valt mij op dat men auteurs van romans voor volwassenen nooit met die 'eisen' aan boord komt" (News 29 1974, n.p.). Cf. (News 115 2000, 36).

¹¹² "Maar ook wij, de oprechten, zijn bang ons kroost te mismeeesteren. Wij roepen nooit de romanschrijver ter verantwoording, wel de jeugdschrijver" (News 258 2007, 50). As Dendooven adds, even champions of children's literature make demands of children's books: "Things can't be too gruesome, too banal, too difficult nor too foolish. We impose our good taste and our pedagogical rules all the same so as not to be to blame when something goes wrong" [Het mag niet te griezelig, niet te banaal, niet te moeilijk en ook niet te dwaas zijn. Wij leggen evengoed onze goede smaak en onze pedagogische regels op zodat ons geen schuld treft als het mislukt] (News 258 2007, 50).

¹¹³ "Al blijven er groepen die zeggen: kinderboeken zijn niet nodig. Ook niet die van de diva Lindgren" (News 29 1974, n.p.).

¹¹⁴ "wat die geestelijk nodig hebben" (News 29 1974, n.p.).

¹¹⁵ "Natuurlijk moeten kinderen Tsjechow lezen. Maar niet op hun vijfde" (News 29 1974, n.p.).

writers aren't eligible for it" (News 63 1987, n.p.).¹¹⁶ At first, Lindgren pretends not to care, but when Boonstra asks her whether she thinks that children's literature is looked down upon, she has to admit that such is the case, even though it does not hinder her much. She points at adult writers' part in the situation nonetheless, stating, "Oddly enough, it is often authors writing for adults who pretend that children's literature doesn't exist. That is awfully short-sighted, because where do they think their own readers come from?" (News 63 1987, n.p.)¹¹⁷ Once again, Lindgren seizes the opportunity to plead in favour of reading promotion. She states,

Love for books needs to be imparted on a person, one isn't born with it. Writers in particular should remember how much books meant to them when they were young. At no point in one's later life are books able to make such an impression. (News 63 1987, n.p.)¹¹⁸

The issue of the Nobel Prize turns out to be another convenient occasion for the critics to discuss the status of children's literature. As is sufficiently well known, Astrid Lindgren never received the coveted accolade, despite her books having been translated more often than Selma Lagerlöf's or August Strindberg's.¹¹⁹ Arguably, that she was not awarded the Nobel Prize is due to the fact that she wrote for children. In connection with Lindgren's death, Knut Ahnlund, literary theorist, critic, and member of the Swedish Academy, which presents the award, suggested that it was a matter of timing, seeing that "at the time when she wasn't quite as old, children's literature was not valued properly" (cited in (Hedlund 2002, 37)).¹²⁰ Swedish children's literature expert Vivi Edström holds the same view and finds that these facts "bear witness to the inability of our literary institutions to look upon the children's book as literature" (quoted in (Kåreland 2002, n.p.)).¹²¹ Marcel van Nieuwenborgh in his obituary included in the corpus hints at the condescending attitude of the Swedish Academy with respect to children's literature. He sees Lindgren's being granted the 1958 Hans Christian Andersen Award, "which counts

¹¹⁶ "zullen waarschijnlijk het idee willen bestrijden dat kinderboekenschrijvers daar helemaal niet voor in aanmerking zouden komen" (News 63 1987, n.p.).

¹¹⁷ "Vreemd genoeg zijn het vaak auteurs die voor volwassenen schrijven, die doen of de jeugdliteratuur niet bestaat. Dat is reuze kortzichtig, want waar zouden hun lezers dan vandaan moeten komen?" (News 63 1987, n.p.)

¹¹⁸ "Boekenliefde moet je worden bijgebracht, daar word je niet mee geboren. Vooral schrijvers moeten zich herinneren hoeveel boeken voor hen betekenden toen ze jong waren. Nooit in je latere leven kunnen boeken zo'n indruk maken"(News 63 1987, n.p.).

¹¹⁹ Compare (Binding 1999, 150); (Kåreland 2009, 32).

¹²⁰ "vid den tidpunkt då hon inte var så gammal, då var barnlitteraturen inte alls uppskattad till sitt fulla värde" (Hedlund 2002, 37).

¹²¹ "aldrig fick Nobelpriset i litteratur eller blev invald i Svenska Akademien vittnar om våra litterära institutioners oförmåga att se barnboken som skönlitteratur" (Kåreland 2002, n.p.).

more or less as the Nobel for children’s books”, as a sop “in anticipation of the moment when the Swedish Academy is ready to also consider that genre as real literature” (News 142 2002, 10).¹²² Similarly, attention is drawn to the fact that Lindgren never was elected as a member of the Swedish Academy itself, because she “‘merely’ wrote children’s books, which many still don’t see as fully fledged literature” (News 93 1997, n.p.).¹²³ Yet again, the overall disdain with which the field of children’s literature is treated is identified as its main problem.

2.5 Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses: Conclusions

The chart below summarises the quantifiable results of the corpus analysis:

Table 7 All Articles (Journals and Newspapers): Overview of Causes

Author	306	26.0 %
Review	212	18.0 %
Review Consumable	210	17.9 %
Review Derivative	116	9.9 %
Prize Commemorative	112	9.5 %
Review Adaptation	87	7.4 %
Recommendation	82	7.0 %
Theme	31	2.6 %
Prize Awarded	20	1.7 %

The quantitative analysis demonstrated that the textual, synchronic categories (Review, Recommendation, and Theme) comprise 325 of the epitexts (27.6 %), whereas the remaining 851 articles (72.4 %) were prompted by contextual causes, both diachronic (Author, Prize Awarded, and Prize Commemorative) and extra-textual (Review Adaptation, Review Consumable, and Review Derivative). The preponderance of diachronic and extra-textual factors is overwhelming.

Furthermore, the inquiry showed that the coverage of Astrid Lindgren and her oeuvre differed severely between journals and newspapers. Different kinds of topics proved to be of interest in the two kinds of epitexts, which leads to the conclusion that leaving either one of those out of the equation would result in an incomplete picture of the

¹²² “die zo’n beetje als de Nobel voor kinderboeken geldt”; “in afwachting dat de Zweedse Academie zo ver is dat ze ook dat genre als heuse literatuur beschouwt” (News 142 2002, 10)

¹²³ “‘alleen maar’ kinderboeken geschreven, wat velen nog niet als volwaardige literatuur beschouwen” (News 93 1997, n.p.).

canonisation processes. Moreover, the distribution of subject matter over the different kinds of sources tells a great deal about the distribution of canonising potential. Consumables and derivatives, for example, are rarely taken up in journals, in which the focus clearly lies on literary works and their intramedial adaptations, whereas the former two phenomena feature prominently in epitexts taken from popular media. Furthermore, a longitudinal evolution in the choice of subject matter in the epitexts was observed, which was found to shift from a content-driven to a context-related selection of topics. This proves that canonisation is a process in which esteem initially is acquired based on textual merits, but in which attention for the literary works themselves gradually is transformed into attention for more general phenomena related to the books or the author. Once the value of the works has been established, strictly content-related issues seem to disappear into the background. This development is visible in the newspaper coverage to a far larger degree than in the journals, in which emphasis remained predominantly content-related. The table below summarises the main trends observable in the corpus:

Table 8 The Evolution of Canonisation Processes involving Astrid Lindgren's Works

Period	Predominant Type of Epitexts	Content of the Epitexts	Phase
1952-1973	Review	Textual	Establishment
1974-1980	Review, Recommendation, Prize Awarded	Contextual	Confirmation
1980-2012	Review Adaptation, Review Consumable, Author	Extra-Textual	Dissemination

Although theoretical accounts rarely make mention of the popular kind of epitexts, my analysis shows that an outlook on canonisation confined to academic and professional sources is too restricted. In my opinion, the risk with such an approach is that it might create a vacuum. Treating the academic and professional epitexts as islands or ivory towers disconnected from their popular counterparts, as has been done before, means not to go far enough. I am convinced that the results of the qualitative analysis substantiate the validity of taking into consideration the afterlife of a body of work, which is put on the agenda far more frequently in popular sources. Hence, in terms of canonisation, I deem commodification and dissemination to be positive phenomena. All in all, I see canonisation as an intricate balancing act between backing from agents from the scholarly, professional, *and* popular support groups. If any of these components is missing, then the object will remain nothing more than a grail coveted merely by the converted inhabitants of the ivory tower of academia and literary criticism, or, on the contrary, a market phenomenon consciously neglected by the grail devotees.

Chapter 3

No Child's Play: Children, Adults, and Canonisation Processes in Children's Literature

It would be an unbalanced selection of Swedish books that didn't include something by the most-translated writer Sweden has ever produced, eclipsing even August Strindberg and Selma Lagerlöf, and [...] who has become a national institution, read by everybody, quoted and referred to by politicians, and with a law named after her, the Lex Astrid [sic], on the humane treatment of farm animals. But then she is a children's writer, though there are many who feel that, even so, the Nobel Prize for Literature should have been hers. (Binding 1999, 150; emphasis in original)

After having mapped the central aspects of the literary context involved in canon formation, a next vital step is to draw attention to the specific nature of the field of children's literature and its research. As the final sentence in the above quotation reveals, some of its distinctive features affect both the stature of the field itself and processes of canonisation within the field. The domain of children's literature shares some characteristics with other types of literature but at the same time it is unique in many respects. The factors setting it apart from other literatures ensue from a premise which is the keynote in the field, namely the relationship between children and adults and their orientation towards each other. This premise moulds the field internally, in terms of organisation and distribution of authority. Subsequently, it makes itself felt on a micro-level, in the design of the texts produced within the framework of the field. In the present chapter, I will investigate how the central issue reverberates in the way in which the separate groups of children and adults are spoken to as well as in the way in which subject matter is chosen. For each and every one of these issues, I will continuously verify whether or not they are visible in the Dutch-language reception of Astrid Lindgren. What is of utmost interest here, is the possible influence these may have had on the canonisation of her oeuvre in the Dutch language area.

3.1 Children and Adults in Children's Books

Children's literature is an intersection of two powerful ideological positions: our ideas about childhood and our ideas about literature, ideas often conflicted beyond our knowing. (Lundin 2004, 147)

When dealing with the phenomenon of children's literature, one should first and foremost, delineate the meaning of the label and the basic conditions governing the field. As mentioned before, the approach underpinning this entire study is a literary sociological one. As such, the main concerns in this chapter will be the *social* relations determining the practice of children's literature.¹ In my view, the field of children's literature constitutes an entity of its own, parallel to that of general literature. To merely refer to it as a "genre", as do Katharine Jones (2006)² and Deborah Stevenson (2009),³ I find, does not reflect the full scope of it. Moreover, it cannot entirely be dissociated from general literature because the institutions and the tools deployed for running the field are similar. As Roderick McGillis asserts, "the criticism of [children's books] [comes] from those adults who occupy positions of authority within the institutions that offer commentary on books: the popular press, the more specialized journals, and the universities" (McGillis 2006, 323).⁴ These are the exact same bodies that shape the practice of general literature, but the people actually taking up the "positions of *authority*" in the two fields are, generally speaking, not the same. Moreover, children's literature displays some specific developments which only in a limited number of cases overlap with those in general literature.

To begin with, defining the field is an utterly complex matter mostly because of the complicated relation between sender and receiver in it. Although the phrase "children's literature" may hint at some degree of involvement from the part of children, the extent to which they actually participate in it is confined. Anne Lundin finds, "The delicate balance between children's literature and the child raises problems in a body of literature with 'children' in the title as its intended audience" (Lundin 2004, 107). One of the perceived problems, then, is that it is primarily adults who write, publish, sell and judge

¹ The problematic of the very concepts of "child" and "childhood" will not be dealt with here. For critical accounts on the construction and interpretation of those notions, see for instance (Jones 2006); (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008); (Nikolajeva 2004); (Nikolajeva 2010).

² E.g. "the evolution of the literary critique of this genre" (Jones 2006, 304); "that causes many of the difficulties and contradictions in the genre" (Jones 2006, 306).

³ E.g. "In name, the genre belongs to children" (Stevenson 2009, 108-109); "the classics are the best representatives of the genre of children's literature" (Stevenson 2009, 115).

⁴ I will focus on the matter of the purported "authority" of these adults further on in this chapter.

children's books.⁵ Flemish scholars Vanessa Joosen and Katrien Vloeberghs in *Exquisite Children's Literature* (2008)⁶ contend, "The exposé or discourse on the child, the way in which the child is discussed and the way in which it is presented in the literary text is nigh-on exclusively designed, affirmed and criticised, preserved or subverted by adults" (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 25).⁷ Unlike in adult literature, where both sender and receiver usually belong to the same social category and in theory are able to switch roles, the relationship underlying the communicative situation characteristic of children's literature is not as straightforward. In theoretical discourse, it is usually referred to as *asymmetrical* because the addressee in the specific case of children's literature does not automatically have the potential to act as the sender of the message.⁸

As Joosen and Vloeberghs phrase it, "Reciprocity or symmetry hardly applies to the communication between the author and the reader [...] From this perspective, child readers appear to be mere passive recipients" (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 25).⁹ In their view, the voice of the child is missing from the entire process of production and reception of children's literature. John Griffith and Charles Frey, too, point to the contradiction inherent in the field. In their opinion, "In the term *children's literature*, the word *literature* cuts backward into the word *children*, identifying only certain children and only a relatively small portion of their reading experience" (Griffith and Frey 1992, 29; emphasis

⁵ Alternatively, Perry Nodelman maintains that "children are not the ones who write either the texts we identify as *children's literature* or the criticism of those texts" (Nodelman 1992, 29; emphasis in original). M.O. Grenby states, "[Children] are not, after all, typical consumers, and their preferences are not based on unlimited access to literature, but have to be constructed from what is obtainable, where and when they live, what they are given by others, or what they can afford. To a large extent, access to children's books has been determined by publishers, who decide what to keep in print and what prices to charge, and by parents, teachers and librarians, who regularly attempt to supervise distribution. Any attempt to define popularity in terms of children's preferences thus necessarily runs up against these external controls" (Grenby 2008, 4). See also (McGillis 2006, 323): "children [...] do not (or only rarely) write the books they read".

⁶ *Uitgelezen jeugdliteratuur* (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008). In this phrase, the adjective "uitgelezen" can be interpreted in two ways: it can either mean "read through", thus hinting at the nature of the book itself, in which a series of analyses of children's books is presented, or "exquisite", suggesting that only children's books of an excellent standard are dealt with.

⁷ "Het vertoog of discours over het kind, de manier waarop over het kind wordt gesproken en de manier waarop het wordt voorgesteld in de literaire tekst, wordt bijna uitsluitend ontworpen, bevestigd en bekritiseerd, in stand gehouden of op zijn kop gezet door volwassenen" (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 25).

⁸ E.g. (Nikolajeva 2004); (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008). In Deborah Stevenson's words, children's literature is lacking in a form of similarity, which adult literature does possess: "Children's literature operates differently from adult literature, for the latter offers a consistency of creators and audience: an adult book is written by adults, read by adults, judged by adults and passed on to adults; the people in the position of gatekeepers, selecting and championing particular texts for admission to the canon and lionisation as classics, are themselves inarguably members of those texts' official and intended audiences" (Stevenson 2009, 108).

⁹ "Van wederkerigheid of symmetrie is er in de communicatie tussen de auteur en de lezer weinig sprake [...] Kindlezers lijken in die voorstelling slechts passieve ontvangers" (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 25).

in original). Maria Nikolajeva, for her part, conceives of this asymmetry in negative terms, as she regards children's literature as "deliberately created by those in power for the powerless" (Nikolajeva 2010, 8).¹⁰ She looks upon children as "oppressed" and impotent on a financial as well as an ideological level:

Children in all societies around the globe lack economic resources, lack the right to vote, and are dependent on adults in every way conceivable. It is obvious that this fact must affect the thematics, design and ideological contents of children's literature. (Nikolajeva 2004, 16)¹¹

In her view, adults involved in children's literature enforce on child readers their own beliefs about children, childhood and children's books. As a result, "nowhere are power structures as tangible as in children's literature" (Nikolajeva 2006, 68). A comparable opinion can be found in the work of Perry Nodelman, when he states that "[a]ll children's books always represent adult ideas of childhood – and inevitably, therefore, work to *impose* adult ideas about childhood on children" (Nodelman 1997, 8; emphasis added). Mary Galbraith, too, perceives the child-adult relationship in children's literature as problematic. She identifies "the existential predicament of childhood in an adult-dominated world" (Galbraith 2001, 200) as the core characteristic of the field and looks upon children as a "silenced" or "oppressed" group, in need of redemption (Galbraith 2001, 188-189).¹²

Admittedly, in children's literature the fact that author and recipient do not coincide is noticeable; it has even caused Jacqueline Rose to famously claim that "[c]hildren's fiction is impossible, not in the sense that it cannot be written [...], but in that it hangs on an impossibility, one which it rarely ventures to speak. This is the impossible relation between adult and child" (Rose 1984, 1).¹³ To Rose's mind, the incongruence of adults and children is insurmountable, as is demonstrated by the following statement taken from her seminal study *The Case of Peter Pan; or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (1984): "Children's fiction", she writes, "sets up a world in which the adult comes first (author, maker, giver) and the child comes after (reader, product, receiver), but where neither of them enter the space in between" (Rose 1984, 1-2). What she sees as characteristic of the

¹⁰ See also (Nikolajeva 2006, 68).

¹¹ "barnlitteratur skrivs av en social grupp för en annan social grupp, av en grupp som har makt för en grupp som är maktlös och förtryckt, ekonomiskt och ideologiskt. Barn i alla världens samhällen saknar ekonomiska resurser, saknar rösträtt och är beroende av vuxna på alla tänkbara sätt. Det är uppenbart att detta faktum måste sätta sin prägel på barnlitteraturens tematik, utformning och ideologiska innehåll" (Nikolajeva 2004, 16).

¹² As such, in Galbraith's view, children are analogous to – amongst others – "females, the poor, and the geographically colonized" (Galbraith 2001, 188). Similar views are held by Maria Nikolajeva (2004) and Beverly Lyon Clark (2003).

¹³ See also (Jones 2006, 289) and (McGillis 2006, 324).

field is the fact that it is defined by a contradiction between sender and receiver, a trait which sets it apart from other literary fields: “There is, in one sense, no body of literature which rests so openly on an acknowledged difference, a rupture almost, between writer and addressee” (Rose 1984, 2). Rose is not alone in addressing these fundamental difficulties, as Ruth B. Bottigheimer shows in “An Important System of its Own. Defining Children’s Literature” (2006).¹⁴ Bottigheimer refers to similar views common in children’s literature research which manifest themselves in a discourse hinging on a conception of “an incipient theory of an unbridgeable chasm, an irreconcilable difference, a perpetual mismatch between adult authors of children’s literature and their child readers” (Bottigheimer 2006, 124).¹⁵

Underlying most of these scholars’ argumentation is a firm conviction that the only possible way of conceiving of the relationship between adults and children is in terms of a binary opposition. However, it could also be argued that the two groups at no point are entirely diametrically opposed, and that there always is some form of relational connection between the two, a counter-argument which I will return to further on in this section. In effect, the specific nature of the intended audience and its connection with the producers of the literature intended for them is a given which characterises the literary practice in the field and at the same time sets it apart from other particular fields such as “women’s literature”, “gay literature”, or “working class literature”.¹⁶ These domains are in themselves dissimilar to children’s literature, seeing that in the former, the relation between the subordinated and the dominant social groups indeed is binary. Despite this difference, the phrase “children’s literature” can be compared to the ones designating these commensurable fields. Nonetheless, as some researchers point out, it is not simply because these labels have come to be widely used that one should assume them to be self-evident. In her article provocatively titled “Getting Rid of Children’s Literature” (2006), Katherine Jones questions the aptness of the term children’s literature and urges critics and scholars alike to rethink it because of its ambiguity (cf. *infra*).

¹⁴ Bottigheimer’s article (2006) was originally published in the *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, issue 59:2 (1998). The article was reprinted in the second volume of Peter Hunt’s four-volume *Children’s Literature: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* in 2006. It is the latter version of the text I will be referring to.

¹⁵ Bottigheimer adds that “[s]ome variant of this statement underlies the recently expressed conviction that ‘children’s literature’ is an impossible oxymoron, precisely because its socially and psychologically formed adult authors cannot possibly, so the theory goes, communicate with socially dependent and psychologically unformed child readers.” (Bottigheimer 2006, 124)

¹⁶ Joosen and Vloeberghs similarly point out that the coinciding of the target audience (literature *for* children) and the object (literature *about* children) is a feature which children’s literature shares with other types of “minority” literatures. What makes the former unique, though, is that its addressee or object does not have the ability to write itself (unlike the receiver in women’s or African American literature, for example) (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 25).

Furthermore, seen from this angle, it is striking that the addressee is an essential part of the term “children’s literature” itself – or for that matter “women’s”, “gay” or “immigrant literature”. Maria Nikolajeva stresses that in all of these minority literatures the question of delineation is “a matter of self-definition *against* another, most often larger and always oppressing group” (Nikolajeva 2004, 16; emphasis added).¹⁷ Nikolajeva depicts the children’s literary field as governed by a climate of “adult normality” (Nikolajeva 2004, 17),¹⁸ where the adult counts as the standard to be reckoned with. Along this line of reasoning, books for children are seen as deviating from that adult norm, which is why their singularity has to be specified in the phrase denoting them. Similarly, women’s, gay, working class or immigrant books are perceived as not fitting in with a specific standard, resulting in the inclusion of the divergent element in the term. By contrast, this is not the case for *adult* literature. Whenever the term “literature” is used without any attribute, one almost automatically assumes that “mainstream” or “general literature” is referred to; it has become an overarching label designating the entire literary field. The actual term “adult literature” is mostly used in very specific instances, for demarcating that type of literature in relation to other kinds. For clarity’s sake, I will be using the term “general literature” instead of “adult literature” when referring to the literary field as a whole (except in those cases where I am explicitly comparing adult and children’s literature with one another).

As was noted above, Maria Nikolajeva shares her view on children’s literature with Perry Nodelman, who likewise frames the asymmetrical communicative situation within power structures. In his much-discussed article “The Other: Orientalism, Colonialism, and Children’s Literature” (1992), Nodelman equates children’s literature theory with Europeans’ way of looking at Eastern cultures as theorised by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978). In Nodelman’s view, adults’ authoritative treatment of children in children’s literature and its criticism is a form of colonisation. He sees a parallel with Europeans’ perspective on Orientals and therefore describes the entire phenomenon of adults writing for and about children as imperialist. In both cases, Nodelman argues, the object of study (Orientals/children) is perceived as unable to describe or analyse itself, it can only be scrutinised by outsiders (Occidentals/adults).¹⁹ The insiders are defined by their

¹⁷ “frågan om en självdefinition *gentemot* en annan, oftast större och alltid en förtryckande grupp.” (Nikolajeva 2004, 16; emphasis added)

¹⁸ “vuxennormalitet” (Nikolajeva 2004, 17).

¹⁹ Compare the following quotation in Beverly Lyon Clark’s article on the general dismissive attitude towards children’s literature, in which she claims that children were “dehumanized” in (post)structuralist approaches: “As one critic states in a reading of *The Scarlet Letter*, ‘[...] a letter or a child is, in isolation, a sign divorced from meaning and in need of definition through others’ (Ragussis 322).” (Clark 2006, 252) This view mirrors Nodelman’s description of The Other as unable to analyse itself.

incapacity and as such diametrically opposed to the external observer; they are in effect seen as “The Other”. Moreover, the outsider claims the right to watch and discuss the Other, as a result of which the latter is regarded as inherently inferior to the former. What is relevant here is that Nodelman regards children as naturally subordinate to adults.

The difficulty with both Perry Nodelman’s and Maria Nikolajeva’s approaches is that by describing the connection between children and adults in the field of children’s literature in terms of oppression and imperialism they have created a cul-de-sac for themselves. Because, as Katharine Jones puts it, “[t]here are [...] problems in lumping individual children together as a marginalized entity and as colonized” (Jones 2006, 299).²⁰ Trying to resist a situation which cannot be altered, as do Nodelman, Nikolajeva and Rose, entails a risk of paralysis. If children’s literature theorists are convinced that what they are pursuing is inherently wrong they might as well refrain from it. In recent years, an ever-increasing number of children’s literature scholars have started to question the impasse. Their contributions to the theoretical debate bear witness to an arising need to qualify adult-centered perspectives. What the field requires is a way of thinking which allows its actors to produce, distribute, and assess children’s literature without being brought to a standstill by ideas which are scarcely tenable. One possible way of revising one’s point of view on the field is by abandoning a polarised definition of children *versus* adults. Katharine Jones endeavours to do so by repudiating binary oppositions and arguing in favour of an outlook on the child-adult relationship in line with Judith Butler’s dialectic thinking. In Jones’ view, the advantage of such an approach is that it “acknowledge[s] both complementarities and tensions, commonalities and differences” (Jones 2006, 303), and, as such, avoids the hazard of paralysis inherent in a polarising perspective.

Consequently, if we accept that children and adults are different – although not entirely opposite – we can similarly assume that they have different roles to play in the field of children’s literature. In English, the label of “children’s literature” in effect symbolises the irony of polarisation. Katharine Jones finds that the debatable element is “the apostrophe in the term [which] continues to suggest possession – that this is a literature *belonging to children*”, whereas “arguably a much stronger relationship exists between adults and such literature” (Jones 2006, 304; emphasis added).²¹ Hence, she believes the solution to lie in the overt acceptance of children’s literature as belonging to adults (Jones 2006, 305-6). Jones’ own willingness to rethink her perspective is evidenced by her putting forward “child literature” as a term to replace “children’s literature”,

²⁰ There is, in fact, a problem with lumping together individual children into in one single entity, viz. “the child”. I will therefore try to avoid this phrase. However, it crops up fairly often in the Dutch-language reception of Astrid Lindgren, so I will render it in that form in case it was used as such in the source I am citing.

²¹ This is also the case in French, where the phrase “*littérature de jeunesse*” is used to denote children’s literature.

meant to “clarify that this is a literature written almost entirely by adults that assumes various conceptions of the child, childhood, and the childlike, with child readers being the target of the book” (Jones 2006, 305). Jones’ suggestion is, however, open to obvious objections: in certain languages the term for children’s literature in fact does not contain a possessive component but the problems pertaining to the nature of the field exist all the same. As it so happens, this is the case in Dutch as well as in Swedish. In Dutch “kinderen jeugdliteratuur” is used, by analogy with German “Kinder- und Jugendliteratur”, and in Swedish children’s literature is called “barnlitteratur”. Neither of these specific phrases suggests possession but, contrary to what Jones envisages, their application does not work wonders. Therefore, I am not convinced that an attempt at displacing the existent term is viable. Nevertheless, I agree with Jones that the fact that adults’ *ideas* can influence the process of their writing books for children is important and should be kept in mind. As Sylvie Geerts and I point out in “Never-ending Stories. How Canonical Works Live on in Children’s Literature” (2014),

[Jones’] careful mentioning of ‘conceptions of the child’ and children as target readers, neatly illustrates the ambivalent relationship children’s literature, and for that matter its criticism, maintains with its readers. The crux lies in the gap between the child as a textual construct and as an actual reader. (Geerts and Van den Bossche 2014, 6-7)

Apart from having an immobilising effect, views such as Nodelman’s and Nikolajeva’s do not leave any room for the possibility of children participating in literary practice themselves. Neither does Jones’ approach enable one to explain *why* adults have gained control in the field of children’s literature. The solution may lie in an alternative outlook on the discrepancy between children and adults such as the one proposed by Clémentine Beauvais in “The Problem of ‘Power’: Metacritical Implications of Aeternormativity for Children’s Literature Research” (2013). As Beauvais explains, a viewpoint advocating adult normativity (or “aeternormativity”) such as Nodelman’s or Nikolajeva’s has at its core a concept of “power” in which the divergent positions of adults and children are interpreted as different amounts of *control*. By contrast, Beauvais redistributes power in accordance with age and with *time* as its “currency” (Beauvais 2013, 82). She suggests that we look at children’s and adults’ power as if they were communicating vessels. Because of their age, adults possess a certain form of power which children have yet to acquire. As Beauvais clarifies, “This is because the essential variable is time, and the values which societies have taught us to see as associated to time – experience and expertise, primarily” (Beauvais 2013, 82).

However, this does not mean that children are impotent simply because they are young and do not have time on their side; they do have a power of their own. This power is impermanent but not useless, despite its being transient. As they grow older, children’s particular type of power will slowly diminish and be replaced with adult agency. Drawing

on sociological theories, Beauvais terms the two different types of power “might” and “authority” and explains,

Children are *mighty*, because their specific form of ‘power’ is dependent on the existence of a future for them in which to act. They are consequently diametrically opposed to authority, though they are evolving towards it. What one loses in might one gains in authority. (Beauvais 2013, 82; emphasis in original)²²

As a result, the positions of children and adults need no longer be perceived as mutually exclusive. Rather, children and adults could be seen as taking up different positions in the field of children’s literature. Assuming that the latter are the ones guiding that field without lapsing into binary thinking will allow for a more balanced outlook on it. Children are indeed different from adults as they do not yet possess the same amount of authority, but in growing up they will in turn acquire it.

Astrid Lindgren’s Conception of Children as a Factor in the Canonisation of her Works in the Dutch Language Area

Taking Child Readers Seriously

Astrid Lindgren had [...] [a]n impact which cuts through everything, straight to children. (Biegel, Paul, cited in (News 477 2002, 1))²³

The Dutch-language reviewers quite often draw on arguments pertaining to Astrid Lindgren’s world view. More specifically, the critics value the author’s attitude towards children and her ideas on the child-adult relationship. As such, their assessment of her oeuvre can be seen as framed within an ideological perspective. With John Stephens, I use the term “ideology” to designate “a system of beliefs by which we make sense of the world” (Stephens 1992, 8). Ideological arguments manifest themselves in different forms in the Dutch-language corpus material. In the *journals* under scrutiny, for instance, a

²² The assumption that children and adults possess abilities which complement each other ties in with a perspective on children’s literature as “generational”, as displayed by Katharine Jones: “this is a literature written, purchased, and reviewed by a generation of adults who were previously children, which appeals to a generation of children who will later become adults. The so-called ‘children’s literature’ I read as a child is not children’s literature but rather literature of my generation – it comes along with me as I age. The term ‘generational literature’ emphasizes individuals over a life course and seeks to resist age polarized terms” (Jones 2006, 305).

²³ “Astrid Lindgren had [...] [e]n impact die dwars door alles heen direct naar kinderen gaat.” (Biegel, Paul, cited in (News 477 2002, 1))

frequently discussed aspect of Lindgren's attitude is the ethical stance prevalent in her oeuvre, namely her unremitting belief in children themselves, which shows in the way in which she allows her child characters to enjoy being children,²⁴ and more specifically "fully fledged *children* and not pocket-size adults" (JBG 98 2007, 229; emphasis in original).²⁵ In terms of a categorisation of child images predominant in Western culture, Lindgren's outlook mirrors the notion of childhood as an individual phase in its own right, as opposed to views on childhood as a life stage which needs to be grown out of rather sooner than later.²⁶ This stance is deemed to be related to Lindgren's romantic – or even utopian – child image,²⁷ which manifests itself in her respect for children along with her consistent choice to put children first and to take their side.²⁸

The latter trait is also commended in the *newspaper* articles. In the opinion of Dutch critic Judith Eiselin, one of Lindgren's most influential trademarks is her solidarity with children (News 471 2002, 1).²⁹ Dutch reviewer Hans Beerekamp corroborates that Lindgren is "a great defender of children's right to an outlook on the world of their own" (News 415 1998, 17).³⁰ Indeed, Dutch critic Tilly Stuckens asserts, Lindgren's belief in children's power radiates from her books (News 143 2002, 10). Moreover, she mentions that this was one of the innovative traits about Lindgren's books (News 143 2002, 10). Flemish children's literature scholar and critic Vanessa Joosen likewise foregrounds the author's positive attitude to children. She argues, "in many of Astrid Lindgren's books the children are wiser than the adults, and hope for a better future lies with the young" (News 274 2007, 40).³¹ Dutch critic Jann Ruyters sees the cleverness and independence of the child characters as distinctive of Lindgren's writing. On a film by Daniel Bergman based on Lindgren's short stories, Ruyters writes, "The [...] narratives would, however, not be typical Astrid Lindgren-narratives if the bright children didn't do much better than their concerned parents could have imagined" (News 416 1998, 123).³² Flemish journalist and radio presenter Kathy Lindekens also highlights this deferential stance of Lindgren's, as

²⁴ (JBG 82 2000, 337); (JBG 98 2007, 229); (JBG 104 2007).

²⁵ "volwaardige *kinderen*, en géén volwassenen in zakformaat" (JBG 98 2007, 229). See also (JBG 104 2010, 297).

²⁶ Cf (de Vries 1989, 131).

²⁷ (LzL 6 2004, 119); (LzL 9 2010, 35).

²⁸ (En nu 28 1999, 116); (En nu 33 2003, 214); (En nu 39 2007, 355); (JBG 98 2007, 230); (LzL 6 2004, 119); (LzL 7 2007, 167); (LzL 9 2010, 35).

²⁹ Compare (News 506 2002, 53): "who always showed solidarity with the child" [die altijd solidair met het kind was].

³⁰ "een groot verdedigster van het recht van kinderen op een eigen blik op de wereld" (News 415 1998, 17).

³¹ "in veel boeken van Astrid Lindgren zijn de kinderen wijzer dan de volwassenen, en ligt de hoop op een betere toekomst bij de jeugd" (News 274 2007, 40).

³² "De [...] vertellingen zouden echter geen echte Astrid Lindgren-vertellingen zijn als de bijdehande kinderen het er niet veel beter vanaf brengen dan hun bezorgde ouders hadden durven denken" (News 416 1998, 123).

does Dutch reviewer Jannah Loontjens. Lindekens notes that Lindgren “was convinced that children possess a mental strength which adults should reckon with” (News 143 2002, 10).³³ Loontjens’ contends, “Children understand and are able to do much more than adults presume, that is what she seems to imply with her stories” (News 690 2007, 12).³⁴ Astrid Lindgren is described as a “great children’s friend” (News 93 1997, n.p.),³⁵ whose self-proclaimed ambition is reported to be “to demonstrate how effective an education which respects the child’s independence can be. Only thus will the child be able to resign itself to the world which it ends up in” (News 93 1997, n.p.).³⁶

Renowned Dutch children’s literature expert Bregje Boonstra also brings to the fore Lindgren’s fondness for her child readers. With reference to the author’s acceptance speech for the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 1958, Boonstra points out that Lindgren never wanted to write for adults but preferred a target audience of children, “who can perform miracles. They blow into our meagre sentences and words the life which they originally lacked[.]” (News 73 1992, n.p.).³⁷ Boonstra holds, “Lindgren’s audience is the best that she can wish for and the author always resisted any suggestions that between the many children’s books it might be time for something else” (News 73 1992, n.p.).³⁸ In Boonstra’s view, this makes Astrid Lindgren an exception: “Within children’s literature, where the truly great like Andersen, Collodi, Carroll and Milne often had other ambitions besides writing a children’s book, Lindgren’s consequent choice is actually exceptional” (News 73 1992, n.p.).³⁹

Similarly, Swedish-Dutch illustrator Marit Törnqvist, who collaborated with Lindgren on several occasions, stresses that for the latter “only the child counted” (News 548 2003, n.p.).⁴⁰ Her choice to directly address her child readers and not the adult co-readers attests to this attitude. Törnqvist explains, “As an adult, one is all too often inclined to

³³ “was ervan overtuigd dat kinderen een geestelijke kracht hebben en dat volwassenen daarmee rekening moeten houden” (News 143 2002, 10).

³⁴ “Astrid Lindgren [...] vond dat kinderen met respect behandeld moesten worden. Kinderen begrijpen en kunnen veel meer dan volwassenen vermoeden, zo lijkt ze met haar verhalen te willen zeggen” (News 690 2007, 12).

³⁵ “grote kindervriendin” (News 93 1997, n.p.).

³⁶ “is te tonen hoe doeltreffend een opvoeding is die de zelfstandigheid van het kind respecteert. Alleen zo zal het kind zich kunnen verzoenen met de wereld waarin het terecht komt” (News 93 1997, n.p.).

³⁷ “die nog wonderen kunnen doen. Zij blazen onze armzalige zinnen en woorden het leven in dat er oorspronkelijk aan ontbrak[.]” (News 73 1992, n.p.).

³⁸ “Lindgrens publiek is het beste dat ze zich kan wensen en de auteur heeft zich altijd tegen iedere suggestie gekeerd dat het na al die kinderboeken misschien eens tijd werd voor iets anders” (News 73 1992, n.p.).

³⁹ “Binnen de jeugdliteratuur, waar echt groten als Andersen, Collodi, Carroll en Milne vaak heel andere ambities hadden dan het schrijven van een kinderboek, is Lindgrens consequente keuze eigenlijk uitzonderlijk” (News 73 1992, n.p.).

⁴⁰ “Voor Astrid Lindgren telde alleen het kind” (News 548 2003, n.p.).

talk over children's heads. Astrid never did that" (News 548 2003, n.p.).⁴¹ Dutch critic Karel Berkhout discusses the notion of "good" children's literature and mentions as a prime example precisely Astrid Lindgren's keen eye for and direct appeal to her child reader already hinted at by Törnqvist. In high-quality children's literature, Berkhout maintains, it is children's interests that should be put first, not the adults': "The children's book shouldn't be a projection of grown-ups' ideas on how children ought to live" (News 815 2010, n.p.).⁴² Consequently, in Berkhout's conception a good children's book is "indeed truly for children" (News 815 2010, n.p.).⁴³ He specifies, "A children's book is a universe in which the rules are set by children's emotions, dreams, desires and opinions" (News 815 2010, n.p.),⁴⁴ a premise which he identifies as central in Astrid Lindgren's works. Actually, many of the newspaper critics shed a light on the care with which Lindgren approaches children. Dutch reviewer Odile Jansen claims that Lindgren "took children seriously unlike any other author" and that she "knew what troubles them" (News 480 2002, 11).⁴⁵ Flemish children's literature docent and critic Annemie Leysen foregrounds the "child-centred emotionalism" which is the primary accent in Lindgren's works in general and in *Pippi Longstocking* and *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* in particular (News 98 1998, 27).⁴⁶

Vanessa Joosen notes that the author's dedication to the child reader started to manifest itself very early on in her career. She writes that "already in the first book on Pippi, Lindgren shows that she takes her young readers seriously" (News 274 2007, 40).⁴⁷ In *Pippi Longstocking*, the sincerity takes shape in the depiction of the other side of the medal of Pippi's existence, as Joosen explains: "besides an outspokenly playful side Pippi also has a darker trait. Her liberated life at Vilekulla Cottage is rendered with a melancholic downside when neighbours Tommy and Annika leave for the day and she is left alone" (News 274 2007, 40).⁴⁸ The same property is also foregrounded in an anonymous article on a Pippi Longstocking-documentary: "There is a pitch-black undercurrent to Astrid Lindgren's artistry. It shows in all of the Pippi-books. Pippi

⁴¹ "Als volwassene ben je zo gauw geneigd over de hoofden van kinderen heen te praten. Astrid deed dat nooit" (News 548 2003, n.p.).

⁴² "Het kinderboek moet geen projectie zijn van volwassen ideeën over hoe kinderen zouden moeten leven" (News 815 2010, n.p.).

⁴³ "ook echt voor kinderen" (News 815 2010, n.p.).

⁴⁴ "Een kinderboek is een universum waarvan de regels worden bepaald door de emoties, de dromen, de verlangens en de opvattingen van kinderen" (News 815 2010, n.p.).

⁴⁵ "nam kinderen serieus als geen ander"; "wist wat hen beroerde" (News 480 2002, 11).

⁴⁶ "kindgerichte emotionaliteit" (News 98 1998, 27).

⁴⁷ "al in dat eerste boek over Pippi toont Lindgren dat ze haar jonge lezers ernstig neemt" (News 274 2007, 40).

⁴⁸ "naast een uitgesproken speelse kant heeft Pippi ook een donker trekje. Haar vrijgevochten leventje in Villa Kakelbont krijgt een melancholische keerzijde wanneer de buurkinderen Tommy en Annika 's avonds weer naar huis zijn en ze alleen achterblijft" (News 274 2007, 40).

Longstocking represents all lonesome children who take comfort in imagination” (News 240 2006, 65).⁴⁹ Another serious note occurs in *Mardie to the Rescue*, in which a taboo subject is tackled: one of Mardie’s neighbours is an alcoholic. In this connection, Dutch reviewer Anneke Munnik utters praise for Lindgren: “that is precisely what I admire in Astrid Lindgren, that she succeeds in fostering understanding even with the youngest readers for problems which she does not try to talk round” (News 39 1977, n.p.).⁵⁰ Similarly, Swedish movie director Lukas Moodysson is quoted praising Lindgren for her courage to discuss serious issues with her readers, specifically in *The Brothers Lionheart* (News 532 2003, 18). *De Volkskrant* critic Annette Embrechts, too, highlights the aim of the novel, which is to “acquaint children with uncomfortable subjects such as untimely death, chronic illness, oppression, and injustice” (News 848 2012, 9).⁵¹ All in all, this willingness of Lindgren’s to address difficult topics is believed to bear witness to a deep-found respect for her child readers.

Overall, the prevalence in the critical discourse of Lindgren’s quality of showing respect for children is striking. In 1992, for instance, noted Dutch children’s literature critic Lieke van Duin points out, “Astrid Lindgren’s children’s book children chiefly are happy children, growing up in the field of tension between freedom and security” (News 69 1992, n.p.).⁵² The parameters of Lindgren’s imaginary universe are in effect believed to be alluring for her child audience, since “[h]er stories create for each child a world in which one would want to live” (News 690 2007, 12).⁵³ The source of inspiration for the comforting fictional context which her characters usually are enveloped in is considered to lie in her own childhood, an interpretation which will be dilated upon in section 4.2.

Off the Beaten Track: Emancipating Child Readers

Astrid Lindgren gained acclaim among Dutch and Flemish gatekeepers for introducing an agentic and encouraging child image (News 257 2007, 27). In fact, as is indicated in many of the newspaper articles, her respect for and belief in children takes shape in the frequent staging of self-supporting child characters, “children who know what they want and for whom the restraints of the grown-up world won’t do”, as Joke Linders puts it

⁴⁹ “Er zit een diepzware onderstroom in Astrid Lindgrens kunstenaarschap. Die zie je in alle Pippi-boeken. Pippi Langkous staat voor alle eenzame kinderen die zich troosten met de fantasie” (News 240 2006, 65).

⁵⁰ “dat vind ik juist zo knap van Astrid Lindgren, ze weet zelfs bij de jongste lezertjes begrip te kweken voor problemen waar ze niet omheen probeert te lopen” (News 39 1977, n.p.).

⁵¹ “om kinderen vertrouwd te maken met ongemakkelijke thema’s als een te vroege dood, chronische ziekte, onderdrukking en ongerechtigheid” (News 848 2012, 9).

⁵² “Astrid Lindgrens kinderboekenkinderen zijn vooral gelukkige kinderen, die opgroeien in het spanningsveld tussen vrijheid en geborgenheid” (News 69 1992, n.p.).

⁵³ “Haar verhalen scheppen voor ieder kind een wereld waarin je zou willen wonen” (News 690 2007, 12).

(News 70 1992, n.p.).⁵⁴ What is perceived as essentially “Lindgrenesque”, then, is a fictional world in which children are “free agents” (News 446 2000, 37).⁵⁵ *De Standaard* critic Wouter Hillaert finds that *Ronia* illustrates Lindgren’s preference for child autonomy.⁵⁶ To his mind, *Ronia*’s and *Birk*’s escape from the rivalry of their families reflects “an idyllic dream about children’s right to self-determination [as well as a] pacifistic faith in progress [...]. *Ronia* and *Birk* are in fact more mature than their parents, fighting cocks *Mattis* and *Borka*” (News 301 2009, 41).⁵⁷ Hillaert’s conclusion is that Astrid Lindgren’s child image entails an improved version of adulthood not so much as a denial of it (News 301 2009, 41). Crucial in this respect, Swedish pedagogue Barbro Hindberg points out in an interview, is the message for adults underlying Lindgren’s writing, that those who are strong should also be nice (News 232 2005, 13).

Equally characteristic of Lindgren’s writing is the depiction of deviant and odd behaviour which borders on nonsense, but does not quite transgress the boundaries (News 29 1974 n.p.).⁵⁸ Here, *Karlsson-on-the-Roof* is a case in point: The Dutch-language critics point out the antiauthoritarian undercurrents in the *Karlsson*-books, which adult readers find disturbing at times. Indubitably, though, *Pippi Longstocking* is the epitome of the child autonomy Lindgren advocated. The author herself characterised *Pippi* as “a little *Übermensch* in the guise of a child” (quoted in (Lundqvist 1979, 16)).⁵⁹ Utter independence is indeed a quintessential feature of the *Pippi*-character, whom the Dutch-language critics predominantly perceive as liberated, nonconformist, and antiauthoritarian.⁶⁰ She is seen as a lone ranger, whose independence is her most attractive quality (News 430 1999, 30). Children’s book author Rita Verschuur, Lindgren’s main Dutch translator and a personal friend of hers, points out that *Pippi* “goes by her own gut feeling and not by what others tell her or by what one ought to do” (News 401

⁵⁴ “kinderen die weten wat ze willen en geen genoegen nemen met de beperkingen van de grote-mensenwereld.” (News 70 1992, n.p.) See also (News 810 2010, 96).

⁵⁵ “eigen baas” (News 446 2000, 37).

⁵⁶ In Astrid Lindgren’s spirit,

⁵⁷ “een idyllische droom over het zelfbeschikkingsrecht van kinderen. Een pacifistisch vooruitgangsgeloof ook [...]. *Ronja* en *Birk* zijn eigenlijk volwassener dan hun ouders, de kemphanen *Mattis* en *Borka*” (News 301 2009, 41).

⁵⁸ “Astrid Lindgren voert afwijkend en eigenaardig gedrag tot aan de grens van non-sense, maar zij gaat er net niet overheen” (News 29 1974 n.p.).

⁵⁹ “en liten *Uebermensch* i ett barns gestalt” (quoted in (Lundqvist 1979, 16)).

⁶⁰ See (News 29 1974, n.p.); (News 85 1995, n.p.); (News 100 1998, 15); (News 111 1999, 14); (News 174 2002, 12); (News 206 2003, 13); (News 219 2004, 48); (News 223 2004, 27); (News 295 2009, 57); (News 307 2009, 18); (News 322 2011, 5); (News 570 2004, 25); (News 723 2008, 12); (News 798 2010, n.p.); (News 861 2012, n.p.).

1998, 17).⁶¹ In addition, emphasis is placed on the fact that she breaks rules and does all kinds of things that average children are not allowed to do.⁶²

In this connection, Astrid Surmatz highlights the import of Pippi's social position. Her disregard for societal regulations and conventions, as well as her withdrawal from traditional social life underscore their arbitrariness. Surmatz holds that "the character's external perspective is significant, since she enters the little town as an outsider and thus questions the social order, the prevailing conventions and hierarchies in the small community" (Surmatz 2005, 84).⁶³ The Dutch-language critics consider Pippi's subversive effect in a wider context, not just that of the small-town society. They see the small town as a representation of the modern Western ideal of society as a whole. Dutch philosopher and writer Marjolijn Februari (pen name of Max Drenth), for instance, considers Astrid Lindgren and philosopher Robert Nozick to be kindred spirits. He writes that the opening paragraphs of *Pippi Longstocking* perfectly embody Nozick's liberal philosophy as advanced in *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1975) (News 485 2002, 17). More specifically, Februari alludes to Pippi's particular way of dealing with rules and regulations, and he sees her liberty, famously exemplified by her going to bed whenever she wants and having toffee instead of cod-liver oil, as representative of Nozick's notion of the free, autonomous individual (News 485 2002, 17). A comparison of this magnitude illustrates that Februari thinks highly of Lindgren's creation. Dutch playwright and art critic Marijn van der Jagt, too, is in absolute awe of the character, precisely because of this normbreaking demeanour. To Van der Jagt's mind, "Her unremitting struggle against order is what makes Pippi a truly modern hero. The order which adults use in order to structure life. The order which allays the fear for chaos but which precludes any kind of adventure" (News 73 1992, n.p.).⁶⁴ Flemish newspaper journalist Karel Michiels discusses the impact of this divergent attitude: "What she was doing [...] parents rather attempt to suppress as quickly as possible: fooling adults, eating whatever she wants, refusing to learn how to read and to do sums" (News 223 2004, 27).⁶⁵

⁶¹ "gaat volledig af op haar eigen gevoel en niet op wat anderen haar zeggen of wat je behoort te doen" (News 401 1998, 17). See also (BBJ 1969, n.p.), (News 105 1998, 14); (News 723 2008, 12).

⁶² (IDIL 3 1958, n.p.); (JBG 45 1986, 78); (JBG 56 1990, 19); (LG 30 1979, 443); (News 11 1965, n.p.); (News 147 2002, 10).

⁶³ "die Außenperspektive der Figur bedeutsam [ist], denn sie kommt als Außenseiterin in die kleine Stadt und hinterfragt so die soziale Ordnung, die vorherrschenden Konventionen und Hierarchien der kleinen Gemeinschaft" (Surmatz 2005, 84).

⁶⁴ "Wat Pippi tot een waarlijk moderne held maakt, is haar niet aflatende strijd tegen de orde. De orde die volwassenen gebruiken om het leven te structureren. De orde die de angst voor de chaos bezweert maar die ieder avontuur buitensluit" (News 73 1992, n.p.).

⁶⁵ "Wat zij deed [...] proberen ouders liefst zo snel mogelijk te onderdrukken: volwassenen voor de gek houden, eten wat ze wil, weigeren te leren lezen en rekenen" (News 223 2004, 27).

The element of food mentioned by Michiels and Februari indeed is a small but nevertheless effective factor in the subversion of adult-imposed social order in the books.⁶⁶ As I argued elsewhere, gluttony and excesses are exponents of Pippi's carnivalesque overturning of children's orderly life, with Pippi's exorbitant spree in the local candy store as a prime example (Van den Bossche 2011b).⁶⁷ This famous scene shows Pippi requesting no less than eighteen kilograms of sourballs, leaving the saleswoman, "who was not used to having people buying that many sourballs at a time", wondering whether she perhaps meant eighteen *pieces* (Lindgren 2002, 145). Pippi then hands out the excessive heaps of candy to the town's children, which results in unprecedented candy feast. In the corpus, the episode is described as "[o]ne of the most delightful scenes in children's literature" (News 769 2009, 83).⁶⁸ As critic Leonie Breebaart indicates, "The reason why it is so much fun is its utter irresponsibility. Children know damned well that *their parents are allowed to provide* candy in measured portions only. That was the case in Astrid Lindgren's Sweden already, and it is most definitely the case in present-day Holland" (News 769 2009, 83; emphasis added).⁶⁹ By pointing out the social convention which prescribes that moderation with food is a norm adults ought to convey to their children, Breebaart touches upon the core of excessive food consumption as a normbreaking element in *Pippi Longstocking*.

Generally speaking, defiant tendencies in children's books tend to be either reviled or applauded, and in the specific case of Astrid Lindgren's Dutch-language reception, assenting voices appear to preponderate (cf. section 3.2). For the most part, this is the result of a reading of such disobedient conduct not as undermining adult authority per se, but rather in terms of the potential positive impact on Astrid Lindgren's audience.⁷⁰ The depiction of borderline conduct such as Karlsson's or Pippi's is believed to have a liberating effect on the child readers. Thus, the critics appear to set aside their own reservations and to prioritise what they believe to be the readers' interests. Due to his

⁶⁶ Cf. discussions of [*Pippi Longstocking and the Dancing Christmas Tree*], e.g. (News 175 2002, 19); (News 177 2002, 34).

⁶⁷ For further reading on the motif of food in children's books, see for instance Katz, Wendy R. "Some Uses of Food in Children's Literature." *Children's Literature in Education* 11:4, 1980: 192-199; Keeling, Kara K. and Scott T. Pollard, *Critical Approaches to Food in Children's Literature*. London/New York: Routledge, 2009. For a specific discussion of the representation of this topic in Astrid Lindgren's works, see Nikolajeva, Maria. "Matmästaren Astrid Lindgren." In *Läckergommarnas Kungarike. Om matens roll i barnlitteraturen* by Maria Nikolajeva and Ulla Bergstrand (eds), 213-250. Stockholm: Centrum för barnkulturforskning vid Stockholms Universitet, 1999.

⁶⁸ "Eén van de verukkelijkste kinderboekenscènes" (News 769 2009, 83).

⁶⁹ "Het plezier zit hem in het volstrekt onverantwoorde van de aankoop. Kinderen weten donders goed dat hun ouders snoep alleen in afgemeten porties mogen verstrekken. Dat was al zo in het Zweden van Astrid Lindgren, dat is zeker zo in het Nederland van nu" (News 769 2009, 83).

⁷⁰ Cf. Annie M.G. Schmidt's conviction that rascally narratives serve a psychological purpose (de Vries 1989, 188).

recalcitrant attitude, Karlsson is seen as a projection of children's secret wishes and rascally desires.⁷¹ In being gluttonous, selfish, and boastful, he embodies the epitome of what children would love to express but have learnt to suppress.⁷² Hence, Karlsson's queerness and revolt are regarded as assets instead of mere drawbacks. As for Pippi Longstocking, it is frequently argued that she provides an outlet for her readers. Dutch journalist Dana Linssens, for example, contends that Pippi's conduct is particularly appealing to a very young audience: "her brutality and maladjusted behaviour fire the imagination of pre-school children who are discovering just how wonderful it is to outsmart grown-ups" (News 385 1998, 13).⁷³ This interpretation is corroborated by Flemish actress Mieke Laureys, who rendered Pippi Longstocking in the 1998 musical version of the stories. She indicates that she sees Pippi as her personal heroine because "[s]he does exactly what children pressured by social norms are not allowed to do" (News 143 2002, 10).⁷⁴

Dutch critic Hanneke de Klerck in a piece on Lindgren's ninetieth birthday frames the importance of Pippi as a liberating agent against a broader psycho-social background. She describes her as "a child who embodies every child's pipe dream: power", and goes on to explain why this is such a desirable quality: "Children yearn for power, because everything and everyone has power over them" (News 95 1997, 39).⁷⁵ Trouw critic Gertie Evenhuis equally emphasises the far-reaching psychological impact the Pippi-figure may exert. She wonders, "how would children handle their rebellious instinct in our organised society if it weren't for Pippi Longstocking, the substitute anarchist?" (News 29 1974, n.p.)⁷⁶ As Dutch expert on cultural education Anita Twaalfhoven states, "The recalcitrant and adventurous behaviour is of course the secret of Pippi's success, because any child in

⁷¹ (JBG 17 1974, 9); (JBG 32 1981, 30); (JBG 59 1990, 242).

⁷² (JBG 80 2000, 64). Compare (News 20 1969, n.p.): "The fun thing about this book is that Karlsson can do and dares to do all of the things which Smidge and all of the readers with him would love to try but of which they very well know that they are not allowed or appropriate" [Het leuke in dit boek is, dat Karlsson al die dingen kan en durft, die Erik en met hem de lezertjes misschien ook best eens zouden willen, maar waarvan ze drommels goed weten dat het niet mag of niet hoort].

⁷³ "haar brutaliteit en onaangepaste gedrag spreken tot de verbeelding van kleuters die net ontdekken hoe heerlijk het is om volwassenen te slim af te zijn" (News 385 1998, 13).

⁷⁴ "Ze doet precies wat kinderen onder druk van de maatschappelijke normen niet mogen" (News 143 2002, 10). Laureys furthermore argues that doing exactly as one pleases and choosing not to abide by any societal rules is something which children dream of (News 147 2002, 10).

⁷⁵ "een kind dat de wensdroom van alle kinderen belichaamt: macht"; "Kinderen smachten naar macht, want alles en iedereen heeft macht over hen" (News 95 1997, 39).

⁷⁶ "waar zouden kinderen met hun drang tot rebellie in onze georganiseerde maatschappij moeten blijven als Pippi Langkous, die plaatsvervangende anarchist, er niet was?" (News 29 1974, n.p.)

any period collides with the norms of the adult world” (News 403 1998, 7).⁷⁷ In the following review, it is juxtaposed with her imaginative outlook on life:

The attraction is understandable. Pippi Longstocking is somewhat of a children’s Robin Hood. She stepped into the breach for shy, poor, bullied souls, she always outsmarts grown-ups, she comes up with the most peculiar games and ... she is full of poetry. (News 48 1980, n.p.)⁷⁸

Already in 1972, in connection with the release of the live action series on Dutch television, it was noted that “educationalists nowadays maintain that Pippi [...] solely brings out good forces in the child. Or as one educationalist put it: by means of an innocent activity such as reading (Astrid Lindgren’s hit book) children get rid of their aggression” (News 26 1972, n.p.).⁷⁹ In retrospect, Karel Michiels asserts, one can state that the books on Pippi Longstocking were a liberation for their audience (News 223 2004, 27). He contends that Belgian children must have felt freed upon first being confronted with this emancipated character, “the first child to have openly revolted against parental and societal patronising and to dare to leave the predetermined paths.” (News 223 2004, 27)⁸⁰ The innovative trait of this character is also foregrounded by Flemish children’s book author, translator and critic Ed Franck, who notes that Astrid Lindgren created the figure “before the term ‘assertive’ became the vogue” (News 206 2003, 13).⁸¹ Bregje Boonstra holds a similar view and corroborates,

Whomever rereads [the stories about Pippi] half a century later, whilst giggling and rubbing their hands, can only conclude how revolutionary and liberating this book must have been at a time when children did not yet have a say in things. (News 73 1992, n.p.)⁸²

⁷⁷ “Het recalcitrante en avontuurlijke gedrag is natuurlijk het grote geheim van Pippi’s succes, want elk kind komt in elke tijd in botsing met de normen van de volwassen wereld” (News 403 1998, 7) As such, the Pippi Longstocking-narratives can be characterised as “outer-directed” [aussengeleitet] (cf. section 4.2).

⁷⁸ “Die aantrekkingskracht is begrijpelijk. Pippi Langkous is zowat de Robin Hood van de kinderen. Ze sprong in de bres voor verlegen, arme, geplaagde sukkelaartjes, ze is de grote mensen altijd te slim af, ze bedenkt de wonderlijkste spelletjes en... ze steekt vol poëzie” (News 48 1980, n.p.).

⁷⁹ “tegenwoordig zeggen pedagogen dat Pippi [...] alleen maar goede krachten naar boven brengt bij het kind. Of zoals een pedagoog het zei: de kinderen kunnen met een onschuldige bezigheid als lezen (van Astrid Lindgrens succesboek) hun agressie kwijt” (News 26 1972, n.p.).

⁸⁰ “het eerste kind dat openlijk revolteerde tegen de ouderlijke en maatschappelijke betutteling en dat de voorbestemde paden durfde verlaten” (News 223 2004, 27).

⁸¹ “voordat het woord ‘assertief’ in de mode kwam” (News 206 2003, 13).

⁸² “Wie [de verhalen over Pippi] een halve eeuw later giechelend en handenwrijvend leest, kan alleen maar vaststellen hoe revolutionair en bevrijdend dit boek moet zijn geweest in een tijd dat kinderen nog niets in de melk te brokkelen hadden” (News 73 1992, n.p.).

Ed Franck concurs that it is “[n]o wonder that she became an idealised picture for all children who are smothered by overly anxious parents and teachers’ warning fingers” (News 206 2003, 13).⁸³

Nevertheless, the defiant trait of the Pippi- and Karlsson-characters should be recognised as a crucial component of the books’ appeal.⁸⁴ The appreciation the adult intermediaries express for elements which they assume will speak to child readers ties in with some theoretical considerations of successful children’s books. Martin Hall and Christine Cole in *Children and their Reading Choices* (1999) demonstrate that children tend to exhibit a strong preference for what they call narratives with an outspoken “child-centered nature”, such as works by Enid Blyton or Roald Dahl (quoted in (Grenby 2008, 15)). M.O. Grenby renders Hall and Cole’s observation that “[g]iving children ‘the freedom to go off and have their own adventures free from adult interference’, and to ‘do good in a world where adults often badly behaved’ was what made these books appealing” (Grenby 2008, 15). “Indeed,” Grenby adds, “it was often their very exclusion of adult values, their closedness to adults [...] that was ‘bound to appeal to children’” (Grenby 2008, 15). He continues to explain that for Hall and Cole, a decisive factor in the success of a children’s book is the premise of a child protagonist “[going] out into the world, freed from normal parental constraint, to test their mettle in the face of adult depravity and deceit”, and the ensuing creation of a narrative universe in which “readers can safely indulge in their fears and fantasies of life without adult control” (Grenby 2008, 15). Heidi Lexe likewise sees the lack of adult characters as an essential feature of canonical works of children’s literature. In *Pippi, Pan and Potter. On a Constellation of Motifs in the Classics of Children’s Literature* (2003),⁸⁵ she argues that a specific pattern of childhood underlies the works that she identifies as children’s classics. The absence of parents is an essential constituent of that pattern (Lexe 2003, 78). Typical of those classics is that the main characters “operate in an adult-free space, that is, completely left to their own devices and freed from influence of parents or other responsible relatives” (Lexe 2003, 78).⁸⁶ The absence of parental or other adult oversight in Pippi Longstocking’s universe is highlighted in (JBG 87 2002, 222).

Up until the present day, the figure of Pippi is seen as a role model (News 603 2006, 19), as “the patroness of the insurgent child, that doesn’t wish to conform to the laws of the

⁸³ “Geen wonder dat ze een ideaalbeeld werd voor alle kinderen die doodgeknepen worden door overbezorgde ouders en leerkrachten met geheven vingertjes” (News 206 2003, 13).

⁸⁴ Compare Anne de Vries’ discussion of nonconformist elements as appreciated by child readers (de Vries 1989, 169).

⁸⁵ *Pippi, Pan und Potter. Zur Motivkonstellation in den Klassikern der Kinderliteratur* (Lexe 2003).

⁸⁶ “agier[en] [...] im elterfernen Raum, also vollkommen auf sich gestellt und unbeeinflusst von Eltern oder familiären Bezugspersonen” (Lexe 2003, 78).

adults” (News 570 2004, 25).⁸⁷ She has indeed been perceived as “[t]he symbol of sauciness, courage, and not giving a damn about authority, [...] for many generations already.” (News 307 2009, 18; emphasis in original).⁸⁸ Former head of *Stichting Lezen Vlaanderen* Majo de Saedeleer affirms, “The rebellious Pippi has become a genuine, entirely established prototype” (News 137 2002, 38).⁸⁹ As Koen Driessens puts it, “today, Pippi still is a free voice, a breath of fresh air to young readers” (News 137 2002, 38).⁹⁰ By contrast, the image of Pippi Longstocking as an example for independent children is qualified by Karel Michiels, who acknowledges that she is an icon but nevertheless doubts the urgency of her behaviour for twenty-first century readers compared to its relevance for older generations: “Possibly there are more mothers and grandmothers who identify with this character than spoiled young girls in designer clothing” (News 223 2004, 27).⁹¹

Overall, though, the characterisation of Pippi and Karlsson as possessing a great deal of agency renders them universal, as it ties in with one of the main functions of a children’s book as identified by Flemish critic Luc Lannoy. He illustrates his point by referring to Daniel Defoe’s well-known novel *Robinson Crusoe*, which, to his mind, “meets one of the fondest wishes a child has: to take its life in its own hands” (Lannoy 1993, 214).⁹² In that sense, Lannoy adds, it is “an indestructible archetype of the child’s soul” (Lannoy 1993, 214).⁹³ The same could in fact be said for Pippi and Karlsson. Rita Verschuur explicitly foregrounds Pippi Longstocking as an archetypal figure within Lindgren’s body of work, from which many other protagonists ensued (News 401 1998, 17). Indeed, she argues, “The self-willed ‘Pippi-figure’ recurs in all kinds of variations in Lindgren’s work” (News 401 1998, 17).⁹⁴ Verschuur sees Karlsson as a more extreme version of Pippi, because he is utterly selfish, whereas Pippi never misuses her limitless authority (News 401 1998, 17). Furthermore, she identifies Mardie and Lotta as Pippi-variants, the former of which is slightly plainer than her model, whereas the latter’s “character and conduct

⁸⁷ “Pippi Langkous is nog altijd de schutspatroon van het opstandige kind, dat zich niet aan de wetten der volwassenen wenst te conformeren” (News 570 2004, 25).

⁸⁸ “Hét symbool van eigenwijsheid, leeuwenmoed en van harte lak hebben aan autoriteit [...] voor nu al heel wat generaties” (News 307 2009, 18).

⁸⁹ “De rebelse Pippi is vandaag een heus prototype en helemaal ingeburgerd” (News 137 2002, 38).

⁹⁰ “vandaag [is] Pippi nog steeds een vrije stem, een verademing voor jonge lezers” (News 137 2002, 38).

⁹¹ “Wellicht zijn er meer moeders en grootmoeders die zich herkennen in het personage dan verwerde jonge meisjes in merkkledij” (News 223 2004, 27).

⁹² “komt [...] tegemoet aan één van de diepste wensdromen van een kind: zijn leven in eigen handen kunnen nemen” (Lannoy 1993, 214).

⁹³ “een onverwoestbaar archetype van de kinderziel” (Lannoy 1993, 214).

⁹⁴ “De eigenzinnige ‘Pippi-figuur’ vind je in allerlei varianten terug in het werk van Lindgren” (News 401 1998, 17).

are developed more subtly from a psychological viewpoint” (News 401 1998, 17).⁹⁵ Other critics also highlight the resemblance between Pippi Longstocking and Mardie based on a similar degree of autonomy in both characters.⁹⁶ Assertiveness is mentioned as a shared characteristic of Pippi and Brenda Brave (LG 22 1975, 488). Emil is seen as just as mischievous as Pippi,⁹⁷ and, in addition, he is believed to equally function as an outlet for children’s vitality (LG 7 1968, 126).

On the whole, summarising this particular facet of the Dutch-language reception of Astrid Lindgren’s works, what is highly valued by the Dutch and Flemish reviewers is that Lindgren does not see children as passive but bestows upon them a certain agency, whereas the adult characters in her stories often are ridiculed (LG 31 1979, 443), or portrayed in subordinate roles. She criticises strict, authoritarian educational norms and argues in favour of an increased right to self-determination for children. She depicts them as *subjects*, and not as *objects* (News 232 2005, 13). These views, too, are supported by the critics. One could therefore argue that the author not just takes her audience seriously but even that she looks upon children as agentic individuals generally speaking. The fact that the emancipatory trait of Astrid Lindgren’s writing has been appreciated so strongly in the Dutch-language area furthermore suggests that the Dutch and Flemish critics predominantly see children as overpowered by adults and in need of liberation and empowerment, an outlook which is aligned with views held by Maria Nikolajeva and Perry Nodelman, for instance (cf. *supra*).⁹⁸ The critics’ traditional interpretation of children as a social group requiring emancipation is in itself fairly conservative, and makes Lindgren stand out as progressive. In a sense, then, an essential component of the success of Lindgren’s most popular stories – amongst which the *Pippi Longstocking*-books beat the lot – is that they deal with nothing other than the pivotal issue underlying children’s literature on the whole, that is, the relationship between children and adults. Thus, the author’s child image proves to be an important factor in the canonisation of her works in the Dutch language area.

⁹⁵ “karakter en gedrag zijn in psychologisch opzicht subtieler uitgewerkt” (News 401 1998, 17). Cf. (News 244 2006, 99).

⁹⁶ See also (LG 20 1974, 320); (LG 48 1992, 583); (LG 49 1993, 437); (News 29 1974, n.p.).

⁹⁷ (LG 7 1968, 126); (News 16 1967, n.p.); (News 18 1967, n.p.).

⁹⁸ Compare the discussion on agentic children and child readers in Sylvie Geerts’ study (Geerts 2014, 69-70).

Astrid Lindgren: A Child of her Time

All children long to be big, everything around them emphasises their smallness. (Neill, A.S., cited in Surmatz 2005, 71)⁹⁹

In a critique of *The Children on Troublemaker Street* published in *Jeugdboekengids*, an unspecified critic touches upon Astrid Lindgren's child image and highlights "the respect shown for the child and the depiction of adults who leave a lot of room for their children's imagination" (JBG 66 1991, 314).¹⁰⁰ Actually, her conception of children as described in this review fits in with an overarching range of principles of "reform pedagogy" which became prevalent in children's literature in the first half of the twentieth century. Her child image is congenial with thoughts on free upbringing propagated by key figures such as Ellen Key, A.S. Neill, and Bertrand Russell. Ellen Key instigated a new way of thinking about children and upbringing through her book *The Century of the Child* (1900),¹⁰¹ which found response with educationalists all over Europe. Within this paradigm, the guiding principle for bringing up children is individuality. Reform pedagogists believe that every child should have the right to develop at its own pace and, consequently, that adults should not intervene actively in the process of their maturation but instead guide children along the way (Kåreland 2009, 19).¹⁰² Furthermore, emphasis is placed on children's needs and their own inner lives, as Astrid Surmatz maintains (Surmatz 2005, 70).¹⁰³

Following Key's radical ideas, the pedagogy of requirement was superseded by a pedagogy of "needs" [behovpedagogik] (Kåreland 2009, 21), the main exponents of which were Scottish writer and educator A.S. Neill and British philosopher Bertrand Russell. Both of them advocated a free upbringing, in which free play took up a prominent part,¹⁰⁴ and they, too, rejected the maxim of strict obedience to parents and educators (Surmatz 2005, 71). Astrid Lindgren was well acquainted with contemporary debates on education and in *Pippi Longstocking* put into practice the principles put forward by Russell and

⁹⁹ "Alla barn vilja vara stora, allt omkring dem framhäver deras litenhet." (Neill, A.S., cited in (Surmatz 2005, 71))

¹⁰⁰ "het getoonde respect voor het kind en de beschrijving van de volwassenen die veel ruimte laten voor de fantasie van hun kinderen" (JBG 66 1991, 314).

¹⁰¹ *Barnets århundrade* (Key 1900).

¹⁰² Lena Kåreland highlights the progressive quality of these convictions and states, "Such a disposition comes across as strikingly modern" [En sådan inställning ter sig påfallande modern] (Kåreland 2009, 19).

¹⁰³ Kåreland indicates that this cuts across the traditional, authoritative pedagogy of "requirement" [kravpedagogik] discernible in older children's books, where "children have to mercilessly conform to parents' and teachers' demands" [ska barnen utan pardon rätta sig efter föräldrars och lärares krav"] (Kåreland 2009, 21).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. (En nu 33 2003, 215); (JBG 77 1997, 337).

Neill.¹⁰⁵ When handing in the *Pippi Longstocking*-manuscript to publishing house Bonniers in 1944, Lindgren quotes Bertrand Russell in order to justify Pippi's disobedience:

With Bertrand Russell ([*Education and the Good Life*], p. 85) I read that the principal instinctive characteristic in childhood is the desire to grow up, or, rather, the desire for power, and that the normal child in its imagination loses itself to impressions that imply the desire for power.

I do not know whether Bertrand Russell is right, but I am inclined to believe so, judging by the outright outrageous popularity Pippi Longstocking has enjoyed with my own children and their friends of the same age for a couple of years now. (Cited in Lundqvist 1979, 16)¹⁰⁶

Astrid Surmatz indicates that the outspoken preference for child autonomy [Selbstbestimmtheit] displayed in *Pippi Longstocking* reflects an interest in their striving for power independent of parents which was typical of the period (Surmatz 2005, 73). The “mundus inversus”-motif, the reversal of adult and child roles so characteristic of the Pippi-books, is a distinct expression of this central reform-pedagogical notion, Surmatz shows (Surmatz 2005, 73). She quotes A.S. Neill who remarked, “All children long to be big, everything around them emphasises their smallness” (Surmatz 2005, 71).¹⁰⁷ This is definitely something which Astrid Lindgren understood thoroughly and incorporated in her writing. Moreover, Surmatz explains that within the framework of reform pedagogy the positive psychological effects of children's books were foregrounded. Neill in particular adhered to the notion that they could serve to bring about an actual change in educational practices. Surmatz asserts that Astrid Lindgren was of the same mind, and that she in *Pippi Longstocking* proposed “an implicit pedagogical agenda as to what childhood and upbringing ideally should look like; if children are not able to live like that, then they should at least be allowed to read about it” (Surmatz 2005, 76).¹⁰⁸ In addition, Surmatz stresses the centrality of this very idea in Lindgren's poetics, seeing that she “considered as an important function of literature precisely to enable a certain escapism

¹⁰⁵ See also (Surmatz 2005, 71).

¹⁰⁶ “Hos Bertrand Russell (Uppfostran för livet, sid. 85) läser jag, att det förnämsta instinktiva draget i barndomen är begäret att bli vuxen eller kanske rättare viljan till makt, och att det normala barnet i fantasien hänger sig åt föreställningar, som innebära vilja till makt. Jag vet inte, om Bertrand Russell har rätt, men jag är böjd att tro det, att döma av den rent sjukliga popularitet, som Pippi Långstrump under en följd av år åtnjutit hos mina egna barn och deras jämnåriga vänner” (cited in Lundqvist 1979, 16). Cf. (En nu 2 1974, 9).

¹⁰⁷ “Alla barn vilja vara stora, allt omkring dem framhäver deras litenhet” (Surmatz 2005, 71).

¹⁰⁸ “ein implizites pädagogisches Programm, so habe Kindheit und Kindererziehung im Idealfall auszusehen; wenn Kinder schon nicht so leben können, dann sollen sie wenigstens darüber lesen dürfen” (Surmatz 2005, 76).

which transcends the cold light of reality so that everyday life and all of its restrictions can be reshaped as bearable and changeable” (Surmatz 2005, 76-77).¹⁰⁹

One of Astrid Lindgren’s devices on upbringing, “Give the children love, more love and still more love – and the common sense will come by itself”, is cited in one of the corpus articles (News 598 2005, 15).¹¹⁰ Indeed, the image of Lindgren as a champion of free upbringing and children’s rights is key in the perception of the author in the Dutch language area. Just how pivotal it is shows in the fact that her homeland is described as “Astrid Lindgren’s child-friendly Sweden” (News 639 2007, 16).¹¹¹ The reviewers see Lindgren’s world view as representative of a set of pedagogical principles which are considered to be typically Swedish. As Jannah Loontjens observes, “her works seems to give voice to the Swedish tendency to focus attention on the child’s development” (News 690 2007, 12).¹¹² Central to this trend, Loontjens elucidates, is the belief “that children should be granted the freedom to play and to give their own imagination free reign as long as possible, which is why Swedish children aren’t obliged to go to school until the age of seven” (News 690 2007, 12).¹¹³ In other words, Loontjens hints at the centrality of reform-pedagogical notions in the Swedish educational system and suggests that it was inspired by Lindgren. Dutch journalist Petra Sjouwerman sees the author as a prime example not just of Swedish pedagogy but of that of Scandinavia in its entirety, which “rests on two pillars: the child should be allowed to be a child as long as possible and to play freely, that is to say without interference on the part of fathers, mothers, and other grown-ups” (News 804 2010, 20)¹¹⁴ Sjouwerman finds, “Astrid Lindgren depicted this beautifully in her books” (News 804 2010, 20).¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ “sah es gerade als eine wichtige Funktion von Literatur an, einen gewissen, die graue Realität übersteigenden Eskapismus zu ermöglichen, aus dem heraus der Alltag mit seinen Begrenzungen wieder erträglicher und veränderbarer zu gestalten ist” (Surmatz 2005, 76-77).

¹¹⁰ “Geef kinderen liefde, meer liefde en nog meer liefde. Dan komen de goede manieren vanzelf” (News 598 2005, 15). The English version of the quotation was taken from Astrid Lindgren’s official website: <<http://astridlindgren.se/en/more-facts/quotes>> [Accessed 31 October 2014].

¹¹¹ “Het kindvriendelijke Zweden van Astrid Lindgren” (News 639 2007, 16).

¹¹² “haar werk [lijkt] ook een uitdrukking van de Zweedse neiging om de ontwikkeling van het kind centraal te stellen in het leven” (News 690 2007, 12).

¹¹³ “dat kinderen zo lang mogelijk de vrijheid moet worden gegund om te kunnen spelen en de eigen verbeelding de vrije loop te kunnen laten, waardoor Zweedse kinderen pas op hun zevende verplicht naar school moeten” (News 690 2007, 12).

¹¹⁴ “De kinderopvoeding in Scandinavië rust op twee pijlers: het kind moet zo lang mogelijk kind kunnen zijn en het moet vrij kunnen spelen, dat wil zeggen zonder bemoeienissen van vaders, moeders of andere grote mensen” (News 804 2010, 20). See also (News 598 2005, 15).

¹¹⁵ “Astrid Lindgren beschreef het mooi in haar boeken” (News 804 2010, 20). As Astrid Surmatz revealed in her study, the same holds true for Lindgren’s German reception. She writes, “Overall, in Germany, she is perceived, in accordance with common clichés of Sweden, as embodiment of the Swedish attitude to life considered to be exemplary-tolerant and child-friendly” [[sie] wird in Deutschland in Übereinstimmung mit gängigen Klischees

Sweet Little Chililug Pills and the Pains of Growing up

The principles which reform pedagogy centres on are largely parallel to Lindgren's conception of children's agency, the most extreme manifestation of which is contained in the *Pippi Longstocking*-trilogy. Pippi, Tommy and Annika refuse to grow up, and this refusal entails a rejection of the prevalence of adult authority, which in effect caught some of the reviewers' eye. The culmination of this denial is situated in the very last chapter of the final book, *Pippi in the South Seas*. At that point in the narrative, the three children decide that they want to have fun forever, as a result of which they resolve against becoming adults. Because, as Pippi argues, adulthood "is not exactly something to long for [...]. Grown-ups never get to do anything fun. They only get loads of dull work, and funny clothes, and corns, and income taxes" (Lindgren 2002, 360).¹¹⁶ Pippi's enumeration of drawbacks of adulthood is quoted in some of the corpus articles.¹¹⁷ For Bregje Boonstra, it is one of the key episodes in Lindgren's child-oriented oeuvre (News 73 1992, n.p.). What the critics fail to note, though, is that an oppositional perspective on the relationship between children and adults underlies the refusal to grow up.

In the original narration, what does it for the three children is the fact that grown-ups are never allowed to play. Annika deplores the inevitability of their fate to mature, but Pippi refutes this argument – "Who said that you should have to?" (Lindgren 2002, 360)¹¹⁸ – and offers a solution in the form of "Krumelur" pills. These pills, called "Chililug" in the English translation, "are really great for someone who doesn't want to grow up" (Lindgren 2002, 360).¹¹⁹ They plan to remain children forever, just like J.M. Barrie's brain child Peter Pan,¹²⁰ a comparison which is made in one single corpus text (News 866 2012, n.p.).¹²¹ Astrid Lindgren writes,

The years would pass, but Pippi, Tommy, and Annika wouldn't have to mature. *That is, if the chililug pills hadn't lost their power.* New springs and summers and new

über Schweden als Verkörperung der als vorbildlich-toleranten und kinderfreundlich angesehenen swedischen Lebenshaltung insgesamt wahrgenommen] (Surmatz 2005, 3-4).

¹¹⁶ "dat is niet iets om naar te verlangen [...]. Grote mensen hebben nooit iets leuks. Zij hebben alleen maar een heleboel vervelend werk en gekke kleren en likdoorns en inkomensbelasting" (Lindgren 2002, 360).

¹¹⁷ (LG 31 1979, 443); (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 430 1999, 30); (News 517 2002, 10); (News 788 2010, n.p.); (News 866 2012, n.p.).

¹¹⁸ "Wie heeft gezegd dat je dat moet?" (Lindgren 2002, 360)

¹¹⁹ "heel goede pillen voor iemand die niet groot wil worden" (Lindgren 2002, 360). This episode is also discussed in (Lexe 2003); (Nikolajeva 1997); (Nikolajeva 2006); (Surmatz 2005).

¹²⁰ Compare (Lexe 2003); (Nikolajeva 2000b).

¹²¹ "Pippi refused to grow up, just like J.M. Barrie's hero Peter Pan" [Pippi mocht dan net als J.M. Barries held Peter Pan weigeren om op te groeien] (News 866 2012, n.p.).

autumns and winters would come, and they would be able to play games forever.
(Lindgren 2002, 365; emphasis added)¹²²

Tommy and Annika want to believe in the possibility of remaining young, but the highlighted passage shows that the narrator questions the effectiveness of the pills. Maria Nikolajeva argues that this sentence reflects the two children's latent scepticism, which allows for a reading of the conclusion of the novel "as the affirmation of the necessity of growing up rather than the nostalgic longing back to eternal childhood" (Nikolajeva 2006, 71). No matter how one chooses to interpret the passage, it still projects an image of childhood as desirable and romanticised, and hence of children and adults as separate groups.

The motif of the eternal child – or, the "puer aeternus" (Nikolajeva 2006, 59) – is yet another element which contributes to the success of the story, which has proven to unremittingly appeal to readers. Renowned general literary critic Pieter Steinz highlights the import of the motif. He comments,

Cynics might say that there is no such thing as a magic pill, and that this type of naive children will get short shrift from Father Time. But the cynics are wrong. Tommy, Annika and Pippi are the ultimate examples of three characters that haven't aged a bit during the past 65 years.

I'll gladly have one of those pills. (News 788 2010, n.p.)¹²³

Marijn van der Jagt points out that the "aversion to prematurely aged adults with their petty rules and lack of imagination" is a quality which Lindgren shares with Dutch children's book author Annie M.G. Schmidt (News 430 1999, 30).¹²⁴ Marjolijn Februari includes Schmidt's fellow countryman and contemporary Godfried Bomans in the comparison. Februari argues that the pursuit of freedom is characteristic of Schmidt's and Lindgren's work (and is radicalised in *Pippi Longstocking*) and shows that another example of that striving can be found in Bomans' novel *Marvellous Nights*,¹²⁵ which was published in 1949 (News 744 2008, 3). It relates the history of protagonist Simon Oppentroodt who is chosen to replace the emperor of China. As soon as he takes office,

¹²² "De jaren zouden voorbijgaan, maar Pippi, Tommy en Annika zouden niet groot hoeven worden. Als de peperneutpillen hun kracht tenminste niet hadden verloren! Er zouden nieuwe lenes en zomers en nieuwe herfst en winters komen en zij zouden altijd spelletjes kunnen blijven spelen" (Lindgren 2002, 365).

¹²³ "Cynici zullen zeggen dat zo'n wonderpilletje niet bestaat, en dat Vadertje Tijd korte metten maakt met dit soort naïeve kinderen. Maar de cynici hebben ongelijk. Als er drie personages al 65 jaar lang geen spat ouder zijn geworden, dan zijn het Tommy, Anneke en Pippi. Geef mij zo'n pilletje" (News 788 2010, n.p.).

¹²⁴ "afkeer van vroeg-oude volwassenen met hun benepen regels en gebrek aan fantasie" (News 430 1999, 30). The two of them are in effect compared abundantly often; cf. section 5.4.

¹²⁵ *Wonderlijke nachten* (Bomans 1949).

Simon decides to abolish all rules and norms: “no more school, no obligations, no responsibilities” (News 744 2008, 3),¹²⁶ an act which clearly echoes Lindgren’s antiauthoritarian stance.

Girl Power *avant la Lettre*: Emancipating Female Readers

It has become quite obvious that the Dutch-language critics find Astrid Lindgren’s affirming attitude towards children admirable. What is more, Pippi Longstocking is deemed to be empowering for *female* readers in particular. The Dutch and Flemish reviewers applaud Lindgren for her progressive stance with respect to gender issues as expressed in the Pippi-books.¹²⁷ What is appreciated specifically is her choice to depict Pippi in a fashion that breaks set gender patterns.¹²⁸ They commend the ensuing portrayal of the character as “candid and free” (News 106 1998, 11),¹²⁹ and as an “embodiment of the right to romp, even for girls” (News 432 2000, 3).¹³⁰ Lindgren is furthermore praised for having addressed a theme which shows to remain topical (News 403 1998, 7), and, even more so, for being far ahead of her time.¹³¹

Pippi herself is seen as “a feminist designed to children’s size” (News 106 1998, 11),¹³² and welcomed as a “refreshing role model in a Barbie world” (News 432 2000, 3),¹³³ who does not need a man to invite her to a party, but who is the life of the party herself, so to speak (News 240 2006, 65). Therefore, she is deemed to be a strong, positive example for girls which enables them to boost their self-image.¹³⁴ As Fred de Swert suggests in his portrait of Lindgren in journal *Jeugdboekengids* in 1974, “Every militant feminist

¹²⁶ “geen school meer, geen verplichtingen, geen verantwoordelijkheden” (News 744 2008, 3).

¹²⁷ In this connection, Astrid Surmatz observes that Lindgren’s stance with respect to gender issues was innovative: “Atypical for the time context and the literary conventions is the openness of the gender roles” [Für den Zeitkontext und die literarischen Konventionen der Zeit untypisch ist [...] die Offenheit der Geschlechterrollen] (Surmatz 2005, 85). Also, she cites literary theorist Lars Bäckström’s description of the configuration of the character as “a female declaration of sovereignty” [en kvinnlig suveränitetsförklaring] (Surmatz 2005, 90) Moreover, she points out that Pippi “disposes of a power and an independence which scarcely are in accordance with the traditional child image or even with the traditional cliché of the girls’ book” [verfügt über eine Macht und Unabhängigkeit, wie sie kaum dem traditionellen Kinderbild oder gar dem traditionellen Mädchenbuchklischee entspricht] (Surmatz 2005, 90). For further discussions of Pippi Longstocking from a feminist perspective see a.o. (Frasher 1977); (Frid 2003); (Nikolajeva 2006); (Reeder 1979).

¹²⁸ (News 432 2000, 3); (News 480 2002, 11).

¹²⁹ “vrank en vrij” (News 106 1998, 11).

¹³⁰ “Pippi staat voor het recht om te ravotten, ook voor meisjes” (News 432 2000, 3). See also (News 399 1998, 21).

¹³¹ (News 69 1992, n.p.); (News 402 1998, 20); (News 432 2000, 3).

¹³² “een op kindermaat gesneden feministe” (News 106 1998, 11). Compare (News 399 1998, 21): “a youthful exponent of feminism” [een jeugdige exponent van het feminisme].

¹³³ “Een verfrissend rolmodel in de wereld van Barbie’s” (News 432 2000, 3).

¹³⁴ (News 86 1995, n.p.); (News 240 2006, 65); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 836 2011, n.p.).

movement which is even slightly concerned about the role pattern will find a wide range of (un)expected possibilities” in the Pippi Longstocking-books (JBG 18 1974, n.p.)¹³⁵ Lindgren’s significance with respect to women’s and girls’ rights was underlined by her relatives’ choice to hold her funeral on International Women’s Day (8 March 2002), as was pointed out in two of the newspaper articles.¹³⁶ In a literary respect, too, the character is found to be groundbreaking and exemplary, seeing that she went on to “set the tone for emancipated girl characters in children’s books published after the Second World War” (News 69 1992, n.p.).¹³⁷ Eventually, the figure of Pippi Longstocking has become synonymous with girl power,¹³⁸ which, as one critic puts it, *began* with Pippi Longstocking (News 402 1998, 20).¹³⁹ In this connection, Pippi is seen as a precursor of the massively popular 1990s girl band Spice Girls.¹⁴⁰

In any case, the importance of the feminist dimension of the Pippi-trilogy for the canonisation of the books can hardly be overstated. It is worth noting, though, that Astrid Lindgren produced some traditional girls’ stories as well, and that her debut book in fact was *Britt-Mari Pours out her Heart* (1944 [2003]),¹⁴¹ which came in second in a girls’ books competition held by publishing house Rabén & Sjögren. In the 1950s, Lindgren also published a series of three books for teenage girls, to wit *Kati in America* (1950 [1998]),¹⁴² *Kati in Italy* (1952 [1999]),¹⁴³ and *Kati in Paris* (1953 [2000]).¹⁴⁴ The Dutch-language reviewers seem to be barely familiar with the books’ existence. *Kati in America* is discussed twice,¹⁴⁵ *Kati in Italy* once (IDIL 17 1966, n.p.), and *Kati in Paris* is not mentioned at all. *Britt-Mari Pours out her Heart* appears to be slightly better known, as it crops up in five of the corpus articles.¹⁴⁶ In all of these pieces, it is mentioned merely as a trivium. For those critics, it is

¹³⁵ “Iedere Dolle Mina-vereniging enigszins bekommerd om het rolpatroon, zal hier een ruime bloemlezing van (on)verwachte mogelijkheden aantreffen” (JBG 18 1974, n.p).

¹³⁶ (News 153 2002, 9); (News 154 2002, 2).

¹³⁷ “de toon zou zetten voor de geëmancipeerde meisjesfiguren in kinderboeken van na de tweede wereldoorlog” (News 69 1992, n.p.). See also (News 861 2012, n.p.); (News 866 2012, n.p.).

¹³⁸ (News 387 1998, 19); (News 402 1998, 20); (News 403 1998, 7).

¹³⁹ Nonetheless, Pippi was not the first literary character of the emancipatory kind, as Eva Wahlström shows in her monography *Free Girls before Pippi. Ester Blenda Nordström and Karin Michaëlis: Astrid Lindgren’s Predecessors* [*Fria flickor före Pippi. Ester Blenda Nordström och Karin Michaëlis: Astrid Lindgrens föregångare*] (Wahlström 2011). Astrid Surmatz, too, discusses Pippi’s literary forerunners in her study of the German reception of the books (Surmatz 2005, 91-101).

¹⁴⁰ (News 97 1998, n.p.); (News 105 1998, 14); (News 402 1998, 20); (News 403 1998, 7).

¹⁴¹ *Britt-Mari lättar sitt hjärta* (1944 [2003]).

¹⁴² *Kati i Amerika* (1950 [1998]).

¹⁴³ *Kati på Kaptensgatan* (1952 [1999]).

¹⁴⁴ *Kati i Paris* (1953 [2000]).

¹⁴⁵ (News 15 1966, n.p.); (IDIL 16 1966, n.p.).

¹⁴⁶ (News 138 2002, 15); (News 471 2002, 1); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 653 2007, 28); (News 866 2012, n.p.).

an interesting fact that *Britt-Mari* was Lindgren's debut and not *Pippi Longstocking*, contrary to common belief. However, neither one of these girls' books is dealt with in its own right in the corpus material.

Resisting Violence and Physical Oppression

Ellen Key influenced Astrid Lindgren's pedagogical views, as was shown above. Both authors were strong supporters of children's autonomy, and attached great importance to their desires. Astrid Surmatz points out the correspondence between them with respect to their reverential child image, which in Key's case emanates from her opinion that "the child possesses an inner majesty, which is connected with a wish for power" (Surmatz 2005, 67).¹⁴⁷ In keeping with this deferential attitude, both Key and Lindgren denounced corporal punishment. Key did so in her seminal work *The Century of the Child* (1900), in which she declared that she saw the renunciation of physically degrading punishments as a sign of civilisation (Surmatz 2005, 67). Lindgren made this a pivotal element in her 1956 novel *Rasmus and the Tramp*. It is even plot-advancing, because protagonist Rasmus decides to flee from the orphanage that is his home for fear of a beating with a cane which awaits him.¹⁴⁸ In addition, Lindgren repudiated corporal punishment in the well-known address titled *Never Violence!*,¹⁴⁹ which she held at the acceptance ceremony of the German Booksellers' Peace Prize on 22 October 1978.

In this speech, Lindgren utters a strong belief in a loving and caring upbringing as the cure for the incessant propensity for using violence, which she describes as a flaw in human nature (Lindgren 2012a, 16). In order for mankind to change for the better, people ought to refrain from punishing their children physically, because those who are raised in a warm environment will meet the world accordingly (Lindgren 2012a, 21). She explicitly denounces the conviction that to spare the rod is to spoil the child. She does so by means of an anecdote about a woman who felt that she needed to corporally punish her son for a severe mistake, despite her not adhering to this motto. The woman sent her son outside to go and look for a branch that could serve as a rod. The boy stayed away for many hours and eventually returned in tears, offering his mother a stone with which to

¹⁴⁷ "das Kind [trage] eine innere Majestät in sich, die mit einem Wunsch nach Macht verbunden sei" (Surmatz 2005, 67). See also (Nix 1998, 14).

¹⁴⁸ See for instance (Lindgren 2002b, 33; emphasis in original): "[Gunnar] did not understand that you had to run away if you were expecting a beating with a rod. Rasmus sighed again. The other boys didn't mind the rod at all. He was the only one who'd rather die than take a pasting" "[Gunnar] begreep niet dat je móést vluchten als je slaag met een rietje verwachtte. Rasmus zuchtte nog eens. De andere jongens vonden dat rietjes helemaal niet erg. Hij was de enige die liever wilde sterven dan slaag krijgen].

¹⁴⁹ *Aldrig våld!* The speech was later published in its entirety. Here, I refer to the version issued by Salikon in 2012.

hit him. This thoroughly shocked the woman, who then resolved never to use violence against her child, and kept the stone in her kitchen cabinet as a reminder of that resolution (Lindgren 2012a, 27-28).

Kathy Lindekens when interviewed in connection with Lindgren's death stresses the latter's role as a champion of children's rights and highlights her rejection of corporal punishments. Lindekens relates, "When she received the Peace Award in Germany, she was asked not to bring up child oppression in her acceptance speech. She did it anyway" (News 143 2002, 10).¹⁵⁰ In addition, she discusses the reception of these ideas of Lindgren's, which were not always welcomed: "She felt that it was wrong to beat children. At one point, pedagogues dismissed this as a madwoman's chimera" (News 143 2002, 10).¹⁵¹ By contrast, Lindekens appreciates Lindgren's stance. She sees the author's choice to address controversial social issues in her works as one of her strengths, particularly because Lindgren sees as "[t]he power of art [...] that one can say and keep saying things that have yet to sink in with society" (News 143 2002, 10).¹⁵² Besides this example, another instance is the mention of Lindgren as a "great defender of nonviolence in children's books and films" (News 416 1998, 123).¹⁵³ She is perceived as a forerunner of the abolition of beatings with a pedagogical purpose in Sweden (News 232 2005, 13). Moreover, the author's aversion to violence and sexism also manifested itself in her resistance against sexually suggestive scenes from the television series on Pippi which Palle Thorsson integrated in his movie *Pippi Examples* so as to make explicit sexual undercurrents in the series.¹⁵⁴

Spreading the Emancipatory Word in Astrid Lindgren's Spirit

Finally, the centrality of the notion of Lindgren's support and respect for children is also underlined by a number of phenomena related to the afterlife of Lindgren's oeuvre which spread the author's emancipatory word, so to speak. For instance, the description of Junibacken, the theme park based primarily on Lindgren's fictional universe, as a place where children come first attests to Lindgren's image as a children's friend (News 393 1998, 3). Equally telling is the fact that an Amsterdam playground for mentally disabled children was inaugurated by a Pippi Longstocking-impersonator (News 394 1998, 4). The

¹⁵⁰ "Toen ze in Duitsland de Prijs voor de Vrede kreeg, werd haar gevraagd om bij het dankwoord niet te reppen over de onderdrukking van kinderen. Ze deed het toch" (News 143 2002, 10).

¹⁵¹ "Ze vond het verkeerd om kinderen te slaan. Pedagogen hebben dat ooit afgedaan als hersenspinsels van een gekkin" (News 143 2002, 10).

¹⁵² "De kracht van kunst is dat je dingen kan zeggen en blijven zeggen die in de samenleving nog moeten doordringen" (News 143 2002, 10).

¹⁵³ "een groot pleitbezorgster van geweldloosheid in kinderboek en -film" (News 416 1998, 123). Cf. (News 80 1994, n.p.); (News 81 1994, n.p.); (News 82 1994, n.p.).

¹⁵⁴ (News 130 2001, 29); (News 131 2001, n.p.); (News 458 2001, 11); (News 459 2001, 5V); (News 460 2001, 6); (News 476 2002, 10); (News 481 2002, 6); (News 410 1998, 2).

concept of a recreation area devoted to Lindgren also cropped up in the aftermath of the author's decease in 2002, when her relatives declined the offer to have a street named after her. Lindgren's daughter and son-in-law maintained that the former would have considered this unnecessary and argues that she probably would have preferred having a decent playground in Vasa Park in Stockholm called after her instead (News 160 2002, n.p.). Children first, indeed.

A further, considerably more far-reaching, extra-textual phenomenon is the installation of a so-called "Children's Consul" [Kinderconsul] in Flanders. In 2007, in honour of the centenary of Astrid Lindgren's birth, *Stichting Lezen Vlaanderen* brought into existence this honorary title in order to disperse Lindgren's plea for freedom and safety. Children's illustrator and author Gerda Dendooven was chosen to act as an ambassador for children's culture. Upon taking office, Dendooven establishes that the way in which people think about children leaves a lot to be desired: "Adults are still the norm that everything needs to relate to. Children are only half" (News 258 2007, 50).¹⁵⁵ She indicates that she wishes to alter this frame of mind:

First and foremost, I want to bring about change of mentality with regard to children. Economically speaking, they are coveted, but they do not have a lot to say besides that. As if they find themselves in a transit zone in which they are not 100 per cent. This I have abhorred for years. (News 256 2007, 21)¹⁵⁶

Dendooven states that children are nobody's property (News 258 2007, 50), and argues that adults should have "respect for people who have not lived as long" (News 256 2007, 21).¹⁵⁷ Providing them with good books is one way of doing so (News 256 2007, 21).

These statements of Dendooven's show that she holds the same view on the relationship between adults and children as Lindgren, whom she admires for having "set the tone for considering children in an emancipatory fashion and for standing up for them" (News 257 2007, 50).¹⁵⁸ Although the concept of the Children's Consul appeared to be dead letter as soon as the buzz of the centenary had blown over, it is significant that the grounds for installing the Consul were strongly – if not entirely – founded on the child image and moral convictions perceivable in Lindgren's writings. As Majo De Saedeleer, then president of *Stichting Lezen Vlaanderen*, maintains, the aim of the Children's Consul

¹⁵⁵ "Volwassenen [...] zijn nog steeds de norm waartoe alles zich moet verhouden. Kinderen zijn slechts half" (News 258 2007, 50).

¹⁵⁶ "Ik wil vooral een mentaliteitswijziging teweegbrengen over kinderen. Die zijn economisch wel geliefd, maar daarbuiten hebben ze niet al te veel te zeggen. Alsof ze in een transitzone zitten waarin ze nog geen 100 procent zijn. Daar gruw ik al jaren van" (News 256 2007, 21).

¹⁵⁷ "respect voor mensen die nog niet zo lang geleefd hebben" (News 256 2007, 21).

¹⁵⁸ "zette de toon om op een emanciperende manier over kinderen te denken en voor hen op te komen" (News 257 2007, 50)

was to disseminate the values of liberty and security (News 256 2007, 21). As such, the concept is yet another indication of the preponderance of Lindgren's world view in the way she is represented in the Dutch-language press.

Last but not least, the creation of the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) by the Swedish government's Arts Council reflects the author's concern for children's well-being. This is evidenced by the motto on the official ALMA-website, which reads: "Good literature gives the child a place in the world... and the world a place in the child".¹⁵⁹ In a mission statement, Astrid Lindgren's "deeply humanist spirit", visible in her efforts to promote "peace and democracy" and her rejection of "all forms of violence", is linked with reading promotion. It reads, "Children's literature has the ability to encourage understanding and exchange between cultures and people", which is why "[c]hildren's and young adult's access to literature is a precondition for democracy and openness".¹⁶⁰ The Swedish government believes that it can contribute by presenting the ALMA "to people and organisations working in her tradition safeguarding democratic values", seeing that "[t]he attention of the award leads to more translations and to more children having access to high-quality literature".¹⁶¹ In the Dutch-language discourse on Lindgren this objective reverberates to a certain extent, for instance when attention is drawn to the possibility to reward projects or organisations aimed at stimulating children to read – and not merely authors or illustrators. In doing so, Vanessa Joosen indicates, "Sweden attempts to propagate Astrid Lindgren's respect for children and her vision on children's books internationally" (News 274 2007, 40).¹⁶²

The import of the ideological undertone of Lindgren's and the ALMA laureates' works surfaces most clearly when the reasons for awarding the latter are discussed. Such was the case for Austrian author Christine Nöstlinger, who shared the very first ALMA with American illustrator (and author) Maurice Sendak in 2003. In the press report in *De Standaard* it is mentioned that Nöstlinger, "who is noted for being an advocate for children's rights", "gained laurels for her 'committed authorship, her candid humour and her simple warmth[']" (News 191 2003, 12).¹⁶³ In articles on 2010 laureate Kitty Crowther, a similar sensitivity is displayed to the concern for children's welfare expressed by the Brussels-based author and illustrator. Veerle Vanden Bosch in *De Standaard* notes, "Children do not always have an easy time in her books, but they overcome their

¹⁵⁹ <<http://www.alma.se/en/About-the-award/>> [Accessed 18 August 2014].

¹⁶⁰ <<http://www.alma.se/en/About-the-award/>> [Accessed 18 August 2014].

¹⁶¹ <<http://www.alma.se/en/About-the-award/>> [Accessed 18 August 2014].

¹⁶² "probeert Zweden het respect van Astrid Lindgren voor kinderen en haar visie op jeugdboeken internationaal uit te dragen" (News 274 2007, 40).

¹⁶³ "Nöstlinger staat bekend als een verdedigster van de rechten van het kind."; "kreeg de lauweren voor haar 'geëngageerd schrijverschap, haar vrijmoedige humor en haar eenvoudige warmte[']" (News 191 2003, 12).

problems and turn out stronger. All of her books resonate with warmth, empathy and much respect for children” (News 318 2010, 42).¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, Vanden Bosch reports that the ALMA jury judged that “[h]er loyalty to children is unconditional” (News 318 2010, 42).¹⁶⁵ *De Morgen* reporter Dirk Leyman equally highlights that Crowther is praised for her “strong sense of empathy for those who are experiencing a difficult time” (News 308 2010, 31).¹⁶⁶ The similarities between the qualities valued in Nöstlinger’s and Crowther’s writing and Astrid Lindgren’s own convictions are obvious. This is also the case, and perhaps even more clearly so, with 2012 Dutch awardee Guus Kuijer, whose “respect for children in line with a rejection of intolerance and oppression” is strongly valued by the ALMA-judges (News 358 2012, 3).¹⁶⁷ What is striking is that, in Flanders, the ideological implications of the ALMA are discussed solely in both of the high-quality newspapers, viz. *De Morgen* and *De Standaard*. In the other newspapers, no such mention of the humanistic spirit of the award is made. This could be seen as a vague indication that a highbrow institute such as a literary accolade mainly resonates in highbrow channels.

Astrid Lindgren in the Vanguard against Childism

To sum up, it is beyond doubt that the positive response of the Dutch and Flemish reviewers to Astrid Lindgren’s affirmative and emancipatory child image heavily impacted the canonisation processes related to her oeuvre. The Dutch-language critics’ rationale appears to be orchestrated to such an extent that the majority of them is appreciative of the author’s acknowledgement of children’s might on the one hand, and, more importantly, of their intrinsic ache for liberation from adult authority. What is particularly valued is that in her writing she offers them not only a feeling of security but also a sense of wish-fulfilment and liberation. As Odile Jansen in her obituary aptly remarks,

She was antiauthoritarian long before it came into fashion, but at the same time she knew the significance for children to be able to immerse themselves in a safe

¹⁶⁴ “Kinderen hebben het in haar boeken niet altijd makkelijk, maar ze overwinnen hun problemen en komen er sterker uit tevoorschijn. Uit al haar boeken spreekt warmte, empathie en een groot respect voor kinderen” (News 318 2010, 42).

¹⁶⁵ “Haar loyaliteit aan kinderen is onvoorwaardelijk” (News 318 2010, 42).

¹⁶⁶ “sterke inlevingsvermogen met wie het moeilijk heeft” (News 308 2010, 31).

¹⁶⁷ “respect voor kinderen in lijn met een verwerping van intolerantie en onderdrukking” (News 358 2012, 3).

atmosphere. No wonder that she was respected internationally and received numerous awards[.] (News 480 2002, 11)¹⁶⁸

Due to her outspoken ethical stance favouring children's interests and rights, and explicitly repudiating a derisive attitude towards them, I argue, Astrid Lindgren can be seen as an opponent of a phenomenon which later on was termed "childism" by the late Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (2009).¹⁶⁹ Young-Bruehl, an American psychoanalyst who specialised in prejudice studies, identified in Western society a tendency of prejudiced thinking about children informed by binary "us/them"-paradigms similar to those underlying prejudices against "minority out-groups" (Young-Bruehl 2009, 251).¹⁷⁰ As such, it resembles attitudes such as racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, and ageism (Young-Bruehl 2009, 251).

Child-unfriendly biases, which usually take shape in child abuse or neglect, she clarifies, "would be clued to their relative helplessness (or dependency) and immaturity" (Young-Bruehl 2009, 254). Childist prejudices can be categorised by means of three established "fundamental prejudicial images[:] obsessional, hysterical, and narcissistic" (Young-Bruehl 2009, 259). Among those, the second type is least common in childism. The Christian notion of original sin is the epitome of the obsessional kind of prejudice against children, seeing that it is a conception of children "as bad, by nature evil or full of some kind of wickedness" (Young-Bruehl 2009, 259). Within this mind-set, it is a matter of course that children's innate evil is to be eliminated. Another type of childism centres on an interpretation of children as embodying an enticing, youthful sexual spirit which can invoke in adults (possibly juxtaposed) feelings of allure or menace, which they feel need to be curtailed (Young-Bruehl 2009, 261). Finally, in the narcissistic childist paradigm, adults view their children as property and, instead of seeing them as continuations of themselves securing their future, perceive them "as the future overthrowers of their parents, as rebels and rejectors of tradition" (Young-Bruehl 2009, 260). Whenever this kind of thinking prevails, the only possible outcome is for children's "rebellions [...] to be

¹⁶⁸ "Anti-autoritair was ze lang voordat het mode werd, maar tegelijkertijd kende ze het belang voor kinderen om zich onder te kunnen dompelen in een veilige sfeer. Geen wonder dat ze internationaal gerespecteerd was en talloze prijzen ontving" (News 480 2002, 11).

¹⁶⁹ A full-length monograph on the topic entitled *Childism. Confronting Prejudice Against Children* was published posthumously with Yale University Press in 2012.

¹⁷⁰ Young-Bruehl points out that childist tendencies were recognised in England in the late nineteenth century already, and that Charles Darwin was among the pioneers laying bare such biases. She writes that "Charles Darwin, for example, considering infanticide, wondered if there was something perverse in human nature that allowed, or encouraged, adults to exploit and harm their own children" (Young-Bruehl 2009, 256). In addition, she notes that the then-prevalent views on "misopedia (hatred of children)[, viz.] the word available in Darwin's time for the prejudice humans can have against their children" were too limited and that the term did not suffice to cover the broad range of forms of child abuse (Young-Bruehl 2009, 256).

put down and [for] their aggressive rebelliousness [...] to be beaten or terrorized out of them” (Young-Bruehl 2009, 260).

Astrid Lindgren’s deliberate choice to bring to the fore situations in which the inherently difficult child/adult-relationship is addressed attests to the author’s strong awareness of what later came to be identified as childist tendencies in modern Western culture. In effect, the deployment of liberating characters and topics in her works can be reinterpreted in this light. These narrative elements, which the Dutch-language gatekeepers have understood as potentially emancipating child readers, can thus be seen to work against childist biases. Firstly, Lindgren’s strong belief in children’s might and her insistence on their having a right to a culture and literature of their own runs counter to obsessional preconceived notions about childhood. Moreover, in staging protagonists whose conduct cuts across the ascendancy of adult authority, she allows child characters to overturn that very authority. In doing so, Lindgren subverts narcissistic forms of childism as well. In fact, with hindsight, her entire child image can be characterised as essentially anti-childist.

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl frames childism against the background of humans’ innate helplessness, which in turn gives rise to an inborn expectation to be taken care of. Childism, she asserts, ensues from inadequate recognition of this expectation:

In its most general meaning, childism is denial of the need to be cherished – in children and in adults who continue to feel that elemental need. To say that children are bad or that they want to overthrow their parents or that they are lascivious is to say, in effect, that they are not dependent beings expecting love. Childist images arise from a failure to acknowledge children as children with children’s needs. (Young-Bruehl 2009, 263)

Obviously, Astrid Lindgren’s conception of children departs from childist preconceptions, and rests on opposite convictions instead. In addition, in adhering to avant-garde reform pedagogical principles and advocating free upbringing, Lindgren and like-minded thinkers such as Ellen Key, A.S. Neill, and Bertrand Russell can be said to have found themselves in the vanguard of anti-childism. Considering that the United Nations did not adopt their Declaration of the Rights of the Child until 1959,¹⁷¹ in foregrounding children’s needs and desires they were far ahead of their time. Young-Bruehl argues, “Before the scientific discovery of child abuse and neglect,¹⁷² prejudice against maltreated children took the simple form of denying that they were maltreated; all kinds of maltreatment were rationalized and institutionalized as normal, necessary, righteous, or rightful” (Young-Bruehl 2009, 261). Hence, Astrid Lindgren’s acknowledgement of children’s rights

¹⁷¹ <<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/child.asp>> [Accessed 20 October 2014].

¹⁷² “the phrase child abuse and neglect (sometimes child maltreatment) came into currency in the 1960s” (Young-Bruehl 2009, 257).

and opposition to oppression and violence aimed at children can be seen as nothing short of groundbreaking. The Dutch-language reviewers recognise these efforts and highlight their continuing relevance. In 1991, a *Jeugdboekengids* article reads,

Thirty years ago, Astrid Lindgren with [her] child-friendly stories was far ahead of her time. The frivolous style, the amount of respect for the child displayed, and the depiction of adults leaving much room for their children's imagination will take the fancy of the audience, now more so than back then. (JBG 66 1991, 314)¹⁷³

Seeing that the Dutch and Flemish gatekeepers set great store with this stance of Lindgren's, it can be said to have played a large part in the canonisation of Lindgren's works in Flanders and the Netherlands.

3.2 Children and Adults as Canonising Agents in Children's Literature

As the overview in the previous section showed, attempts at pinpointing the forces informing the practice of children's literature inevitably involve discussions of the positions adults and children occupy in the field. Commonly, such bids lead to the conclusion that it is mainly adults who take up positions of authority in the field of children's literature. The questions that will be discussed in the current section address the impact of the distribution of the different roles taken up by children and adults on canonisation as an institutionalised process. Arguing in line with Clémentine Beauvais' conception of might as an alternative to power, a practicable premise is that children and adults are different and that adults have authority because of their being older. In terms of canonisation processes, this leads to the crucial conclusion that it is primarily adults who weigh in on them.

Zohar Shavit stresses that in children's literature it is the adult who determines what children should and should not read. She sees the adult ascendancy as perhaps the most influential of the "systemic constraints" governing the field (Shavit 1986, 93). As mentioned earlier, Katharine Jones points out that children's literature is not so much a field of *children* as it is one of *adults* (cf. section 3.1). As Deborah Stevenson likewise

¹⁷³ "Astrid Lindgren was 30 jaar geleden met deze kindvriendelijke verhalen haar tijd ver vooruit. De ludieke schrijfrant, het getoonde respect voor het kind en de beschrijving van volwassenen die veel ruimte laten voor de fantasie van hun kinderen, zullen nu meer dan toen bij het publiek in de smaak vallen." (JBG 66 1991, 314)

maintains, “In name, the genre belongs to children, but in actual fact their direct influence is limited” (Stevenson 2009, 108-109).¹⁷⁴ In effect, she argues that “there are no child gatekeepers of the canon” (Stevenson 1997, 119). Children are unable to occupy such vital, gatekeeping roles because, as Stevenson puts it, they are “culturally and financially powerless; more specifically, child readers are judged and categorized in a way that precludes their contribution to [a] [...] canon” (Stevenson 1997, 119). The argumentation set forth by Claudia Nelson in “*Jade and the Tomboy Tradition*”, her chapter in the 2011 *Oxford Handbook of Children’s Literature*, is fairly similar. Adults, Nelson maintains, in their capacity of “traditional masters of reviewing outlets, book awards, school book lists, and library collection building, are the arbiters of canonicity” (Nelson 2011, 498). Nelson distinguishes between “canonicity” and “popularity”, properties which within children’s literature are closely related and very similar but not entirely identical. She explains that canonicity, which is governed by adult agents in the field, is a matter of “(perceived) quality”, whereas “popularity is connected to the size of a book’s readership, often measured by sales figures” (Nelson 2011, 498). In her view, children can impact popularity when they have “purchasing power”, but their influence on canonicity is virtually non-existent (Nelson 2011, 498).

Laura Atkins proves to reason along similar lines when she states that “in the case of children’s publishing industry, the concern with audience values is frequently the audience of adult purchasers of books for children”, adding, “The actual child, and the child’s voice, are generally left out of the equation” (cited in Ehriander 2012, 97). Hans-Heino Ewers highlights the restricted impact that children have on processes of canonisation in the field as well. As supporting groups [Trägergruppen] for a canon of children’s literature, children are able to keep it alive and to support it only to an extremely limited extent (Ewers 2007a, 98).¹⁷⁵ As John Daniel Stahl notes, this renders the matter of canonisation in the field of children’s literature difficult to grasp: “Since children do not institutionalize canons, the concept of a canon of children’s literature is naturally fraught with ironies” (Stahl 1992, 14).

¹⁷⁴ Compare the following comment by Sandra van Ginkel: “[I] suspect that it is not the readers who decide whether a book becomes classic. In that case, Rita Ghesquiere is [...] right in stating that it is critics, authors and publishers who determine whether or not a certain repertoire belongs to the canon” [[ik] krijg het bange vermoeden dat niet de lezers bepalen of een boek klassiek wordt. Dan heeft Rita Ghesquiere [...] gelijk wanneer ze zegt dat het de critici, auteurs en uitgevers zijn die vastleggen of een bepaald repertoire al dan niet tot de canon behoort] (van Ginkel 1994, 149).

¹⁷⁵ Moreover, Ewers goes on to argue, “In other words, it does not qualify as a supporting public for a historical canon, which is not meant to exclude the possibility that individual historical works are read by it time and again” [Es scheidet mit anderen Worten als Trägerpublikum eines historischen Kanons weitgehend aus, womit nicht ausgeschlossen ist, dass einzelne historische Werke von ihm immer wieder gelesen werden] (Ewers 2007a, 98).

Indeed, when it comes to propelling certain works of children's literature to canonicity, it is adults who pull the strings. *Adult* authors, publishers, critics, teachers, librarians, etc. steer processes of canonisation within children's literature. Children do not have the authority to canonise – yet. A pivotal consequence of this distribution of canonising potential is that children play a minor role in the processes of canonisation in the field. In this connection, children's author and scholar John Rowe Townsend indicates that “the result is that a children's book can go far on the road to success before a single child has seen it” (quoted in (Jones 2006, 304)). Deborah Stevenson likewise observes that child readers' actual preferences do not matter much, although she does acknowledge that peer pressure to some extent can play a role in canonisation: “their word of mouth can contribute to the reading popularity of a title, but that influence is more notable in connection with otherwise obscure or adult-unfriendly texts [...] than with the known quantity of a prospective classic” (Stevenson 2009, 109). Anne Lundin, for her part, is convinced that texts might survive merely because children spontaneously transfer them between themselves. “I truly believe”, she writes, “that a child will pass on a beloved text to another child and never see the prescription” (Lundin 2004, 148). Sure enough, in rare cases children get opportunities to influence canonisation, for instance through readily available adaptations (compare section 5.1), or through literary prizes awarded by children's juries, in which children actually are granted a certain degree of canonising authority (which nevertheless is not entirely independent, seeing that it is always overseen by adults).

The Adult-Child Relationship and its Implications on a Formal Level

The adult preponderance in all matters concerning children's literature discussed in the previous section suggests that, in order to be accepted, a work of children's literature should be approved by the adult readers. As Zohar Shavit puts it, the presence of the adult gatekeepers who monitor and guide children's reading places a heavy burden on children's writers, who commonly seem to struggle with “the simultaneous (often contradictory) need to appeal to both the child and to the adult” (Shavit 1986, 63). This given has an ineluctable impact on the design of children's books, in particular with respect to the way in which their varied readers are addressed.¹⁷⁶ Hence, one way of characterising children's literature is in terms of narrative address. In this connection, the term “dual address”, which was first coined by Barbara Wall, has often been deployed. In her book *The Narrator's Voice. The Dilemma of Children's Fiction* (1991), Wall sets out to

¹⁷⁶ See also (Haugland 1994, 51).

answer the familiar question “Is it really a children’s book?” by investigating the way in which children’s authors have written for children.

Wall looks upon narration as a process of communication, but, as she explains herself, is “concerned not with the ‘message’ but with the nature of the addresser and of the addressee and with the manner in which the message is transmitted” (Wall 1991, 3). From her narratological point of view, Wall is able to distinguish between three modes of narrative address in children’s fiction, viz. single, double and dual address. She explains that the first type, single address, is characterised by “a voice concerned [...] genuinely and specifically with child readers”, putting children’s interests first (Wall 1991, 9). In works of fiction where this type of address prevails, “narrators will address child narratees, overt or covert, straightforwardly, showing no consciousness that adults too might read the work” (Wall 1991, 35). Secondly, books in which the narrative communication can be identified as double address tend to display “an adult narrative voice which exhibit[s] strong consciousness of the presence of adult readers” (Wall 1991, 9). That these works are written for a double audience shows in the fact that “their narrators will address child narratees overtly and self-consciously, and will also address adults, either overtly [...] or covertly” (Wall 1991, 35). Dual address, finally, being “a fusion of the two”, is presented by Wall as the ideal form of narration in a children’s book, as she believes that the most difficult task a children’s book author faces is to attract the attention of both child and adult readers.

The entire concept of studying the way in which a children’s book is narrated is tantamount to the predominance of the adult mediators in the children’s literary field. As Zohar Shavit points out, children’s literature is defined by its “double attribution” (Shavit 1999, 83). In *Poetics of Children’s Literature*, she claims that the position which a text obtains within the literary system “can be described in terms of binary opposition: either the text is for children or for adults, either it is canonized or it is non-canonized” (Shavit 1986, 64). Certain works, however, do not fit these clear-cut categories and can be said to have a diffuse status (Shavit 1986, 64). In Shavit’s view, children’s literary texts are diffuse in essence. She writes,

The status of the texts in question is by definition not unequivocal but diffuse. That is, we are dealing here with a group of texts that normally belong to the children’s system, although their being read by adults is a *sine qua non* for their success. (Shavit 1986, 64)

Barbara Wall holds a similar view and shows that, apparently, “[t]he possible verdict of an adult reader exercises a disturbing influence” on some authors (Wall 1991, 20). As a result, they may adopt a rather patronising and disdainful tone and direct remarks or jokes at adults over the child reader’s head, both of which are characteristic of double address (Wall 1991, 16). This remark is indeed reminiscent of Zohar Shavit’s findings, which represent a rather negative outlook on the matter. She discusses this situation in

terms of “abuse” of the official child addressee, which she finds “tiresome” (Shavit 1999, 94-95). Moreover, her notion of diffuse or ambivalent texts ties in with that of the doubly addressed text. She is convinced that the narrator in such works merely sees children as “pseudo readers”, whereas the adults are the “real” ones: “The child, the official reader of the text, is not meant to realize it fully and is much more an excuse for the text rather than its genuine addressee” (Shavit 1986, 71).

Children’s books author and critic Aidan Chambers, too, stresses the importance of dual address in his essay “The Reader in the Book” (2006),¹⁷⁷ which in itself is a plea for the critical study of the implied reader in children’s fiction. Chambers indicates the communicative nature of literature as a process involving, as he phrases it, “a sayer” and “a sayee” (Chambers 2006, 354), terms which are comparable with Wall’s “narrator” and “narratee”. From this communicative angle, the main difficulty authors writing for children are confronted with is the fact that they are separated from their child audience, and that children in fact become outsiders, as Jacqueline Rose puts it in *The Case of Peter Pan* (Rose 1984, 2). As was shown in the previous section, it is indeed paradoxical that children’s literature evolved out of (and in fact required) a segregation of adult and child which contemporary authors often aim to undermine.¹⁷⁸ As a matter of fact, writers who attempt to cross the boundaries between child and adult audiences criticise those boundaries themselves in doing so. The fact that child and adult readers are separated implies that they are different. In Aidan Chambers’ view, children are “unyielding readers” (Chambers 2006, 356), while adult readers have learnt how to surrender to a story in order to be drawn into the text. Child readers, by contrast, “want the book to suit them, tending to expect an author to take them as he finds them rather than they taking the book as they find it” (Chambers 2006, 356). Chambers maintains, in other words, that adult and child readers read differently, which is why addressing both of them is essential for a book’s success.

The dual mode of address, then, according to Barbara Wall, is “rare and difficult” (Wall 1991, 36). It implies addressing the child reader “either using the same ‘tone of seriousness’ which would be used to address adult narratees, or confidentially sharing the story in a way that allows adult narrator and child a conjunction of interests” (Wall 1991, 35). Maria Nikolajeva elaborates on the concept in “Children’s, Adult, Human ...?”, her contribution to a collection of essays titled *Transcending Boundaries. Writing for a Dual Audience of Children and Adults* (1999). In this article, she describes dual address as a mode of narration

¹⁷⁷ This essay was originally included in Aidan Chambers’ collection of essays *Booktalk. Occasional Writing on Literature and Children* (1985) and was reprinted in Peter Hunt’s four-volume *Children’s Literature: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* in 2006. It is the latter version of the text I will be referring to.

¹⁷⁸ This bifurcation was shown to be enabled by a growing awareness of children’s particular needs and interests.

in which child and adult are addressed on different levels, but *on equal terms*. In plain words, it means that a child and an adult reader will probably read and understand the novel differently, but enjoy it equally; that neither the child nor the adult has priority to a ‘correct’ interpretation. (Nikolajeva 1999, 64; emphasis added)

Overall, Nikolajeva has a positive attitude towards dual address. She sees it as a much-needed challenge to the boundaries of children’s and adult literature. Zohar Shavit, by contrast, approaches the matter from a much more negative viewpoint. I myself want to leave the question of the value of dual address aside and choose to focus on its relevance for canonisation processes instead, a topic which will be handled in section 4.1.

The Adult-Child Relationship and its Implications in terms of Canonisation

Imagine if the children’s book author could have the same privilege as the adult author – to write whatever he wants at his own risk! (Lindgren, cited in (Ehriander 2012, 99))¹⁷⁹

The bid for the approval of the adult players in the field required for canonisation has – apart from the formal consequences with respect to the textual design – specific implications in terms of canonisation as well, namely as regards the acceptability of the subject matter dealt with in a text. The receptive norms for appropriate topics are informed by the gatekeepers’ ideology. Rita Ghesquière holds “With respect to children’s books, the adult’s opinion on mankind and society and on life values are decisive when it comes to judging a book positively or negatively” (Ghesquière 1982, 145).¹⁸⁰ This ideological dimension is of overriding importance within children’s literature due to the fact that the practice of writing for children in its entirety is firmly rooted in a desire to introduce the child audience into the world, or, in other words, to socialise it. This is in turn caused by the conviction prevalent with gatekeepers of children’s literature that child readers are to be moulded so as to become good citizens, through their reading among other means. Zohar Shavit explains that adult mediators’ preoccupation with

¹⁷⁹ “Tänk om barnboksförfattaren kunde få samma förmån som vuxenförfattaren – att skriva som han vill och på egen risk!” (Lindgren, cited in (Ehriander 2012, 99))

¹⁸⁰ “Bij jeugdliteratuur is de opvatting van de volwassene over mens- [sic] en maatschappij en over de waarden van het leven dikwijls bepalend om een boek positief of negatief te beoordelen” (Ghesquière 1982, 145). She furthermore argues that this sets children’s literature apart from adult literature, where “mostly the way in which the author shapes their experiences and outlook on life is predominant in terms of evaluation.” [vooral de manier waarop de auteur zijn ervaringen en zijn kijk op het leven gestalte geeft, dominant is voor de evaluatie.] (Ghesquière 1982, 145)

presenting children with suitable books exclusively results from the tendency that “our present culture [...] attach [sic] great importance to the child’s reading material as crucial for his development and his mental welfare” (Shavit 1986, 93). In the same vein, John Stephens argues,

Childhood is seen as the crucial formative period in the life of a human being, the time for basic education about the nature of the world, how to live in it, how to relate to other people, what to believe, what and how to think – in general, the intention is to make the world intelligible. (Stephens 1992, 8)

As a result, children’s literature observably engages with social, political, and ethical issues mainly, aiming to explain how the world works and how one should behave in it.

In fact, every literary work (whether for children or for adults) represents a certain world view, and guides the responses of its audience towards a particular stance with respect to social order.¹⁸¹ In the introduction to *New World Orders in Contemporary Children’s Literature* (2008), the authors contend that “children’s literature is marked by a pervasive commitment to social practice, and particularly to representing or interrogating those social practices deemed worthy of preservation, cultivation, or augmentation, and those deemed to be in need of reconceiving or discarding” (Bradford, et al. 2008, 2). Likewise, Heather Montgomery and Nicola J. Watson in *Children’s Literature: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends* (2009) refer to the possible attitudes towards ideological viewpoints discernible in children’s books. They hold, “Children’s literature has always been implicitly or explicitly ideological, presenting and promoting particular ideas about childhood and encouraging children to either uphold or challenge particular values” (Montgomery and Watson 2009, 7). It should come as no surprise, then, that the agents with the authority to canonise will primarily accept those works which align with the values and beliefs which they consider to be paramount and hence inform their own world view. Astrid Surmatz in her study on the German reception of *Pippi Longstocking* (2005) discusses the topics which are generally regarded as acceptable. She explains, “Traditionally, the reading of morally edifying narrations of a didactic-exemplary nature is considered to be particularly fit for children” (Surmatz 2005, 30).¹⁸² Conversely, adult gatekeepers may be seen to resist texts representing dissenting convictions. As Surmatz shows, a generally held conviction is that topics to be avoided are violence, death, corporality, sexuality, and signs of political revolt, “such as the questioning of hierarchies” (Surmatz 2005, 30).¹⁸³ In children’s literature, the rules dictating what is acceptable and

¹⁸¹ Compare (Geerts and Van den Bossche 2014, 7-8).

¹⁸² “Traditionell wurde die Lektüre moralisch erbaulicher Erzählungen von belehrend-beispielhaftem Charakter als für Kinder besonders geeignet angesehen” (Surmatz 2005, 30).

¹⁸³ “wie das Infragestellen von Hierarchien” (Surmatz 2005, 30).

what is not are imposed by adults, viz. from above, and motivated by those adults' world views and conceptions of childhood.¹⁸⁴

Consequently, of vital importance in processes of canonisation is the stance a work adopts with regard to the ideological position of the predominant canonising agents. I wish to argue – and have in fact argued elsewhere, in collaboration with Sylvie Geerts – that processes of canonisation are “informed by two different kinds of impetus: top-down and bottom-up” (Geerts and Van den Bossche 2014, 9). The first type of canonisation, instigated from above, reflects the preponderance of the canonising agents, when a work is approved precisely because it reasserts and hence endorses the prevailing ideology. The opposite label applies to instances where a work becomes accepted despite its rubbing up the dominant majority the wrong way. In such cases, a book “gain[s] acclaim from the bottom upwards”, due to “a dynamic force emanating from questioning and subverting that very ideology” (Geerts and Van den Bossche 2014, 9).¹⁸⁵ Eventually, once the dust has settled, it will be appreciated and valued because of its innovative qualities.

In effect, many canonical works of children's literature were rather recalcitrant and acquired canonicity in a bottom-up fashion. This shows for instance in the selection of works made by Sandra Beckett and Maria Nikolajeva for their “counter-canon” *Beyond Babar* (2006). In the introduction Beckett explicitly mentions as one of the common characteristics of these books that they rowed against the current. She remarks that they “sought to question the status quo and overturn conventional attitudes” (Beckett 2006, xi-xii), an objective which manifests itself in an unruly choice of subject matter. Beckett adds, “Freeing themselves from the rigid moral codes and taboos that had long governed children's literature, many of these authors explore controversial topics” (Beckett 2006, xi-xii). For Nikolajeva and herself, this is one of the reasons why those books are worthwhile studying.

In Zohar Shavit's polysystemic understanding of the field of children's literature, no such thing as “bottom-up” canonisation can exist. Quite on the contrary, Shavit claims that only texts which are accepted by adults can become canonical in children's literature. Texts in which the preferences of the grown-up readers are not taken into account will remain peripheral. Shavit sees failure to acknowledge the adult “canonisers” as an essential feature of non-canonised children's literature: “In popular literature he [the children's book author; svdb] ignores the adult and rejects the need to court him and obtain his approval” (Shavit 1986, 94) The consequence, Shavit continues to argue, is “usually the rejection of the text by ‘the people of culture’” (Shavit 1986, 94), who will seek to keep children away from the book in any way possible or who may even meddle in its publication. Shavit looks upon censorship as a sign of the adult concern for

¹⁸⁴ Cf. section 3.1.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. (Persson 1998, 47).

acceptable reading matter, which is most prominent in the translation of children's books. Astrid Surmatz in *Pippi Longstocking as a Paradigm* (2005) also foregrounds the prevalence of censoring in the transfer of children's literature between different language areas. With reference to Göte Klingberg, Surmatz addresses the issue of "purification", which denotes the adaptation of the source text to the target culture's moral and pedagogical norms (Surmatz 2005, 30). As Surmatz puts it, "To be omitted from the text – or rather not to be included at all – is, on the one hand, anything children *may* not understand while reading, and on the other hand anything they *should* neither read nor understand" (Surmatz 2005, 31; emphasis in original).¹⁸⁶ In fact, Astrid Lindgren experienced this herself, judging by a remark of hers cited by Surmatz. The former states, "There are many things one isn't allowed to say or do in children's books. This one notices not in the least when they get translated into foreign languages. Then one comes across many taboos and peculiarities that those writing for adults never are confronted with" (Surmatz 2005, 56).¹⁸⁷ Regardless of whether one looks upon gatekeepers' involvement in the choice of subject positively or negatively, it should have become clear that it is a major factor to be reckoned with in matters of canonisation. In what follows, I will discuss the Dutch-language canonising agents' response to the subjects dealt with in Astrid Lindgren's books and attempt to establish whether the processes of canonisation involving her works evolved in a top-down or bottom-up fashion.

Astrid Lindgren and the Adult Canonising Establishment in the Dutch Language Area

Setting Foot Ashore

Astrid Lindgren's debut in the Dutch language area with the publication of *Pippi Longstocking* in 1952 was fairly uneventful compared with the Pippi-feud which had taken place in Sweden six years earlier. The earliest review I was able to retrieve shows *Boekengids* critic Bert de Bois embracing Pippi as a cheerful embodiment of children's vivid imagination. He deems the Pippi-character to be "the imagination of most children come to life" (BG 1 1952, 316).¹⁸⁸ Yet, de Bois appears to be criticising the books for its lack of religious – that is, Roman Catholic – leanings. As I remarked elsewhere,

¹⁸⁶ "Aus dem Text ausgeschieden – oder erst gar nicht aufgenommen werden – soll einerseits alles, was Kinder beim Lesen nicht verstehen *könnten*, andererseits alles, was sie weder lesen noch verstehen *sollten*" (Surmatz 2005, 31; emphasis in original).

¹⁸⁷ "Det är mycket man inte får säga [informal spelling; svdb] och göra i barnböcker. Det märker man inte minst när de ska översättas till främmande språk. Då råkar man på många tabun och besynnerligheter som verkligen aldrig drabbar dem som skriver för vuxna" (Surmatz 2005, 56).

¹⁸⁸ "de leven-geworden fantasie van de meeste kinders" (BG 1 1952, 316)

Although this critic acknowledges that Pippi's behaviour is not quite what one would expect from a well-behaved child, he suggests that every child should read this book. The only reservation de Bois utters against Pippi is that she is not religious, an aspect which was very important in Catholic Flanders in the 1950s: [...]

Pippi is so bright and so pithy, that not all girls, but also all boys should read this book. For those who are looking to split hairs: Pippi may be neutral, but what would we do with Our Lord in this fantastic incarnation of children's world. [BG 1 1952, 316]¹⁸⁹

[D]e Bois' final judgement is that the book be recommended for somewhat advanced readers (aged nine to twelve). Mind you, had Pippi been a faithful Catholic, the book certainly would have been *warmly* recommended. (Van den Bossche 2011b, 59; emphasis in original)

Bert de Bois hints at potential objections of a religious kind, which seem to prohibit him from praising the book without reservation. Nevertheless, he appears to downplay those objections.

Overall, it is striking that *Pippi Longstocking* was accepted readily, with hardly any demur raised against it. In fact, what is even more surprising, is that support for the Pippi-books occurred in channels where one would least expect it, such as the *Rafaël-catalogus*, a guide for acceptable reading for children compiled by the Inspection Board of Roman Catholic for Central Bureau for Literature (IDIL). As Anne de Vries indicates in his study *What Are Good Children's Books Thought to Be?* (1989), representatives of the Inspection Board argue in favour of books which carry a catholic moral and regard artistic value to be of secondary importance. They renounce pernicious literature, which includes neutral books, or books propagating Enlightenment ideas (de Vries 1989, 123-124). This is typically the kind of publication in which one would look for resistance against the Pippi-books. This is, however, not the case. Initially, in the 1954 *Rafaël Catalogue*, the first of the Pippi Longstocking-narratives is recommended to "anyone who is young at heart" and praised for its ability to relate to a vision of "how one would have dreamed oneself" (Raf 1 1954, 21).¹⁹⁰ Five years later, in 1959, the fear that the unbridled character would set a bad example for its readers, which was in fact the crux of a controversy surrounding the books in Sweden (cf. *infra*), is countered explicitly. The notice of the complete cycle reads as follows: "In the three volumes of the Pippi Longstocking-series, such foolish

¹⁸⁹ "Pippi is zo knap en zo pittig, dat niet alle meisjes, maar ook alle jongens dat boek lezen moeten. Voor hen die graten zoeken waar ze niet zijn: Pippi is wel neutraal, maar wat zouden we met O.L. Heer doen in deze fantastische kinderwereldincarnatie" (BG 1 1952, 316).

¹⁹⁰ "Voor ieder die een jong hart heeft"; "zoals men zichzelf wel eens droomde" (Raf 1 1954, 21).

adventures are narrated about Pippi and her friend Tommy, that they are *too* foolish and *too* fantastical to generate a risk for imitation in their readers” (Raf 5 1959, 4; emphasis in original).¹⁹¹ Significantly, the unnamed author does not believe that children who read the books will be inclined to copy Pippi’s excessive behaviour as they will be able to recognise it as unrealistic. The judgment expressed by a likewise anonymous *IDIL* critic is nigh-on identical. He or she finds that the adventures related in the Pippi Longstocking-series “are so fantastical and so foolish that they are impossible to imitate for their readers and therefore do not constitute a danger” (IDIL 4 1959, n.p.; emphasis in original).¹⁹² As such, these reviewers seem to either anticipate or respond to possible objections raised against the books, similar to those voiced in Sweden. The stance put forward here is remarkably progressive, in particular given the nature of the publications in which the pieces appeared.

In assessments of the second edition, which came out in 1958, much emphasis is placed on the humorous effect of the work. For instance, a critic writing for the *IDIL*-guide finds, “The peculiar Pippi’s silly whims render this book a scintillating entity, which imaginative children will relish” (IDIL 5 1959, n.p.).¹⁹³ In an earlier review in the same journal it is stressed that the narrated anecdotes “are so amusing and exciting that virtually any child will enjoy the numerous comical situations” (IDIL 3 1958, n.p.).¹⁹⁴ In *Lektuurgids*, objections of an educational kind are put aside. The verdict reads, “No matter how boisterous, the book remains pedagogically acceptable” (LG 1 1958, 188),¹⁹⁵ and the book is ranked as an A-list work, meaning that it should be available in every single library.

My analysis of the contemporary reviews provides proof that the introduction of *Pippi Longstocking* in the Dutch language area went utterly smoothly. Nonetheless, Rita Verschuur, the aforementioned translator of many of Lindgren’s works, raises objections against some of the Pippi-figure’s properties, which she finds questionable: “Pippi can jump from windows without hurting herself and in the Swedish version she even eats fly

¹⁹¹ “In de drie deeltjes uit de Pippi Langkous-reeks worden zulke dwaze avonturen verteld van Pippi met haar vriendje Tommy, dat ze té dwaas en té fantastisch zijn om gevaar tot navolging bij de lezertjes op te leveren” (Raf 5 1959, 4). This judgment is repeated in (Raf 7 1960, 4); (Raf 11 1961, 4); (Raf 14 1962, 4).

¹⁹² “zó fantastisch en zó dwaas, dat ze door de lezertjes niet na te volgen zijn en daarom ook geen gevaar kunnen opleveren” (IDIL 4 1959, n.p.; emphasis in original). Compare even (IDIL 3 1958, n.p.): “Due to the far-reaching imagination there is little or no chance that a child will try to imitate Pippi’s foolish pranks” [Door de verregaande fantasie bestaat er weinig kans, dat het kind de dwaze streken van Pippi zal proberen na te doen].

¹⁹³ “De dwaze invallen van de originele Pippi maken dit boek tot een sprankelend geheel, waarvan kinderen met veel fantasie zullen smullen” (IDIL 5 1959, n.p.).

¹⁹⁴ “zo amusant en opwindend, dat vrijwel ieder kind genieten kan van de talrijke komische situaties” (IDIL 3 1958, n.p.).

¹⁹⁵ “Hoe druk ook, toch blijft het boekje pedagogisch aanvaardbaar” (LG 1 1958, 188).

agarics without falling ill.¹⁹⁶ Imagine that any child anywhere in the world copies this” (News 401 1998, 17).¹⁹⁷ Obviously, she finds that such hazardous behaviour should not be imitated at all.¹⁹⁸ What chiefly troubles Verschuur about *Pippi Longstocking* is that the narrative is lacking in clear boundaries.¹⁹⁹ She herself deems clearly demarcated limits to be indispensable in children’s upbringing, and while in Lindgren’s writing “[t]he difference between fantasy and reality usually is very clear, right on the borderline it can be confusing at times” (News 401 1998, 17).²⁰⁰ Verschuur did not translate *Pippi Longstocking* herself, but the person who did, Lisbeth Borgesius-Wildshut, clearly felt the same about this specific episode: she substituted the potentially perilous “fly agaric” for the generic term “mushroom” (Lindgren 2002, 64).²⁰¹ As such, the translator turns the description into a euphemism, presumably in an effort to reduce the risk for dire consequences in case of imitation. Much harsher censorship was imposed on the Pippi-books in France, where the books were severely purified prior to publication. This fact is mentioned in five of the corpus articles.²⁰² A famous example of the French bowdlerisation of *Pippi Longstocking* is the horse, which Pippi lifts over her head, being replaced with a pony, which was found to be more likely.²⁰³ In addition, in the French

¹⁹⁶ (Lindgren 1945 [2001], 63)

¹⁹⁷ “Pippi kan uit het raam springen zonder zich te bezeren en in de Zweedse versie eet Pippi zelfs vliegenzwammen zonder ziek te worden. Het zal maar gebeuren dat een kind ter wereld dat nadoet.” (News 401 1998, 17)

¹⁹⁸ In another interview Verschuur emphasises that, to her, the risk for imitation seems imminent: “I felt that this went too far. I can easily imagine children thinking: ‘if Pippi can eat an entire fly agaric, then we can perhaps try a little piece’. It can happen so quickly, and even if one only one child does that, it is one child too many.” [Jag tyckte nämligen att det gick för långt. Jag kan så gott tänka mig att barn tanker: ‘om Pippi kan äta en hel flygsvamp, så kanske vi kan smaka en liten snutt’. Det är så lätt gjort, och om bara ett barn gör det, så är det ett barn för mycket.] (Van den Bossche 2004, 101)

¹⁹⁹ Maria Nikolajeva sees this specific property of Pippi’s as a sign of her “supernatural origin”: “She can eat toadstools. Any dictionary of myth will tell us that this ability signals belonging to ‘the other world.’ Pippi is a witch” (Nikolajeva 2006, 63).

²⁰⁰ “Meestal is het onderscheid tussen fantasie en realiteit heel helder, maar op de grens is het wel eens verwarrend” (News 401 1998, 17).

²⁰¹ In a recent Dutch version of *Pippi Longstocking*, issued in 2012, Lisbeth Borgesius-Wildschut’s 1952 translation is still used, albeit freshened up. The term “fly agaric” is not mentioned in the text, and the generic noun “mushroom” is preserved (Lindgren 2012b, 95). However, the fly agaric is visible in Lauren Child’s illustrations, partly undoing the euphemistic effect of the text.

²⁰² (Lzl 2 1995, 167); (News 76 1993, n.p.); (News 276 2007, 65); (News 481 2002, 6); (News 625 2006, 35).

²⁰³ See (Matson 2002); (Heldner 2004). Astrid Lindgren herself had actually foreseen much of the criticism. Upon submitting *Proto-Pippi* to Bonniers, she famously writes an ironic letter to the publishers urging them not to report her to the Child Welfare Council on account of child abuse, as is mentioned in one article in the corpus (En nu 2 1974, 9). See <<http://www.rabensjogren.se/Alfabetiskt/L/Astrid-Lindgren/>> [Accessed 27 October 2014]. Hans Avontuur furthermore cites a famous response of Lindgren’s, in which she states, “When people say that no normal child would eat an entire cake [...] that is correct. But what child could lift a horse with

translation Pippi's first name is censored, she is called Fifi instead. In Swedish, the noun "pippi" is an informal word for a bird, which furthermore denotes folly and silliness. In French, "pipi" is an informal term for urine, which may be the reason why it was found to be offensive. In the Flemish variety of Dutch, the word has the same meaning, but the name was nevertheless left unchanged. What is more, this particular connotation of the word is never even referred to in the corpus materials.²⁰⁴

De Volkskrant-critic Hanneke de Klerck sees Lindgren's choice to stem the current with *Pippi Longstocking* as an extension of her own personality, another instance of which is the fact that she became a single mother by choice. "She must have been a rebellious girl, Astrid Lindgren", she writes, "already at a time when a girl was still called a gal, an older girl a lady, and an unmarried mother a fallen woman" (News 95 1997, n.p.).²⁰⁵ De Klerck interprets Lindgren's tongue-in-cheek note, her gesture of defiance towards the publisher, accordingly: "The year was 1945, she had created a character which was utterly reprehensible – pedagogically speaking – and she duly realised it, flirted with it" (News 95 1997, n.p.).²⁰⁶ However, she notes, Lindgren eventually did conform to the bourgeois values of her time (News 95 1997, n.p.). By testing the waters she could find out just how far she could stretch the boundaries without risking going too far. De Klerck furthermore states that the first Pippi-book caused a commotion when it was first published in 1952, and that it still was controversial when she herself was young in the 1970s. She remarks that back when she attended primary school, not all of her classmates parents' allowed their children to read the books (News 95 1997, n.p.). Likewise, in connection with the discovery of a Christmas story featuring Pippi Longstocking in 2002, an unnamed reporter in *Algemeen Dagblad* relates how the original book was received initially: "Fifty years ago, Holland was introduced to Pippi Longstocking for the first time. Not every adult was taken

outstretched arms? Whoever can do that, can also spoon up an entire cake in one go" [Als mensen zeggen dat een normaal kind geen hele taart [...] opeet, dan klopt dat. Maar welk kind zou met gestrekte arm een paard kunnen optillen? Wie dat kan, kan ook in een keer een hele taart oplepelen] (News 393 1998, 3).

²⁰⁴ Rita Verschuur in addition points out that the book was subject to a mild form of censorship prior to its publication already, and before the Pippi-feud arose. The original manuscript, which later came to be known as the Ur-Pippi [Proto-Pippi], was too emancipated for the publisher's taste and had to be toned down in order for it to be accepted for publication (News 401 1998, 17). See also (News 681 2007, 10-11).

²⁰⁵ "Ze moet een rebelse meid zijn geweest, Astrid Lindgren, al in de tijd dat een meid nog meisje heette, een ouder meisje juffrouw en een ongehuwde moeder een gevallen vrouw" (News 95 1997, n.p.). Cf. (News 179 2002, 49).

²⁰⁶ "Het was 1945, ze had een figuurtje gecreëerd dat pedagogisch volstrekt onverantwoord was en besepte dat terdege, flirtte er mee" (News 95 1997, n.p.).

with her. Parents were afraid that her rebellious personality would exert a bad influence on their children” (News 517 2002, 10).²⁰⁷

These are in fact two of only a handful of indications of criticism aimed against *Pippi Longstocking* in the Dutch language area. Although quite a few of the reviewers in articles from the past two decades refer to the critical attitude with respect to the work in Flanders and the Netherlands in the initial stages of Lindgren’s reception, hardly any such objections could be gleaned from the corpus.²⁰⁸ Quite on the contrary, some of the reviewers do not even seem to be aware of the aftermath of the publication of the book. Bas Maliepaard, for example, simply states that it was “a resounding success” (News 681 2007, 10-11).²⁰⁹ What is more, the majority of the corpus contributors express admiration for the pioneering role Astrid Lindgren played by publishing this work. In an anonymous piece from 2006 announcing a documentary on Pippi Longstocking, the timing of the book’s publication is seen as an important factor in its success:

The book appeared in 1945 at exactly the right time. During the war years, the time hadn’t been ripe for a revolutionary character like Pippi yet, but in 1945 everything became ‘lightened’ once again and people felt a need for new things. (News 240 2006, 65)²¹⁰

The entire article focuses on Lindgren’s innovativity and is completely devoid of any negative evaluations. In 2000, *Trouw* critic Dorien Pels likewise stresses just how groundbreaking Lindgren’s feat was: “With the unconventional Pippi, Lindgren was way ahead of her time, and she got a lot of criticism. From adults, of course, because children devoured her books” (News 432 2000, 3).²¹¹

Overall, the warm welcome *Pippi Longstocking* received stands in stark contrast with the controversy it caused in Sweden. In the following two sections, I will first give a short overview of the Swedish Pippi-debate, and subsequently discuss the characteristic traits

²⁰⁷ “Nederland maakte 50 jaar geleden voor het eerst kennis met Pippi Langkous. Niet iedere volwassene was van haar gecharmeerd. Ouders waren bang dat haar rebelse karakter een slechte invloed op hun kinderen zou uitoefenen” (News 517 2002, 10).

²⁰⁸ In her study of Annie M.G. Schmidt’s oeuvre, Joke Linders likewise points out the surprising lack in criticism of Astrid Lindgren’s books (including *Pippi Longstocking*) (Linders 2011).

²⁰⁹ “een doorslaand succes” (News 681 2007, 10-11).

²¹⁰ “Het boek verscheen in 1945 precies op het juiste moment. In de oorlogsjaren was de tijd nog niet rijp voor een revolutionair personage als Pippi, maar in 1945 werd het weer ‘licht’ en voelden de mensen behoefte aan nieuwe dingen” (News 240 2006, 65). Compare (News 241 2006, 39): “*Pippi Longstocking* appeared in 1945, right on time. The war was over and the time was ripe for a revolutionary wench like Pippi” [*Pippi Langkous* verscheen in 1945, net op tijd. De oorlog was voorbij en de tijd was rijp voor een revolutionair wicht als Pippi].

²¹¹ “Lindgren was met de roldoorbrekende Pippi haar tijd ver vooruit, en ze kreeg een lading kritiek over zich heen. Van volwassenen, uiteraard, want kinderen vraten haar boeken” (News 432 2000, 3).

of the 1950s field of children's literature in Flanders and The Netherlands, in an attempt to explain the divergent response *Pippi Longstocking* was met with.

The Swedish Pippi-Feud

The first Pippi Longstocking-book was published in 1945 and soon became very popular. Despite – or perhaps, thanks to – its enormous success, it aroused harsh criticism in 1946, when a row which came to be known as the “Pippi-feud” was initiated by professor of pedagogics John Landquist. Ulla Lundqvist coined the term “Pippi-feud” in her book *The Child of the Century. The Phenomenon Pippi Longstocking and its Preconditions* (Lundqvist 1979, 239).²¹² Its starting point was a scathing article entitled “Poor and Prize-Winning. A Reflection on Good and Poor Children's Books” (1946),²¹³ in which Landquist demolishes *Pippi Longstocking* for being pointless and morally reprehensible.

Among other things, the famous tea party-episode, in which Pippi devours a cake in its entirety, breeds bad blood in Landquist, who deems it to be tasteless and “reminiscent of an insane person's imagination or of unhealthy obsessions” (Landquist 1946, n.p.).²¹⁴ He expresses serious concerns about the effect of the book: “If this stupid behaviour has any impact on the child readers at all, it is that of making the predispositions to insane actions that are dormant in every one of us surface” (Landquist 1946, n.p.).²¹⁵ Another scene arousing aversion in Landquist is the one where Pippi finds a poisonous mushroom in the forest and decides to eat it. He rages, “There is no understandable reason whatsoever why Pippi remains unharmed by the mushroom” (Landquist 1946, n.p.).²¹⁶ By contrast, it is “possible that foolish little children [...] could imitate her spirited tasting. In any case, the fun in this tasteless joke about poisoning and death is beyond comprehension” (Landquist 1946, n.p.).²¹⁷ He dismisses the book in its entirety and instead favours meaningful “impressions of literary beauty” as provided in the books by Zacharias Topelius, Hans Christian Andersen, Elsa Beskow and A.A. Milne (Landquist 1946, n.p.).²¹⁸ Landquist's review initiates a tsunami of negative reactions centring on the suitability of the book for child readers. The ensuing debate shows parents and educators worried about the

²¹² *Århundradets barn. Fenomenet Pippi Långstrump och dess förutsättningar* (Lundqvist 1979). I refer to this study (pp. 239-251) for a full account of the eventful reception of *Pippi Longstocking* in Sweden. See also (Kåreland 1999); (Surmatz 2005).

²¹³ “Dålig och prisbelönt. En reflexion om goda och dåliga barnböcker” (Landquist 1946).

²¹⁴ “påminner om en sinnessjuks fantasi eller om sjukliga tvångsföreställningar” (Landquist 1946, n.p.).

²¹⁵ “Har över huvud dessa tjockhuvade uppträdan någon verkan så är det den att de driver upp till medvetande de anlag till sinnessjuka handlingar som slumarar hos en var” (Landquist 1946, n.p.).

²¹⁶ “Det kan icke finnas någon som helst anledning varför Pippi förblir oskadd av flugsvampen” (Landquist 1946, n.p.).

²¹⁷ “möjligheter att oförståndiga småbarn [...] kan imitera hennes kavata smakande. Hur som helst är detta smaklösa skoj med förgiftning och död obegripligt” (Landquist 1946, n.p.).

²¹⁸ “litterära skönhetsintryck” (Landquist 1946, n.p.).

detrimental effect of Pippi Longstocking's shocking, disrespectful behaviour on innocent readers who might not understand her conduct but may imitate it nonetheless.

Nevertheless, *Pippi Longstocking* was received utterly positively at first. Critics are pleasantly surprised by the unusual, disarming character (Lundqvist 1979, 235). They point out her casual attitude with respect to social conventions but they do not revile it, rather, they find it endearing. This is evidenced by the judgment of Gallie Åkerhielm, which Ulla Lundqvist cites as representative of the overall attitude held by Lindgren's supporters. It reads,

when she every now and then turns conventions upside down and eats an entire cake during the tea-party hosted by the conceited aunts, one is almost ashamed to admit that one feels that that is precisely what had to happen at that point. *And that it is wonderful that someone dares to do it.* Not to mention how much better it feels that it is Pippi doing it, and not one's own well-educated little Lisa. (Cited in (Lundqvist 1979, 234; emphasis in original))²¹⁹

The fact that the cake-anecdote is at stake in the polemic and is used as an argument both for and against the Pippi-book shows that this debate arose at a time when discourse on (reform) pedagogy was heavily polarised. In the end, Pippi was accepted by the reluctant adult canonising agents in Sweden. Due to its polarised nature, the debate exhibits clear elements of top-down and bottom-up canonisation simultaneously. The upward current in the canonisation process illustrates the suggestion that there is no such thing as bad publicity, or, as Oscar Wilde put it, "The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about".²²⁰

The 1950s Dutch-Language Reception Climate

In this section, particular attention is paid to the climate into which *Pippi Longstocking*, the first title of Astrid Lindgren's to be published in Dutch, was received in 1952. A sketch of the backdrop which it was introduced into seems vital for a proper understanding of its reception for several reasons. Firstly, because an author's debut is particularly significant in terms of canonisation, seeing that it is their first chance to make an impression on their audience and arbiters. In addition, seeing that *Pippi Longstocking* was highly controversial in Sweden, the fact that it did *not* cause a stir in the Dutch-language field of children's

²¹⁹ "om hon då och då vänder upp och ner på konvensbegreppen och äter upp en hela gräddtårtan på de snorkiga tanternas kafferep, så får man skam till sägandes en stark känsla av att det är precis vad som borde göras just då. Och att det är härligt med någon som vågar göra det. För att inte tala om hur ännu mycket härligare det är, att det är Pippi och inte ens egen väluppfostrade lilla Lisa som gör det" (Lundqvist 1979, 234; emphasis in original).

²²⁰ <<http://www.quotes.net/quote/34887>> [Accessed 19 August 2014].

literature calls for contextualisation. Therefore, the ideas on children's literature which prevailed at that time and which could affect the book's reception are scrutinised. A relevant, detailed study of the context of the Dutch field of children's literature was carried out by Anne de Vries, former head of the children's book section of the *Dutch Centre for Libraries and Reading*.²²¹ In 1989, de Vries published his dissertation titled *What Are Good Children's Books Thought to Be?*,²²² in which he scrutinised the views on children's literature governing the field between 1880 and 1980. For this purpose, he investigated theoretical discussions on children's literature as well as reviews of children's books from newspapers, pedagogical periodicals, and literary journals. I will build on the main findings regarding the 1950s presented in his study and complement these with my own observations concerning the state of affairs in Flanders in the same period.²²³

Judging by Anne de Vries' analysis, *Pippi Langkous*, the Dutch translation of *Pippi Longstocking*, arrived at a time when the field of children's literature was in transition. Institutionally speaking, the mid-twentieth century entailed the demarcation of a *separate* field of children's literary criticism, which became increasingly independent from general literary criticism. Examples of this development are the establishment of the so-called *Book and Youth Bureau* in 1953,²²⁴ which organised the first Children's Book Week in 1955, and introduced the Children's Book Prize that same year (de Vries 1989, 164). Although these facts illustrate that the *Book and Youth Bureau* managed to put children's literature on the map as an entity in its own right, De Vries indicates that his father, children's book author Anne de Vries (whom he was named after), deplored the lack of depth in the consideration given to children's literature at the time, which to his mind was caused by the fact that general literary critics neglected to discuss children's books.²²⁵ Despite the signs of growing awareness of children's literature, De Vries Snr remarked that this expansion had been merely lateral, and that the attention given to the subject needed the supported of serious criticism and research to become substantial (de Vries 1989, 200).

The main views on children's literature were transforming as well. Up until 1930, De Vries shows, opinions had been polarised. Children's books were either seen as a means for education, or considered to be works of art in their own right. In the latter perspective,

²²¹ *Nederlands Bibliotheek en Lektuur Centrum*.

²²² *Wat heten goede kinderboeken?* (de Vries 1989).

²²³ For an in-depth discussion of developments in the Dutch field up to 1980 I refer to (de Vries 1989). In addition, the overview of the journals and books available in the Flemish and Dutch fields of children's literature in the previous section gives a rough idea of what the fields looked like after the 1950s. Thorough scrutiny and description of the changes in the Flemish field specifically would provide ample subject matter for a study in its own right.

²²⁴ *Bureau Boek en Jeugd*.

²²⁵ The bifurcation of children's and adult literature had already started in the first decade of the twentieth century, as De Vries Jr showed (de Vries 1989, 89).

the way in which children *experienced* those works was taken into account as well (de Vries 1989, 46; 285). It was truly a matter of either/or, the outlooks were diametrically opposed, and their representatives challenged each other's views. De Vries categorises the two currents as pedagogical and aesthetic respectively, and notes that these views were imposed on children's books from above; it were the gatekeepers' opinions which mattered, and no one else's (de Vries 1989, 46). Within the pedagogically-oriented paradigm, adults were keen to keep children away from books depicting objectionable conduct which could potentially mar their moral maturation. After 1930, and in the 1950s in particular, De Vries observes a convergence of the hitherto divergent points of view. Inspired by German developmental psychologist Charlotte Bühler's influential theory on reading stages,²²⁶ the Dutch gatekeepers started to take into account children's emotional development as a factor directing their reading preferences. Children were increasingly seen as individuals capable of shaping their own morality, and one began to realise that adults' and children's literary inclinations could differ (de Vries 1989, 209). De Vries terms the newly emerged view on children's literature preponderant in the 1950s "pedagogic-aesthetic" (de Vries 1989, 167), with the hyphen symbolising the decreasing opposition in gatekeepers' standpoints.

The aesthetic component of the overriding attitude shines through in the viewpoints expressed by some of the leading figures in the field. Their conception of the children's book author is heavily indebted to the Romantic ideal of the artist as a genius in touch with the deeper truths of human life. Educationalist D.L. Daalder in his study *Tansy and Sugar* (1950)²²⁷ posits that artistry should be the foremost requirement for a children's book. De Vries paraphrases Daalder's view that the artist is perceived as "a revolutionary, menacing all things decent, assailing sacred cows, and contesting formalism. According to Daalder, the artist indeed is a nonconformist" (de Vries 1989, 169).²²⁸ The latter trait is foregrounded as an aspect which child readers appreciate: "that is why [the artist] appeals to children so much" (de Vries 1989, 169).²²⁹ Significantly, as will be shown later, nonconformism is a characteristic of Astrid Lindgren's writing which is believed to have been an immensely important component of her success.²³⁰ Moreover, Daalder explicitly undercuts traditional beliefs as to the mutual exclusivity of pedagogy and art. Because he has access to the realm of absolute truths and values, the artist is the natural enemy of

²²⁶ Bühler introduced her ideas in *Das Märchen und die Fantasie des Kindes* [*The Fairy Tale and the Imagination of the Child*], first published in 1918.

²²⁷ *Wormcruyt met suyccker* (Daalder 1950).

²²⁸ "een revolutionair, de belager van alles wat fatsoenlijk is, de aanrander van heilige huisjes en de bestrijder van alle formalisme. Volgens Daalder is de kunstenaar inderdaad een nonconformist" (de Vries 1989, 169).

²²⁹ "daarom valt hij bij kinderen zo in de smaak" (de Vries 1989, 169).

²³⁰ See section 3.1.

any kind of moral that overpowers aestheticism. In *Tansy and Sugar*, Daalder remarks, “An artist’s creation is sensible, and ethical, and aesthetic, and hence a means in the hands of the educator – and what a means! – to influence and impel the development of a personality’s potential” (cited in de Vries 1989, 170).²³¹ In Daalder’s view, the pedagogical dimension is a self-evident component of a children’s book. His standpoint can in fact be summarised by means of an aphorism of renowned Swedish author and champion of children’s literature Lennart Hellsing, who famously stated, “All pedagogical art is bad – and all good art is pedagogical”.²³²

The second pillar of the pedagogic-aesthetic approach to children’s books is the idea of children as proper individuals, which is mirrored in the growing consideration for their emotions, desires, and needs. The prevalent child image can be seen to evolve from that of children as innocent and in need of protection from the bad outside world to that of an independent and resilient creature (de Vries 1989, 214). In 1949, librarian Louise Boerlage rebuts the conviction dominant before 1930 that children needed to be moulded so as to become better and more noble people than the current generation of adults. Boerlage feels that this notion has become obsolete, and that she and her contemporaries have grown wiser, seeing that they have come to realise “that we do not make our children into anything: they ‘make’ themselves” (cited in (de Vries 1989, 182)).²³³ Such a conception of children is slightly reminiscent of reform-pedagogical ideas which came into fashion in the 1930s.²³⁴ The Dutch gatekeepers adhering to this conception argue in favour of books in which recognisable emotions work to facilitate identification on the part of the child reader (de Vries 1989, 182, 194, 197). Children’s book author W.G. van de Hulst maintains that a proper writer for children ought to write “as-a-child-itself, from within the child”, and that children’s books are meant to “reflect their *inner* lives” (quoted in (de Vries 1989, 194-195; emphasis in original)),²³⁵ a belief which – as De Vries shows – is shared by many of van de Hulst’s contemporaries. Furthermore, reading is increasingly seen as an escapist activity, allowing children to get “away” from reality for a while, and providing an outlet for feelings of aggression, for instance (de Vries 1989, 174, 201, 202). Overall, the 1950s in the Dutch field of children’s literature saw a waning demonisation of morally reprehensible books and a diminishing focus on bad examples set by literary figures.

²³¹ “De schepping van een kunstenaar is redelijk en zedelijk en aesthetisch en dus een middel in de handen van de opvoeder – en welk een middel! – om te beïnvloeden en te stuwen bij de ontwikkeling tot persoonlijkheid van wie het in potentie is” (de Vries 1989, 170).

²³² “All pedagogisk konst är dålig konst – och all god konst är pedagogisk”. Cf. (Boëthius 2010).

²³³ “dat we onze kinderen niet tot iets maken: zij ‘maken’ zichzelf” (de Vries 1989, 182).

²³⁴ See section 3.1.

²³⁵ “als-kind-zelf uit het kind”; “spiegels van hun *innerlijk* leven” (de Vries 1989, 194-195; emphasis in original).

Dutch children's book author Annie M.G. Schmidt is a prime example of a player in the 1950s field of children's literature aligned with the pedagogic-aesthetic paradigm. As will be shown further on (section 5.4), she is one of the main points of reference for Astrid Lindgren in the Dutch language area, which is why I choose to deal with her views on children's literature at greater length here. Anna Maria Geertruida Schmidt was a prolific and versatile writer, who started her career as a librarian and went on to write novels, stories, poems, columns, and songs as well as theatre and television scripts for a dual readership.²³⁶ In a 1954 booklet giving parents advice on children's books, Schmidt, too, reacts against the deployment in books for children of "Deterrent Examples", as Anne de Vries puts it (de Vries 1989, 186). In her view, bad examples in children's books never do much damage due to the fact that children do not live in a vacuum, but rather in an environment that undoes the effect of literature. She rejects overly moralistic reactions against bad books, and, by contrast, warns against the danger of raising children in a "cultural vacuum", deprived of the "vitamins" and the long-term effect which good children's literature provides (de Vries 1989, 186).²³⁷

Schmidt sees as the vital components of good children's books

[s]tories with living figures, figures who live on, even years past the closing of the book. The yarn, from which these stories ought to be woven: joy, and warmth, and humour, and moral, and safety, and adventure, and mildness, and compassion. [This yarn] should be able not to fade, not even after many years. (quoted in de Vries 1989, 186-187)²³⁸

De Vries indicates that Schmidt sets great store by such narratives, because they provide the child reader with much-needed stability, ensuing from "the security of the home, the breadth of the adventure, and the delightful boundlessness of existence" (de Vries 1989, 187).²³⁹ Schmidt furthermore urges mediators between children and their books to take into consideration children's literary and emotional needs. Following Charlotte Bühler's reading stages theory, she believes those needs to be correlated to children's age. Nevertheless she points out that it constantly revolves around a few central elements, such as adventure, danger, resistance against authority – components which are counterbalanced by the sense of security evoked by a safe return home (de Vries 1989,

²³⁶ See < <http://www.annie-mg.com/> > [Accessed 8 November 2014].

²³⁷ "cultureel luchtledig" (de Vries 1989, 186)

²³⁸ "Verhalen dus met levende figuren, figuren die blijven doorleven, ook jaren nadat het boek is dichtgeslagen. De garens, waarmee die verhalen geborduurd moeten zijn: vreugde en warmte en humor en moraal en veiligheid en avontuur en mildheid en mededogen ... moeten niet kunnen verbleken, ook niet na jaren" (de Vries 1989, 186-187).

²³⁹ "de veiligheid van het thuis en de wijdheid van het avontuur en de verrukkelijke onbegrensde van het bestaan" (de Vries 1989, 187).

188). Consequently, Schmidt believes that rascally, picaresque elements in children's books serve to relieve children's energy (de Vries 1989, 188), and that they therefore have a far-reaching psychological effect.

In 1965, upon receiving the State Prize for Children's Literature,²⁴⁰ Schmidt once more lashes out at the requirement for children's books to be edifying. In her opinion, the only requirement a children's book should meet is that it be "true", authentic and not consisting of lies. As Anne de Vries explains, this is an aesthetically motivated argument, because Schmidt, just like many of her contemporaries, believes that moral intentions erode the value of the book as a piece of art. She sees Holland as lacking in imagination, as a result of which artistry is threatened by people's "insipidly decent, [...] intentionally benevolent" attitudes, by their overemphasis on taboos and "the fear of the truth", which leads them to constantly "stamp out fire[s]" (cited in de Vries 1989, 189).²⁴¹ The gist of Annie M.G. Schmidt's outlook on children's books, then, is that works of great literary quality which take children as a starting point offer children something invaluable, namely "the foundation of their culture" (cited in de Vries 1989, 189).²⁴² As such, Schmidt represents the aesthetic perspective on children's books, in which the aesthetics of the book and children's aesthetic response to it are coupled (de Vries 1989, 285).

The growing amount of attention paid to arguments of a literary kind, discernible throughout the 1950s, ensued from a growing concern about cultural decay amongst teenagers. Educators deplored the social degeneration they saw in youngsters, which they believed to be caused by the decline of an ordered, purpose-driven, nigh-on teleological lifestyle. What they observed in the young instead was an overriding preference for passive entertainment, of which then modern media such as movies, radio, and comic books were the main exponents, along with teenagers' habit to loaf about in the streets (de Vries 1989, 164). 1950s gatekeepers of children's literature were convinced that these lamentable trends could be precluded and perhaps even rectified by means of high-quality books. The expanding importance of literary criteria coincided with the erosion of socio-political boundaries which traditionally had existed between socialist, Protestant, and Roman-Catholic movements. As regards the field of children's literature, this evolution entailed a decrease in the strict denominational demands previously imposed on children's books.

In Flanders, similar worries appeared to preoccupy the editorial board of *Jeugdboekengids*,²⁴³ a critical-bibliographical children's literature journal founded in 1959

²⁴⁰ Staatsprijs voor kinder- en jeugdliteratuur.

²⁴¹ "geestloos-fatsoenlijke, [...] opzettelijk-goedwillende"; "de angst voor de waarheid"; "het uittrappen van vuur" (de Vries 1989, 189).

²⁴² "het fundament van hun cultuur" (de Vries 1989, 189).

²⁴³ *Children's Book Guide*.

as a branch of *Boekengids*,²⁴⁴ a periodical for general literature coordinated by the *General Secretariat for Catholic Libraries*.²⁴⁵ Up until that point, children's books had been reviewed in parent journal *Boekengids*. In their preface to the first ever issue, editorial secretary Hendrik Jaspers and editor-in-chief priest X. de Win indicate that by establishing this separate journal for children's books, "the board of *Boekengids* wishes to underline the great importance of the Dutch-language children's literature and the dissemination of children's reading in Flanders" (Jaspers and de Win 1959, 1).²⁴⁶ Explicitly aiming their contributions at parents, teachers, and librarians, the editorial board sets as its goal to bring the best children's literature to the notice of these educators. Much like their Dutch contemporaries, they are concerned about the hazards modern-day children and youths were confronted with. With reference to pope Pius XII and his spokesperson cardinal Jozef Van Roey, Jaspers and de Win condemn "that worldly spirit of superficiality and a craving for pleasure" fostered by "bad reading, salacious illustrations, indecent performances, dangerous dancing-salons", and, more significantly still, the fragmentation of the traditional family (Jaspers and de Win 1959, 1).²⁴⁷ Educators are tasked with keeping children away from such bad influences, and, more importantly, with presenting them with "the very best reading and artistic, creative illustrations" (Jaspers and de Win 1959, 1).²⁴⁸ In order to reach that goal, Jaspers and de Win urge the gatekeepers of children's literature to recognise the part high-quality children's books can play in counteracting youngsters' moral decay: "A good and fine children's book is like a second guardian angel. It is a friend who never betrays the young. It is an opportunity for *reflection*, formation of emotions, refined recreation, indeed of true *artistic pleasure*" (Jaspers and de Win 1959, 1; emphasis added).²⁴⁹ In coupling inner growth with aesthetic enjoyment, Jaspers and de Win prove themselves to be aligned with the pedagogic-aesthetic mindset predominant in Dutch children's literary criticism at the time.

In 1954, *Lektuurgids*,²⁵⁰ a new bibliographical periodical, was launched. Whereas the foundation of *Jeugdboekengids* as an autonomous entity attests to the dissociation of children's from general literature, with all its consequences, the intentions behind

²⁴⁴ *Book Guide*.

²⁴⁵ *Algemeen Secretariaat voor Katholieke Boekerijen* (A.S.K.B.).

²⁴⁶ "wil de directie van 'Boekengids' het groot belang van de Nederlandstalige jeugdliteratuur en de jeugdlectuurverspreiding in Vlaanderen onderstrepen" (Jaspers and de Win 1959, 1).

²⁴⁷ "die wereldse geest van oppervlakkigheid en zucht naar zingenot"; "slechte lectuur, prikkelende illustraties, onwelvoeglijke vertoningen, gevaarlijke dansgelegenheden" (Jaspers and de Win 1959, 1).

²⁴⁸ "de allerbeste lectuur en de kunstzinnige, vormende illustraties" (Jaspers and de Win 1959, 1).

²⁴⁹ "Een goed en schoon jeugdboek is als een tweede engelbewaarder. Het is een vriend die nimmer de jeugd verraadt. Het is een gelegenheid van bezinning, van gemoedsvorming, van edele ontspanning, ja van echt kunstgenot" (Jaspers and de Win 1959, 1).

²⁵⁰ *Reading Guide*.

Lektuurgids are the opposite. In *Lektuurgids*, children's books are reviewed alongside works for adults. Editor-in-chief Leo Magits' political leanings were outspokenly socialist. He administered the *National Library Fund*,²⁵¹ and at the time when *Lektuurgids* was founded served as the secretary to the *Centre for Workers' Education*.²⁵² The following quotation from his foreword to the first issue illustrates that children's books self-evidently rank among the upper echelons of literature: "Naturally, belles-lettres and youth reading will hold a prominent position in the journal" (Magits 1954, 1; emphasis added).²⁵³ Furthermore, the editors, who with this periodical target librarians, set out to treat the reviewed books impartially, and to separate the wheat from the chaff (Magits 1954, 1). The journal editors did not provide a specific programme on children's literature such as the one published in *Jeugdboekengids*. Nevertheless, the fact that children's books are considered to be an obvious part of literature and that they, too, can belong to the proverbial wheat, bears witness to an inclusive approach and a respectful attitude towards children's literature on their part. Overall, in Flanders as well as in The Netherlands, the climate in which children's books travelled in the 1950s was fairly favourable. The tide was right, as is demonstrated by the opportunity they got to either claim some territory of their own, or to be considered of equal value to adult books. Moreover, it is illustrated by the ever-increasing willingness to treat children's books not just as vehicles of education but as works of art deserving of a literary approach.²⁵⁴ Part of the explanation of the mild reception of *Pippi Longstocking* in the Dutch language area is indubitably distance in time, which meant that the dust had already settled on the Pippi-feud in Sweden. In addition, though, this particular stimulating atmosphere, with focus shifting away from what adults saw as fitting to what children might appreciate, could in fact help to clarify why the first Pippi-book was not met with any significant resistance in Flanders and The Netherlands.

The Mild Reception Climate for *Pippi Longstocking* in Flanders and The Netherlands

If the first Pippi-book did not cause much controversy in the Dutch language area, one could wonder if the commotion in Swedish media surrounding its publication reverberated in it at all. Dutch and Flemish critics indeed seem to be aware of the Swedish

²⁵¹ *Nationaal Bibliotheekfonds*.

²⁵² *Centrale voor Arbeidersopvoeding*.

²⁵³ "Uit de aard der zaak zullen de belletrie en de jeugdlectuur een voorname plaats in het tijdschrift bekleden" (Magits 1954, 1).

²⁵⁴ Elsewhere, Anne de Vries stated that the true breakthrough of *purely* literary arguments in the evaluation of children's books took place after 1970 (de Vries 1991, 304).

stir.²⁵⁵ For example, it is recounted by Vanessa Joosen in an article honouring Lindgren's centenary. Joosen maintains that what is characteristic of Pippi's behaviour is that she, "broadly smiling, treads on petty adults' toes and turns logic upside down" (News 274 2007, 40).²⁵⁶ As she furthermore explains, Pippi's "absurd humour and rebellious character [...] were unheard-of" in the middle of the 1940s, at a time when "good behaviour and firm moral principles still were well thought-of in the realm of children's literature" (News 274 2007, 40).²⁵⁷ Judith Eiselin in her obituary of Lindgren comments on the crux of the Swedish controversy feud:

The publication of *Pippi Longstocking* in 1945 must have been somewhat of an earthquake. Up until then, most children's books had been nice and sound, with a clear moral. Pippi mocks all of that; order, rules, and manners, what parents try to impart to their children. [...] Nowadays children in children's books are assertive, unruly, and headstrong to the point of being soporific, but in 1945 Pippi Longstocking entailed a revolution. (News 471 2002, 1)²⁵⁸

Petra Sjouwerman in considering the cause underlying the Pippi-feud explicitly couples it with the epoch-making impact of reform pedagogy. She argues that debates were so vehement precisely because they hinged on a "clash between teachers of the old school and the adherents of free pedagogy, who believe that play and imagination are indispensable to a person's development" (News 598 2005, 15).²⁵⁹ On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the first Pippi-book, Henk van Gelder, journalist for the Dutch *NRC Handelsblad*, ascribes its popularity to the negative publicity it got. He remarks that "Pippi Longstocking was an immediate success, *not in the least* because of the controversial attack by an eminent Swedish professor, in *Svenska Dagebladet* [sic] in 1946, on the heroine's

²⁵⁵ (News 71 1992, n.p.); (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 85 1995, n.p.). It is furthermore mentioned indirectly in (En nu 2 1974, 9), which is a reprinted essay by Astrid Lindgren on her own works, but is not commented upon.

²⁵⁶ "Met een brede glimlach stamppt Pippi tegen de schenen van enggeestige volwassenen en zet ze de logica op zijn kop" (News 274 2007, 40).

²⁵⁷ "De absurde humor en het rebelse karakter van Pippi waren ongezien"; "stonden goed gedrag en een stevige moraal nog hoog aangeschreven in kinderboekenland" (News 274 2007, 40).

²⁵⁸ "De verschijning van Pippi Langkous in 1945 moet een soort aardchok zijn geweest. Tot dan toe waren de meeste kinderboeken keurig en degelijk, met een duidelijke moraal. Pippi spot ermee; met orde en regels en manieren, met wat ouders hun kinderen bij proberen te brengen. [...] Tegenwoordig zijn kinderen in kinderboeken op het slaapverwekkende af assertief, tegendraads en eigengereid, maar in 1945 betekende Pippi Langkous een revolutie" (News 471 2002, 1).

²⁵⁹ "botsing tussen onderwijzers van de oude stempel en de aanhangers van de vrije pedagogiek, die menen dat spel en fantasie onmisbaar zijn voor de ontwikkeling van een mens" (News 598 2005, 15).

behaviour, which was antiauthoritarian and mocking any form of logic” (News 85 1995, n.p.; emphasis added).²⁶⁰

On the whole, the commotion brought about by *Pippi Longstocking* in The Netherlands and Flanders by no means can be called a “feud”. The book was accepted quite readily and there were not nearly as many bottom-up factors involved in its canonisation as was the case in Sweden. Migrating south, *Pippi Longstocking* in the Low Countries found a reception climate which appears to have been much milder. In comparison with the controversy-laden reception in Sweden, the introduction of *Pippi Longstocking* in the Dutch language area was a low-key affair. The book was considerably less high-profile, critics did not seem to be gasping for breath quite as often, responses to its publication were toned down, and it was met with benevolence much more consistently. There are no signs whatsoever that the witch hunt in Swedish newspapers reverberated in the Dutch-language press. The distance in time quite certainly must have played a role – the first Pippi-book appeared in Holland eight years after its initial publication in Sweden – but perhaps it also has to do with a differing overall attitude regarding education. In mid-twentieth century Sweden, debates on upbringing were visible and animated. With the country being the cradle of reform pedagogy, the ideas advanced in these debates were revolutionary. In such a climate, where strong, progressive views oppose extant visions, a book embodying the innovative outlook is bound to invoke resistance in reactionary circles. Public debate on educational principles in the early 1950s in the Netherlands and Flanders was not nearly as polarised, which allowed for a far smoother acceptance of the work.

In later stages of its reception, the groundbreaking contribution of the Pippi-trilogy is foregrounded. There are many indications in the corpus which signal the attribution of Lindgren’s great renown to the trilogy’s epoch-making impact. In the late 1990s, Hanneke de Klerck, looking back on the author’s career, finds that times change, as do morals. She observes, “Just as it is hard to understand what scandal was brought down upon unmarried mothers [such as Lindgren; svdb], it is hard to imagine that Pippi Longstocking got criticised” (News 95 1997, n.p.).²⁶¹ By that time, the few critical voices renouncing Pippi Longstocking had long since waned,²⁶² which shows in 1998, when the character literally

²⁶⁰ “Pippi Langkous was een onmiddellijk succes, al was het maar door de geruchtmakende aanval van een vooraanstaand Zweeds hoogleraar, in 1946 in *Svenska Dagebladet* [sic], op het antiautoritaire en met elke vorm van logica spottende gedrag van de heldin” (News 85 1995, n.p.).

²⁶¹ “Zoals het bijna niet meer na te voelen is welk schandaal ongetrouwde moeders over zich afriepen, zo is het moeilijk voor te stellen dat Pippi Langkous kritiek kreeg” (News 95 1997, n.p.).

²⁶² Astrid Lindgren herself commented on changing norms in children’s literature as well. In 1983, she wrote, “In all fairness one has to admit that the freedom of speech in children’s books, both Swedish and foreign, has increased quite astonishingly in only a few decades. Much can be written now which in the 1940s and -50s would have made the normative children’s books establishment gasp for breath” [Och i rättvisans namn måste man ju

is put centre stage in a musical production, and she is described merely as naughty (News 399 1998, 21). At Lindgren's passing, overwhelmingly positive interpretations of the Pippi-figure stand out. Well-known Dutch children's book author Paul Biegel admits to having enjoyed the Pippi-controversy thoroughly. He admires Lindgren for having "raised hell in the domain of pedagogics", and calls the scandal the books brought about "splendid" (News 477 2002, 1).²⁶³ Noted critic Pieter Steinz greatly appreciates the fact that Lindgren "inspired writers to [produce] children's books of refreshingly dubious instructive value" (News 484 2002, 55).²⁶⁴

Defiance of societal norms is a trait which typifies Lindgren's works, but of course she is not the only children's author to have incorporated this in her writing. Some of those congenial writers are mentioned in the corpus. Nell Westerlaken upon Lindgren's decease notes that a few other household names held a nonconformist world view as well:

Together with Hans Christian Andersen, Lewis Carroll, and A.A. Milne, Lindgren is one of the immortals of children's literature. What she had in common with them, was that she conjured up a world in which the child enjoyed independence and respect, not always to responsible educators' satisfaction, especially during her own lifetime. (News 476 2002, 10)²⁶⁵

Note that Andersen and Milne are two of the authors whom John Landquist preferred to Lindgren (cf. supra). Whereas Landquist classed them in opposing camps, Westerlaken considers them evenly matched. A comparison similar to Westerlaken's crops up in a review of Donald Sturrock's *Storyteller. The Life of Roald Dahl* (2010):²⁶⁶ "Almost all great writers of children's books were rebels. Astrid Lindgren didn't give a damn about social conventions, Annie M.G. Schmidt mocked them. But Roald Dahl pushed the art of being naughty to the extreme" (News 818 2011, n.p.).²⁶⁷ The air of anarchy emanating from both

medge att yttrandefriheten i barnböcker, både svenska och utländska, har ökat rent förvånansvärt på bara ett par decennier. Mycket kan numera skrivas som skulle ha fått hela det normgivande barnboksetablissemangen på 40- och 50-talet att kippa efter andan] (cited in Surmatz 2005, 65).

²⁶³ "Ze heeft de hele pedagogische wereld op stelten gezet; dat schandaal bij de verschijning van Pippi. Heerlijk" (News 477 2002, 1).

²⁶⁴ "Astrid Lindgren inspireerde schrijvers tot kinderboeken van verfrissend twijfelachtige opvoedkundige waarde" (News 484 2002, 55).

²⁶⁵ "Lindgren hoort met Hans Christian Andersen, Lewis Carroll en A.A. Milne bij de onsterfelijken van de jeugdliteratuur. Wat ze met hen gemeen had, was dat ze een wereld bij elkaar schreef waarin het kind onafhankelijkheid en respect genoot, zeker in haar tijd niet altijd tot genoegen van verantwoorde opvoeders" (News 476 2002, 10).

²⁶⁶ *Verhalenteller. Het leven van Roald Dahl*.

²⁶⁷ "Bijna alle grote schrijvers van jeugdboeken waren rebellen. Astrid Lindgren had lak sociale conventies, Annie M.G. Schmidt spotte er mee. Maar Roald Dahl dreef de kunst van het stout zijn tot het uiterste" (News 818 2011, n.p.). Cf. (JBG 78 1998, 396).

Lindgren's and Schmidt's stories is pointed out elsewhere as well (News 470 2001, 45). As such, these authors' works tick the "antiauthoritarian" box in the set of criteria for canonical works employed in *Beyond Babar* (Beckett 2006, xi-xii), discussed in section 3.2.²⁶⁸

In effect, Pippi Longstocking's recalcitrant nature and rebellious conduct, which are nowadays seen as the essence of the character,²⁶⁹ earned Astrid Lindgren quite the reputation. Dorien Pels shows that the introduction of the television series around 1970 came at the exact right moment. As Pels argues, "Halfway through the seventies, [...] the story fit in exactly with the antiauthoritarian educational ideal that was coming on. Criticism subsided: punishing a daughter who tore her socks was no longer politically correct" (News 432 2000, 3).²⁷⁰ Because the central message of the books (and, by extension, the televised version) suited the 1970s spirit extremely well, it was able to profit from it. As such, the television series undeniably stimulated the growing awareness of the pioneering role of this work of Lindgren's work, hence taking its canonisation to a next level (cf. section 5.3).

Astrid Lindgren's "Troublemakers"

In the present section, I will explore whether the Dutch-language reception climate remained as favourable for Lindgren during the rest of her career. Dutch critic Judith Eiselin asserts that "Lindgren's significance for children's literature consists in – among

²⁶⁸ It should be added that Judith Eiselin slightly downplays this nonconformist trait, which otherwise usually is found to be admirable. In considering Schmidt's *Yip and Yannika* and Lindgren's *Lotta on Troublemaker Street*, Eiselin remarks that in these books the transgression of boundaries is much less far-reaching (News 538 2003, BB5). She terms the tenor of these stories for younger children a "surveyable" kind of naughtiness, illustrating it with the following examples: "Yip nearly feeds his sandwich to a little bird. Yannika dirties her new jacket in a wheelbarrow. Astrid Lindgren's Lotta hangs left-over pancakes in a tree" [Jip voert bijna zijn boterham op aan een vogeltje. Janneke maakt haar nieuwe jas vuil in een kruiwagen. Lotta van Astrid Lindgren hangt overgebleven pannenkoeken in de boom] (News 538 2003, BB5). She reaches the following conclusion: "Of course, none of it is allowed by the mothers and fathers. But it is not precisely terrible either" [Het mag allemaal niet, natuurlijk, van de moeders en de vaders. Maar echt erg is het niet] (News 538 2003, BB5).

²⁶⁹ See for instance (News 223 2004, 27): "the core of Pippi Longstocking, the antiauthoritarian trait which writer Astrid Lindgren deliberately equipped her with" [de kern van Pippi Langkous, het anti-autoritaire trekje dat de schrijfster Astrid Lindgren haar personage heel bewust meegaf].

²⁷⁰ "Halverwege de jaren zeventig, [...] paste het verhaal precies in de anti-autoritaire opvoedingsideaal dat zo'n opmars maakte. De kritiek verstomde: een dochter die met kapotte kousen thuiskomt straffen, was niet langer politiek correct" (News 432 2000, 3). See also (News 393 1998, 3): "The fear that arose when the first book came out in the 1940s has vanished" [De angst die ontstond na het uitkomen van het eerste boek in de jaren 40 is verdwenen]; and (News 570 2004, 25): "The immense success [...] made all criticism die down" [Het immense succes [...] deed alle kritiek echter verstommen].

other things – her innovative choice of subject matter” (News 471 2002, 1).²⁷¹ Lindgren earned her reputation as an innovator principally on the basis of the epoch-making ideas personified by Pippi Longstocking, but it was not grounded on this one work solely, nor was Pippi the only Lindgren-character to have stirred mild commotion among the gatekeepers of Dutch-language children’s literature. Other works of Lindgren’s to have been considered “troublemakers” for various reasons over the years, albeit to an even more limited extent than *Pippi Longstocking*, are *Mio, my Son*, the Emil-trilogy, *Kati in America*, *The Brothers Lionheart*, and *Ronia, the Robber’s Daughter*.

Where these other literary figures are concerned, the effect of Lindgren’s societal viewpoints is taken into account as well.²⁷² During the early phases of the reception of her work in Flanders and the Netherlands, her ideological inclinations were taken into consideration from a very specific point of view, namely with respect to religion. Among the earliest reviews of Lindgren’s books are short notices, dating from the 1950s, included in lists of recommended reading compiled by the Roman-Catholic “Selection Committee” [Keurraad], in which some of her works are criticised – if only mildly – for their lack of religious overtone. In one such publication, the 1956 *Rafaël Catalogue*, *Mio, my Son* is praised for being “a beautifully depicted fantasy”, yet it is not entirely beyond reproach, as it is experienced as “[i]n essence actually slightly unsatisfactory in religious respect” (Raf 2 1956, n.p.).²⁷³ In the *IDIL*-guide, this aspect is coupled with questionable educational norms. With respect to the first of the Noisy Village-books, the reviewer remarks,

They [the protagonists; svdb] also play naughty and dangerous tricks, like climbing trees and jumping in front of cars, which hopefully won’t be copied. It’s a pity that their lives pass by in an entirely non-religious fashion. [...] Pedagogically and religiously speaking, the work requires some supplementation; the lacunas indicated above restrain us from recommending the book heartily[.] (IDIL 2 1958, n.p.)²⁷⁴

Reviewers in the 1960s and 70s, too, seemed to be preoccupied with pedagogical issues mainly. *Kati in America*, for instance, is found to be lacking in edifying potential: “Pedagogically speaking, this little book does not convey anything. Moreover, there is no

²⁷¹ “Lindgrens betekenis voor de jeugdliteratuur is niet alleen haar vernieuwende onderwerpskeuze” (News 471 2002, 1).

²⁷² This was for instance the case in 22 of the Dutch-language journal articles.

²⁷³ “Knap beschreven wensdroom”; “In wezen eigenlijk wat onbevredigend in godsdienstig opzicht” (Raf 2 1956, n.p.).

²⁷⁴ “Maar ook stoute en gevaarlijke streken halen zij uit, zoals klimpartijen en het springen voor auto’s, die hopelijk niet ter navolging zullen dienen. Jammer is het dat hun leventje volstrekt a-religieus verloopt. [...] Pedagogisch en religieus dient iets aangevuld te worden; de gesignaleerde leemten weerhouden ons van een hartelijke aanbeveling” (IDIL 2 1958, 177-178).

further formative value to be detected in it” (JBG 4 1966, 6).²⁷⁵ Similar comments are made with respect to the Emil-books, although in this case recommendations are uttered in a slightly more cautious tone due to the antics which prominently feature in the trilogy. A 1968 Dutch newspaper review reads that they are “highly recommendable books, which they [the child readers; svdb] will derive great pleasure from” (News 19 1968, n.p.).²⁷⁶ However, the reviewer feels that the books are not suitable for all readers, but exclusively “[f]or children who will not promptly ape the mischievous pranks of the terribly sweet-looking angel-eyed boy” (News 19 1968, n.p.).²⁷⁷ According to this critic, some prudence is in order, because Emil, just like Pippi or Karlsson, could be considered to set a bad example. Yet, another reviewer qualifies the fear for imitation Karlsson may induce, echoing discourse on *Pippi Longstocking* in doing so: “To be sure, Karlsson is slightly unpedagogical, but nevertheless a priceless invention. Because the fat little man exaggerates in everything he does, any child will sense what isn’t allowed or appropriate” (IDIL 7 1960, n.p.).²⁷⁸

Perhaps the fiercest commotion about a book of Lindgren’s was brought about by *The Brothers Lionheart*, both at the time of its publication and later on. It was translated into Dutch in 1974, one year after it had come out in Sweden. The novel was received welcomingly by most of the Dutch-language reviewers, but nevertheless revolted a small minority of the critics. In a piece in *De Volkskrant*, Dutch critic Jan Paul Bresser discards *The Brothers Lionheart* as “debatable” (News 31 1974, n.p.).²⁷⁹ In response to Astrid Lindgren’s own utterance that the book “is very beautiful and actually very cheerful”, despite its sad beginning and gruesome passages (News 31 1974, n.p.),²⁸⁰ Bresser expresses his reservations about the book. He finds that “the blatant contrast between poor, ill Scotty and his heavenly brother Jonathan could frustrate children, Tengil’s thirst for blood never is uplifting, and Scotty’s bravura to jump into the abyss with his nearly-dead brother [...] comes across as unreal” (News 31 1974, n.p.).²⁸¹ Therefore, he does not deem it to be suitable reading material for children:

²⁷⁵ “Pedagogisch brengt dit boekje niets bij. Ook is er geen andere vormende waarde in te ontdekken” (JBG 4 1966, 6).

²⁷⁶ “zeer aanbevelenswaardige boekjes, waaraan ze veel plezier zullen beleven” (News 19 1968, n.p.).

²⁷⁷ “Voor kinderen, die de stoute streken van het zo lief ogende jongetje met zijn engeltjesogen niet prompt na zullen doen” (News 19 1968, n.p.).

²⁷⁸ “Weliswaar wat onpedagogisch, is Karlsson toch een kostelijke schepping. Omdat het dikke mannetje in alles zo overdreven is, zal ieder kind heel goed aanvoelen hoe het niet moet of hoort” (IDIL 7 1960, n.p.).

²⁷⁹ “discutabel” (News 31 1974, n.p.). Cf. (News 95 1997, n.p.).

²⁸⁰ “Het verhaal begint droevig, dan wordt het doodgrijselijk, maar het is erg mooi en eigenlijk heel vrolijk” (News 31 1974, n.p.).

²⁸¹ “de gruwelijke tegenstellingen tussen de arme doodzieke Kruimel en zijn hemelse broertje Jonatan kunnen op kinderen frustrerend werken, de bloeddorstigheid van Tengil zie ik nergens als opwekkend, en de bravour

I have doubts about this children's book, because it is lacking in the nuances and explanations that are so much-needed for children, because it does not contain any understandable comparisons to put things into perspective, nothing to hold on to in order to easily cope with the experience. (News 31 1974, n.p.)²⁸²

One other critic admits to feeling reluctant to confront children who have recently suffered the loss of a relative with the book, because he feels that “[a] healthy child should not want to join the dearly departed in death” (News 30 1974, n.p.).²⁸³

On the whole, the contemporary Flemish and Dutch reviewers dealing with *The Brothers Lionheart* are rather partial to it. *Lektuurgids* critic Leo Roelants is in awe of the book, in which Lindgren “opens up new ground and surprises the world” (LG 21 1975, 85).²⁸⁴ He exclaims, “What a risky enterprise and what a triumph!” (LG 21 1975, 85)²⁸⁵ Some other gatekeepers feel even the need to side with Lindgren. *Jeugdboekengids* critic Fred de Swert reports that *The Brothers Lionheart* has stirred a good deal of commotion and draws a parallel with reactions against *Pippi Longstocking* when it first appeared. Regarding the former, he refers to newspaper critics who discard Lindgren's choice of “cheap solutions”, criticise her for “disguising reality” and hence claim the book to be “unsuitable for children” (JBG 19 1974, 146).²⁸⁶ De Swert, for his part, agrees that Astrid Lindgren perhaps was not at the top of her game when she wrote *The Brothers Lionheart*, but refuses to partake in the “progressive predilection for a ‘fashionable’ critical attitude” (JBG 19 1974, 146).²⁸⁷ Because she is an “internationally famed author”, he is not willing to denounce all of her works, though (JBG 19 1974, 146).²⁸⁸ In an effort to rebut some of the faultfinders' arguments, de Swert refers to a response by Egil Törnqvist, professor of Scandinavian Literatures at Amsterdam University, who pointed at “false interpretations due to readings of the book which were both too quick and too superficial” (JBG 19 1974, 146).²⁸⁹

[sic] van Kruimel om met zijn bijna dode broer in de afgrond te springen komt [...] onwezenlijk over” (News 31 1974, n.p.).

²⁸² “Ik heb mijn twijfels over dit kinderboek, omdat het voor kinderen zo broodnodige nuances en verklaringen mist, omdat er geen begrijpelijke en relativerende vergelijkingen in voorkomen, geen kleine stukjes houvast om de ervaring gemakkelijk te kunnen verwerken” (News 31 1974, n.p.).

²⁸³ “Een gezond kind mag eigenlijk niet zijn dierbare dode achterna willen gaan” (News 30 1974, n.p.).

²⁸⁴ “die nieuw terrein ontgint en de wereld verrast” (LG 21 1975, 85).

²⁸⁵ “Welk een waagstuk en welk een succes!” (LG 21 1975, 85)

²⁸⁶ “goedkope oplossingen”; “verdoezeling van de werkelijkheid”; “ongeschikt [...] voor kinderen” (JBG 19 1974, 146).

²⁸⁷ “de progressieve hang naar 'n 'modieuze' kritische instelling” (JBG 19 1974, 146).

²⁸⁸ “internationaal bekend auteur” (JBG 19 1974, 146).

²⁸⁹ “verkeerde interpretaties als gevolg van een te snelle en 'n te oppervlakkige lectuur” (JBG 19 1974, 146).

He himself defends Lindgren's decision to write about death, which, although commonly avoided in children's books, actually "is nothing new under the sun" (JBG 19 1974, 148).²⁹⁰

The anonymous author of an article in *Trouw* titled "Astrid Lindgren Breaks the 'Taboo' of Death"²⁹¹ is very fond of the story but discusses the criticism it was faced with all the same. "Bitter debates started", so the journalist observes, "on death, social democracy, Astrid Lindgren's political position, polarisation, Zen Buddhistical pacifism, theories on reincarnation, etc" (News 29 1974, n.p.).²⁹² As the critic indicates, "The book was found to be too progressive, or not progressive enough" (News 29 1974, n.p.),²⁹³ and some of its opponents went as far as to call Astrid Lindgren "a witch because she did not equip her book with warning signs. Therefore, she should be locked up in the gingerbread house, and a hammer and sickle should be drawn on the door" (News 29 1974, n.p.).²⁹⁴ Besides such time-typical allegations of communist leanings, it is reported that Lindgren was accused of incitement to commit suicide.²⁹⁵ The opposition the novel encountered notwithstanding, the unnamed writer of "Astrid Lindgren Breaks the 'Taboo' of Death" expresses his or her own liking for it, and calls it "[a] moving archetypal fairy tale", which all in all is "such a grand whole that I find this story apart from *Mio, my Son* [...] to be the most beautiful book ever written by Astrid Lindgren" (News 29 1974, n.p.).²⁹⁶

In the article at hand the journalist leaves some room for rebutting the criticism. A statement of Astrid Lindgren's is quoted, in which she points out that the taboo of death is circumvented in the book by the idea that the brothers "in reality simply continue to live in a completely different world" and do not die twice, as is commonly assumed (News 29 1974, n.p.).²⁹⁷ If one is determined to stick with that interpretation, however, Lindgren refutes that "if you died once, you have gotten used to it already" (News 29 1974, n.p.).²⁹⁸ Ultimately, in her view, "Thousands of children see it as a book of consolation. And that is what I intended" (News 29 1974, n.p.).²⁹⁹ As also becomes evident in other articles, Lindgren deplored the fact that death still was a taboo subject. "You aren't allowed to talk

²⁹⁰ "niets nieuws onder de zon" (JBG 19, p. 148).

²⁹¹ "Astrid Lindgren breekt het 'taboe' van de dood" (News 29 1974, n.p.).

²⁹² "over dood, sociaal-democratie, de politieke opstelling van Astrid Lindgren, polarisatie, Zenboeddistisch pacifisme, theorieën over wedergeboorte, etc" (News 29 1974, n.p.).

²⁹³ "Het boek, [sic] heette te progressief, en niet progressief genoeg" (News 29 1974, n.p.).

²⁹⁴ "een heks want ze heeft haar boek niet van waarschuwborden voorzien. Daarom moet men haar in het peperkoekhuisje opsluiten, en op de deur een hamer en sikkel tekenen" (News 29 1974, n.p.).

²⁹⁵ See (News 29 1974, n.p.); (News 31 1974, n.p.); (News 46 1978, n.p.); (News 92 1997, 16).

²⁹⁶ "Een aangrijpend oersprookje"; "een zo groots geheel dat ik dit verhaal na *Mio, mijn Mio* [...] het mooiste boek vind ooit door Astrid Lindgren geschreven" (News 29 1974, n.p.).

²⁹⁷ "in werkelijkheid gaan ze gewoon door met leven in een heel andere wereld" (News 29 1974, n.p.).

²⁹⁸ "Als je één keer gestorven bent ben je er al aan gewend" (News 29 1974, n.p.).

²⁹⁹ "Duizenden kinderen vinden het een troostboek. Dat was ook mijn bedoeling" (News 29 1974, n.p.). Cf. (JBG 85 2002, 91); (En nu 3 1975, 9).

about it”, she said, “[b]ut many children ponder precisely death a lot. They are afraid of it” (News 95 1997, n.p.).³⁰⁰ In her opinion, that is the exact reason why they find comfort in a book like *The Brothers Lionheart*, in which the theme which usually is avoided is dealt with openly instead.³⁰¹ In effect, some other critics give Lindgren credit for having addressed the taboo. They deplore that people criticizing *The Brothers Lionheart* usually wrongfully ignore the fact that she was the first to put into words children’s fear of dying.³⁰²

Furthermore, praise for *The Brothers Lionheart* is voiced in connection with the release of the film adaptation a few years later. *NRC Handelsblad* critic Hans Beerekamp deems the film to be “unusual and poetic”, and finds that it “estimates the comprehension of a youthful audience to be higher than the average children’s film does” (News 46 1978, n.p.).³⁰³ What is more, Beerekamp goes against the grain of the criticism rendered above in stating that the film in its explicit treatment of the theme of death “provides ample matter for conversation, for instance on the rude and impersonal way in which children in their daily portion of television viewing are confronted with death” (News 46 1978, n.p.).³⁰⁴ This is an entirely refreshing way of looking at the controversial topic addressed in the story.

Moving on to more recent discussions of the resistance *The Brothers Lionheart* was met with, I found that the death theme in effect is named as a component of the story which was perceived as problematic.³⁰⁵ As one critic puts it, “Who on earth opens a children’s book with the death of the main characters, parents and teachers wondered” (News 846 2012, 11).³⁰⁶ More specifically, signs of opposition which are taken up in the corpus are those aimed at an escapist tendency in the book,³⁰⁷ as well as at the supposed propagation of suicide.³⁰⁸ As was the case with criticism against *Pippi Longstocking*, records of critical voices in the studied materials are chiefly secondary. The two instances of critics raising objections against *The Brothers Lionheart* themselves are exceptions, in all of the other

³⁰⁰ “Je mag daar niet over praten. Maar veel kinderen denken juist over de dood veel na. Ze zijn er bang voor” (News 95 1997, n.p.). Cf. (En nu 3 1975, 9).

³⁰¹ See also (News 138 2002, 15); (News 202 2003, 20); (News 217 2004, 22).

³⁰² (News 142 2002, 10); (News 147 2002, 10).

³⁰³ “een ongewone en poëtische film, die het bevattingsvermogen van een jeugdig publiek heel wat hoger inschat dan de gemiddelde kinderfilm” (News 46 1978, n.p.).

³⁰⁴ “voldoende stof geeft om na te praten, bij voorbeeld over de grove en onpersoonlijke manier, waarop kinderen in hun dagelijkse portie kijkvoer met de dood worden geconfronteerd” (News 46 1978, n.p.).

³⁰⁵ (News 147 2002, 10); (News 846 2012, 11).

³⁰⁶ “Wie begint er nu een kinderboek met de dood van de hoofdpersonen, vroegen ouders en onderwijzers zich af” (News 846 2012, 11).

³⁰⁷ (News 63 1987, n.p.); (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 408 1998, 3); (News 471 2002, 1).

³⁰⁸ (News 138 2002, 15); (News 202 2003, 20); (News 408 1998, 3); (News 471 2002, 1).

cases, dismissive notes are derivative and not grounded on proper opinions or interpretations of the book. What is more, some of the reviewers bringing up the criticism come to Lindgren's defence. That was the case in the anonymous 1974 piece entitled "Astrid Lindgren Breaks the 'Taboo' of Death", and it also happens in two later articles. Wilfried Eetezonne in his obituary for *De Morgen* draws attention to the author's self-proclaimed intention with the novel, namely to impart on children "courage and daring", as well as "the conviction that things can be better elsewhere, that a child can withdraw from dependence and take its fate in its own hands" (News 138 2002, 15).³⁰⁹ Writing in 1998, Judith Eiselin considers the way in which Lindgren was reviled for the reasons named above and indicates that those have become obsolete: "By now, people holding these kinds of opinions are generally regarded as ludicrous" (News 408 1998, 3).³¹⁰

Be that as it may, even in the twenty-first century the topic of death still disturbs readers confronted with the book. As becomes apparent in an interview, a dramatist with theatre company *Theater Terra* attempting to transform the novel into a musical in 2012 was troubled by its ending (News 846 2012, 11). Adaptor Fons Merckies states that he would have liked to see the story close differently, and that he therefore chose to change the outcome. Critic Marjolein van Trigt, reviewing the musical, indicates that in this version, "the battle for Nangijala appears to take place in a kind of time vacuum in between life and death" (News 846 2012, 11).³¹¹ She seems to have mixed feelings about this intervention: "It changes the message of the story. 'Dying is not so bad, as long as you fought to stay alive', appears to be the somewhat paradoxical lesson young attendees are left to draw from the production" (News 846 2012, 11).³¹² Another critic, Brechtje Zwaneveld, seems equally unsure what to make of it. She writes that the presentation of the battle against Tengil as "a mere metaphor for the death-struggle sickly Scotty is engaged in" makes the story "more realistic, but also overly didactic" (News 845 2012, n.p.).³¹³ The interpretation of *The Brothers Lionheart* advanced in this particular musical version aligns well with commonly accepted readings of the book. It is therefore all the

³⁰⁹ "moed en durf"; "het geloof dat het elders beter kan zijn, dat een kind zich kan onttrekken aan het afhankelijke en zijn eigen lot in handen kan nemen" (News 138 2002, 15).

³¹⁰ "Mensen met dit soort meningen worden inmiddels algemeen als bespottelijk beschouwd" (News 408 1998, 3).

³¹¹ "blijkt de strijd om Nangijala zich af te spelen in een soort tijdsvacuüm tussen leven en dood" (News 846 2012, 11).

³¹² "Daarmee verandert de boodschap van het verhaal. 'Doodgaan is niet erg, als je maar gestreden hebt om te blijven leven' lijkt de wat paradoxale les die de jonge bezoekers uit de voorstelling moeten trekken" (News 846 2012, 11).

³¹³ "slechts de metafoor [...] van de doodstrijd die de ziekelijke Kruimel moet leveren"; "Dat maakt het verhaal realistischer, maar ook uitleggerig" (News 845 2012, n.p.).

more striking that these two Dutch reviewers seem somewhat baffled by it, with their response suggesting that this interpretation is far from established among Dutch critics.

Astrid Lindgren's subsequent and final novel, *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, caused some minor excitement as well. *Volkskrant* critic Herman Tromp, for example, notes that the book "contains ample elements which will make adults think of it as a bad book" (News 59 1981, n.p.).³¹⁴ As Tromp goes on to state, components of the narrative which may be objectionable from an adult perspective include protagonist Ronia's opposition against "paternal authority" and the depiction of the grown-up figures as "incredibly stupid" (News 59 1981, n.p.).³¹⁵ Elsewhere, the fact that the book is an adventure tale, a genre not generally deemed suitable to convey moral messages to children, is used as an argument against it (News 60 1982, n.p.) (cf. section 4.2). The rest of Tromp's argumentation takes an interesting turn, as he indicates that the book became a success in Sweden, in spite of its obvious shortcomings. He contends, "In the adults' view, it is a good book because it contains a *clearly moralistic message* [which is] [t]hat violence leads to nothing and that nature is calming" (News 59 1981, n.p.; emphasis added).³¹⁶ Once again, it seems that the evaluation of the book is informed by adult preoccupations. Remarkably enough, Herman Tromp on the contrary undercuts and rejects such argumentations. To his mind, a children's book should only be judged in terms of what it brings to the table for the child readers: "Such considerations are of no importance with regard to *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* because it is a children's book. A book that offers things that have the full potential to fulfil fond wishes" (News 59 1981, n.p.).³¹⁷

Adults' and children's divergent responses to children's books hinted at by Tromp are also taken into consideration in an overview of Lindgren's career in *De Volkskrant* in 1992, in reaction to the author's announcement that she was forced to give up writing. Journalist Willem Ellenbroek remarks, "Child psychologists and political scientists, apprehensive parents and educationalists, everybody meddled in the irresponsible adventures and anarchistic ideas in her children's fantasy, but children were mad about them" (News 68 1992, n.p.).³¹⁸ In 1997, in connection with her 90th birthday, a similar observation is made in *Het Volk*: "All of Lindgren's books activate her readers' imagination.

³¹⁴ "heeft het genoeg elementen in zich waardoor volwassenen het een slecht boek zouden kunnen vinden" (News 59 1981, n.p.).

³¹⁵ "het vaderlijk gezag"; "ongelofelijk dom" (News 59 1981, n.p.).

³¹⁶ "Het is in de ogen van de volwassenen een goed boek, omdat er een duidelijk moralistische boodschap in zit. Die is dat geweld tot niets leidt en dat de natuur rustgevend is" (News 59 1981, n.p.).

³¹⁷ "Deze overwegingen zijn voor Ronja de roversdochter niet van belang omdat het een kinderboek is. Een boek dat volop wensdroomvervullende zaken aanbiedt" (News 59 1981, n.p.).

³¹⁸ "Kinderpsychologen en politicologen, bezorgde ouders en pedagogen, iedereen bemoeide zich met de onverantwoordelijke avonturen en anarchistische gedachten van haar kinderfantasie, maar kinderen waren er dol op" (News 68 1992, n.p.).

And *that* is precisely the aim of the great children’s friend, who utterly consistently stages young girls with nerve” (News 93 1997, n.p.; emphasis in original).³¹⁹ Strangely enough, the unnamed journalist neglects to acknowledge the social relevance of Lindgren’s narratives, as opposed to the majority of the contributors in the corpus. In this particular article, the author reaches the conclusion that “[c]ritics often held it against Astrid Lindgren that her stories about wonderful children’s adventures were too decent and naive. But the writer never meant to denounce social order in her books” (News 93 1997, n.p.).³²⁰ The suggestion that Lindgren was an obedient writer who never exposed any societal discrepancies makes this journalist appear as a dissenting voice which is out of step with the tenor of the Dutch-language discourse on Lindgren in general.

The Greatest Tree Attracts the Wind

As the saying goes, a great tree attracts the wind. That is no different for Pippi Longstocking, the best-known of Lindgren’s works, which at the same time has been the most prone to criticism. As has been shown in this section so far, the antiauthoritarian character was reported to be blasted at several occasions, although such criticism rarely was uttered by the Dutch-language reviewers themselves. For the most part, critical notes in the corpus are secondary representations of other people’s objections. Similarly, a recent attack on Pippi is present in the corpus indirectly exclusively. It occurred in 2011, when yet another adult claimed that the books were offensive, this time because of their purported underlying racism.³²¹ The topic is taken up in Flemish newspapers *Het Nieuwsblad* (News 349 2011, 11), *Het Belang van Limburg* (News 350 2011, 13), and *Het Laatste Nieuws* (News 351 2011, 10), none of which are highbrow newspapers.³²² In all three articles, German theologian and feminist scholar Eske Wollrad’s findings on the racist bias of some well-known children’s books are presented. Earlier, Wollrad had disclosed the conclusions of her research in an interview with German English-language newspaper *The Local* (Cleaver 2011). She is a member of the German Federal Association of Evangelical Women, and within that framework she propagates social awareness and equality

³¹⁹ “Al Lindgrens boeken zetten de verbeelding van haar lezertjes aan het werk. En dat is precies de bedoeling van de grote kindervriendin, die heel consequent jonge meisjes met lef opvoert als hoofdpersonages” (News 93 1997, n.p.).

³²⁰ “Critici verweten Astrid Lindgren vaak dat haar verhalen over prachtige kinderavonturen te braaf en naïef zijn. Maar de schrijfster wou met haar boeken nooit de sociale orde aan de kaak stellen” (News 93 1997, n.p.).

³²¹ In Sweden in september 2014, allegations of racism were again uttered against the Pippi-books, this time in connection with the release of curtains featuring illustrations of Pippi and some South-Sea children, which was found to be offensive. See e.g. (Anon., Pippi-gardin dras tillbaka 2014).

³²² In two of the three relevant articles, (News 349 2011, 11) and (News 351 2011, 10), Astrid Lindgren is even erroneously referred to as a *Danish* writer.

(Clever 2011, n.p.), particularly in children's books. She deplores the "woeful" lack of non-white characters, which to her mind is a major drawback, as it "simply isn't helpful if we want to help our children find their place in a multicultural society" (Clever 2011, n.p.).

Pippi Longstocking is one of the books Wollrad scrutinised, and, as is indicated in the three Flemish articles, the scholar's main argument against it is that "Astrid Lindgren attributes Pippi's proclivity to lie to her long stay in Africa", implying that "[a]ll of Pippi's follies are put down to her contact with 'negroes'" (News 349 2011, 11).³²³ Moreover, Wollrad identified in the trilogy elements which signal imperialism: "In the Pippi Longstocking-books coloured children appear who bow respectfully for white men. The bowing negroes on the island of Kurredutt are a sign of hidden racism" (News 349 2011, 11).³²⁴ Wollrad's proposal for remedying this situation, the journalists state, is that parents discuss racist passages with their children.³²⁵ In these three Flemish reports, the allegations Wollrad made are reproduced without even the slightest hint of reservation. The journalists merely render the scholar's opinion, hence suggesting to their readers that this particular, provocative interpretation of the stories is beyond questioning.

However, Wollrad's judgment is also discussed in two Dutch newspapers, namely *NRC Handelsblad* (News 836 2011, n.p.) and *Het Parool* (News 837 2011, 34), and in both cases the academic's statements are presented with some degree of caution. In the short piece in *Het Parool*, the unnamed author qualifies Wollrad's finding that the subservient attitude of the South Sea Island inhabitants who bow for Pippi, which conveys colonialist stereotypes (News 837 2011, 34). The qualifying effect is produced by the remark that "[i]t has been remonstrated that it says 'for incomprehensible reasons[']'" (News 837 2011, 34).³²⁶ The scene hinted at here takes place right after Pippi arrives on the South Sea Island where her father was received and is treated as a king, as a result of which Pippi herself is welcomed as a princess. This, in turn, explains why she is met with reverence and why the islanders bow for her. The passage reads as follows:

the small, black South Sea children approached Pippi's throne. *For some incomprehensible reason* they had gotten into their heads that white skin was much prettier than black, and they therefore walked up to Pippi, Tommy, and Annika

³²³ "Astrid Lindgren schrijft Pippi's neiging om te liegen toe aan haar lange verblijf in Afrika. Al Pippi's dwaasheden worden toegeschreven aan haar contact met de negers" (News 349 2011, 11). Compare (News 350 2011, 13); (News 351 2011, 10). See also (News 836 2011, n.p.).

³²⁴ "In de Pippi Langkous-boeken komen donkere kindertjes voor die eerbiedig buigen voor blanke mannen. De buigende negertjes van het eiland Taka Tukaland zijn een teken van verborgen racisme" (News 349 2011, 11). Compare (News 350 2011, 13); (News 351 2011, 10).

³²⁵ (News 349 2011, 11); (News 350 2011, 13); (News 351 2011, 10).

³²⁶ "Er is al tegengeworpen dat daarbij staat: 'om onbegrijpelijke redenen[']'" (News 837 2011, 34).

deferentially. In addition, Pippi was a princess. When they reached Pippi, they all together threw themselves onto their knees in front of her, and bowed their head to the ground. (Lindgren 2002, 315; emphasis added)³²⁷

By means of the comment highlighted in the quotation above, Lindgren's narrator subtly indicates that the motives underlying the characters choice to behave as "subordinates" is questionable and definitely not to be seen as a norm. This is concisely but aptly pointed out in the *Parool*-article. Moreover, the South Sea inhabitants' reasoning and ensuing conduct is uncut even further by Pippi's response to it. She construes their bowing as a game, and wants to: "Pippi leapt down from the throne in a hurry. 'What is this I see?' she said. 'Do you play thing searcher here as well? Hang on, I'm joining in!'" (Lindgren 2002, 315)³²⁸ Throughout the story, she continues to act counter to the "princess" part imposed on her. Through Pippi's refusal to adopt her colonial role, the narrative in effect works to undermine postcolonial readings emphasising imperialist biases.

Nevertheless, the Pippi-trilogy has been read as imperialist. What is more, Eske Wollrad was not the first to challenge it: it had already been questioned for that very reason at several earlier occasions. Astrid Surmatz in "International Politics in Astrid Lindgren's Works" (2007) reasons that the sensitive character of the text originates from the regal status Captain Longstocking acquires on the South Sea Island, which leaves Pippi fantasising about becoming a negro princess upon their reunion. There is nothing wrong with this starting point *per se*, but from a contemporary point of view, it appears to be lacking in delicacy. As Surmatz notes, "The original Swedish text knows no politically correct restraints" (Surmatz 2007, 33), which is why it came to be perceived as problematic in retrospect: "In a postcolonial perspective, this is of course just the stereotyped hierarchic phenomenon of how colonies were established in imperialist times" (Surmatz 2007, 33). She goes on to relate that Lindgren was met with opposition in Anglo-Saxon literary and academic circles primarily, and describes how attempts were made at settling the issue by replacing the concept of a "negro king" with that of a "cannibal king" in the English and American translations. Of course, this is no watertight solution, quite on the contrary, it may give rise to debatable situations on a different level

³²⁷ "de kleine zwarte Taka-Tuka-kindertjes [naderden] Pippi's troon. Om de een of andere onbegrijpelijke reden hadden ze het in hun hoofd gekregen dat een blanke huid veel mooier was dan een zwarte, en daarom kwamen ze vol eerbied op Pippi, Tommy en Annika toe gelopen. Pippi was bovendien prinses. Toen ze vlak voor Pippi waren gekomen, wierpen ze zich allemaal tegelijk voor haar op hun knieën en bogen hun hoofd naar de grond." (Lindgren 2002, 315)

³²⁸ "Pippi sprong vlug van de troon af. 'Wat zie ik?' zei ze. 'Spelen jullie hier ook al dingenzoecker? Wacht, ik doe mee!'" (Lindgren 2002, 315)

altogether. Surmatz remarks that introducing “[t]his element [of cannibalism; svdb] in a children’s book creates some new and unexpected connotations” (Surmatz 2007, 33).³²⁹

In Sweden, postcolonial criticism of this kind surfaced again in 2004,³³⁰ at which point the Lindgren heirs felt compelled to respond to the controversy. Astrid Lindgren’s daughter Karin Nyman in the foreword to a new edition of *Pippi Longstocking in the South Seas* sets forth their view on the matter. In response to suggestions that the term “negroes” be removed from the books, Nyman frames the use of the word within its proper historic context, pointing out that it is one of many elements in Pippi’s fictional universe typical of the 1940s are unfamiliar to twenty-first century readers (Nyman 2009, 3). By way of example, she names bygone phenomena such as “singlets and cod-liver oil, a day off from school to clean and domestic servants, and children who aren’t allowed to call the teacher by her first name” (Nyman 2009, 3).³³¹ In Nyman’s rationale, “negroes” is equally time-typical in the sense that it was a neutral term back then, and not in the slightest perceived as offensive: “In the 1940s negroes was the standard Swedish name for black-skinned people who lived on other continents than ours. There weren’t any black people living in Scandinavia [...] ‘Negroes’ were exotic” (Nyman 2009, 3).³³² She rebuts the suggestion that simply omitting the word would solve the problem, and interprets the controversy as reflecting the propensity for provocation vital to the character itself:

The matter isn’t quite as simple as one could be inclined to believe. Pippi can of course never be made into a child of the twenty-first century. And it has always been impossible for her to behave appropriately. Nobody can change her irreverent attitude. *Conversely, we can’t see how, anywhere in the books, her conduct would be biased.* (Nyman 2009, 4; emphasis in original)³³³

³²⁹ To illustrate her point, Surmatz mentions the following examples: “for instance when Pippi longs to play with the small cannibal children on her father’s island or when Tommy and Annika’s mother, without the slightest doubt, sends her children away together with Pippi to spend some time on Cannibal Island” (Surmatz 2007, 33).

³³⁰ See <<http://astridlindgren.se/en/more-facts/her-role-literary-world/books-which-gave-rise-debate>> [Accessed 20 August 2014].

³³¹ “livstycken och fiskleverolja, skurlov och hembiträden, och barn som inte får säga du till sin fröken” (Nyman 2009, 3).

³³² “På 1940-talet var negerer det vedertagna svenska namnet på människor med svart hudfärg som levde i andra världsdelar än vår. Det bodde just inga svarta människor i Norden [...]. ‘Negrer’ var exotiska” (Nyman 2009, 3).

³³³ “Saken är inte riktigt så enkel som man kanske kan tro. Pippi kan förstås aldrig göras till ett 2000-talsbarn. Och det har alltid varit en omöjlighet för henne att uppträda lämpligt. Själva vanvördigheten rår ingen på. Däremot kan vi inte se att hon någonstans i böckerna uppträder fördomsfullt” (Nyman 2009, 4; emphasis in original).

For that reason, Nyman concludes, the Lindgren heirs refuse to delete the contested term.³³⁴

The decision made by Lindgren's relatives is picked up on in the *NRC Handelsblad* article (News 836 2011, n.p.), and even here only indirectly, by means of references to a piece on the topic which appeared in *The Guardian* two days earlier (Flood 2011). In the *NRC* text, mention is made of Karin Nyman's fierce dismissal of allegations of racism. It is pointed out that Pippi demurs subservient behaviour, a point which is corroborated by Nyman's observation that "[s]he on the contrary always has been strongly opposed to stereotypes" (News 836 2011, n.p.).³³⁵ In addition, the anonymous author of the piece provides context for Eske Wollrad's objections and digs a bit deeper than the other four journalists simply reiterating the accusations. Hence, this piece presents a more balanced image of the controversy, which is less black-and-white (pun intended). The more thoughtful approach to the matter shows, firstly, in the observation that it should not come as a surprise that the Pippi-books are laden with "racist clichés" seeing that they date from the 1940s (News 836 2011, n.p.). Secondly, the *anti-imperialist* undercurrent of the original books is also touched upon: "In *The Guardian*, it is cleverly remarked that Pippi, after the scene with the children in the sand, goes on to ridicule the white children for their obsession with school" (News 836 2011, n.p.).³³⁶ Finally and most importantly, the *NRC* contributor acknowledges the refinement Eske Wollrad herself had introduced in her rationale, in admitting that "[n]ot everything is bad, according to the theologist: the strong protagonist can give girls a better self-image" (News 836 2011, n.p.).³³⁷ Indeed, in the aforementioned interview with *The Local* Wollrad paints a more balanced, much less one-sided picture of the Pippi-books. She states,

I would certainly not condemn the book completely – on the contrary, there are many very positive aspects to the book, as well as being very funny, it is instructive for children as it not only has a strong female character, she is against adultism, grown-ups being in charge, and she is fiercely opposed to violence against animals – there is a very strong critique of authority in the book. (Clever 2011, n.p.)

Thus, Wollrad recognises the outspoken antiauthoritarian and feminist undercurrents in the book, which have proven to be crucial in the Dutch-language canonisation of the

³³⁴ Compare a similar discussion in Norway described in (News 632 2007, 10-11), where Karin Nyman is reported to have resisted the replacement of the word "negro king" with "South Sea king".

³³⁵ "Ze is juist altijd heel sterk tegen stereotypen gekant geweest" (News 836 2011, n.p.)

³³⁶ "In *The Guardian* wordt fijntjes opgemerkt dat Pippi, na de scène met de kinderen in het zand, verder gaat de blanke kinderen belachelijk te maken vanwege hun obsessie met school" (News 836 2011, n.p.). Compare the remark in the original article: "Wollrad neglected to mention that Pippi goes on to mock white children for their obsession with school" (Flood 2011, n.p.).

³³⁷ "Niet alles is slecht, volgens de theologe: de sterke hoofdpersoon kan meisjes een beter zelfbeeld geven" (News 836 2011, n.p.).

work. Against this backdrop, the partiality of the Flemish reviewers, stands out all the more clearly. In merely reiterating what Wollrad's sees as reprehensible elements in the *Pippi Longstocking*-trilogy, and neglecting to notice that she also pointed out commendable features of the books, they come across as much more biased than the Dutch journalists dealing with the subject.

In addition, the perception of the Pippi-books as racially biased is discussed by general literary critic Michiel Leezenberg, who in an essay on world famous imaginary literary destinations zooms in on the South Sea setting in the trilogy. He draws parallels between Lindgren's *Kurrekurredutt Island* [Taka-Tukaland] with Joseph Conrad's Africa as portrayed in *Heart of Darkness* (1899), both as regards the potentially imperialist thrust of both books, and the way in which the settings serve as the backdrop for comparable universal subject matter (News 732 2008, 4-5).³³⁸ Leezenberg writes, "Something that is held against both books – not entirely wrongfully – is that they are founded on superseded, or even outright racist conceptions" (News 732 2008, 4-5).³³⁹ In line with Astrid Surmatz' argumentation, Leezenberg goes on to explain that these accusations are elicited by the restrictive depiction of the exotic settings: "both of them seem to reduce an entire continent to nothing more than the décor for Occidentals' actions and obsessions" (News 732 2008, 4-5).³⁴⁰ He is convinced that the potentially contestable elements in these works nevertheless do not detract from their literary value. As far as Lindgren is concerned, he refers to her heirs' rebuttal of the objections, stating that "the representations of negroes in raffia skirts is outmoded, to be sure, but not racist", subsequently repeating Karin Nyman's argumentation that the absence of coloured people in Sweden at the time when the books were written acquits them (News 732 2008, 4-5).³⁴¹ More importantly, Leezenberg himself feels that the Pippi-books should not be affected by this kind of criticism "because Lindgren's works are timeless literature anyway" (News 732 2008, 4-5).³⁴² Michiel Leezenberg likens *Pippi Longstocking* with a work of world renown such as Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and mitigates the upsetting effect of the debatable leanings in both works. As a result, his essay reads as nothing short of an ode to Lindgren.

By way of excursion, I would like to add that in 2012, protest against racist elements in the Pippi-books again came to the fore, in connection with the removal of Hergé's comic

³³⁸ The comparison between *Pippi Longstocking* and *Heart of Darkness* with respect to universal contents will be discussed in section 4.2.

³³⁹ "Beide boeken is [...] verweten - niet geheel ten onrechte - dat ze berusten op achterhaalde, of zelfs ronduit racistische voorstellingen" (News 732 2008, 4-5).

³⁴⁰ "beide lijken een heel werelddeel te reduceren tot slechts een decor voor de handelingen en obsessies van de westerlingen" (News 732 2008, 4-5).

³⁴¹ "de voorstellingen van negers in raffiarokjes weliswaar achterhaald maar niet racistisch zijn" (News 732 2008, 4-5).

³⁴² "omdat Lindgrens werk sowieso tijdloze literatuur vormt" (News 732 2008, 4-5).

book *Tintin in the Congo* from Swedish libraries because of its racist contents. This specific instance is not mentioned in the corpus articles, but it is an ironic coincidence that in one of the Flemish articles dealing with Wollrad's critical comments aimed against "colonial" Pippi she be portrayed alongside Tintin, who equally has been blasted (News 351 2011, 10):



Figure 10 Pippi Longstocking and Tintin, both blasted for a racist bias (News 351 2011, 10)

Adults and Children's Divergent Tastes

As was established at the beginning of section 3.2, children and adults in the field of children's literature fulfil different roles, with different amounts of canonising potential, which rarely overlap. Consequently, one will find that the two groups' preferences with regard to children's books may differ considerably.³⁴³ Considering the matter in abstract terms, Astrid Surmatz observes "a contrast between adults and children as agents of reception" (Surmatz 2005, 60).³⁴⁴ M.O. Grenby points out a disjunction in that gatekeeper-approval does not necessarily equal user-approval. He remarks,

with children's books, sales figures (generated by the decisions of the adults who buy the books) do not necessarily correspond to the actual appeal of the text to its

³⁴³ Examples such as the books on Harry Potter or Geronimo Stilton prove this point: they are hugely popular among child readers but highly controversial among and often reviled by adult gatekeepers. Jan Van Coillie (1999, 86-88) also takes these divergent tastes into consideration.

³⁴⁴ "eine Gegensatz zwischen Erwachsenen und Kindern als Rezeptionsinstanzen" (Surmatz 2005, 60).

end-users (the children who read it), and who may have had little say as to which books were bought or borrowed for them. (Grenby 2008, 2-3)³⁴⁵

On a more concrete level, Deborah Stevenson notes that children often gravitate towards books which the adult gatekeepers preferably would keep out of their reach: “They can have some effect on a text’s status through purchasing, but they are likely to exercise their limited financial power on books that aren’t otherwise available to them through adult-run institutions and adult-funded shopping” (Stevenson 2009, 109). In the same vein, Reinbert Tabbert in “What Makes Successful Books Successful?” (1994)³⁴⁶ proposes a pragmatic distinction between books which are equally appreciated by children and critics and those which are loved only by children despite critics’ reservations (Tabbert 1994, 46). Significantly, Tabbert mentions Astrid Lindgren’s works as an example of the former category of books, whereas he refers to Enid Blyton’s oeuvre as representing the latter type (Tabbert 1994, 46).

In “How Long does Classic Last?” Rita Ghesquière asserts that the discrepancy in the taste of child versus adult readers, which is manifested in the existence of specific children’s and youth literary prizes, has resulted in the emergence of a “second canon” (Ghesquière 2004, 56).³⁴⁷ She elucidates that this term “refers to those books which owe their name to large popularity with the readership. To phrase it in Bourdieu’s [...] terms: what is meant here are books that score well within the commercial circuit” (Ghesquière 2004, 56).³⁴⁸ Focusing on children instead of adults, however, would require an entirely different approach, for instance aligned with reader-response theory. Such an endeavour is outside the scope of this study. Moreover, the fact that the adults involved in the field are shown to possess the largest amount of canonising potential was one of the reasons for justifying why their opinions and impact are at the core of this study.

Adults’ and Children’s Differing Opinions on Astrid Lindgren’s Works

Astrid Lindgren’s books are discussed in connection with adults’ and children’s divergent judgments on two occasions, both of which pertain to questions of literary taste. The first

³⁴⁵ Grenby furthermore states, “Indeed, it might be argued that almost all children’s books have been imposed on their end-users. It is a commonplace that children seldom choose their own books, but have them selected on their behalf by parents, relatives, teachers and other adults (though today this may be becoming less true). This process, benign though it often is, further problematizes attempts to determine popularity from sales figures” (Grenby 2008, 5).

³⁴⁶ “Was macht erfolgreiche Kinderbücher erfolgreich?” (Tabbert 1994)

³⁴⁷ “tweede canon” (Ghesquière 2004, 56).

³⁴⁸ “verwijst naar de boeken die hun bekendheid vooral danken aan de grote populariteit bij het lezerspubliek. Om het in termen van Bourdieu [...] te stellen: het gaat om boeken die vooral goed scoren binnen het commerciële circuit” (Ghesquière 2004, 56).

instance relates to children's preference for "kitsch" or "pulp" literature, and their inclination to indulge in "binge reading", if you will. In this specific example, the starting point for a discussion on literary standards is a height in the popularity of scary books for young teenagers clearly discernible in Holland and Flanders in the late 1990s (News 395 1998, 7). Several gatekeepers of children's literature are shown to be displeased with the overwhelming supply of pulp literature, because they fear that pulp flooding the field may hamper child readers' literary socialisation. Herman Kakebeeke, chairman of the jury awarding the Dutch Slate Pencil-awards [Griffels] from 1996 until 1998, asserts that children's reading patterns are conservative, and that they indeed will "read till they drop and until a certain genre runs out" (News 395 1998, 7).³⁴⁹ In itself, there is nothing wrong with children binge reading low-quality books, he finds, yet he does "silently hope that children abandon the customary book" (News 395 1998, 7).³⁵⁰ Kakebeeke in other words adheres to a stepping stone theory of reading, and he indeed asserts that he is not afraid that children will get stuck with pulp books. Strikingly, he mentions Lindgren's reading habits in order to prove his point: "In her childhood, Astrid Lindgren read any book she could lay her hands on, but she still went on to write really good children's books" (News 395 1998, 7).³⁵¹ To Kakebeeke, Lindgren obviously is a shining example, whose own works definitely rank among the apices of children's literature.

In this same piece, Kakebeeke in his capacity of a member of an award jury is contradicted by gatekeepers working with children's books on a daily basis. The advantages of pulp literature from the point of view of reading promotion are pointed out by librarians and teachers, stating that such books are easier for readers to digest and may lead to their experiencing reading as pleasurable. At the same time, the discrepancy between adult judges' selections for literary awards and children's responses to those awarded books is highlighted. The professional gatekeepers argue that such books are read by adults primarily and only by a select group of children (News 395 1998, 7). Elsewhere, Veerle Weverbergh, children's book editor at publishing house Houtekiet likewise brings up for discussion the wide gulf between youngsters' and grown-ups' conceptions of quality. She observes that within the context of literary awards, accolades granted by children's juries to works which adults perceive as poor literature are of no account (News 99 1998, 2). However, Weverbergh pleads with adult players in the field of children's literature for lenience in their approach to the matter, as everything merely boils down to conflicting values which eventually will be resolved:

³⁴⁹ "Ze lezen zich suf totdat er niks meer is in een genre" (News 395 1998, 7).

³⁵⁰ "ik heb de stille hoop dat kinderen van het geijkte boek afstappen" (News 395 1998, 7).

³⁵¹ "Astrid Lindgren las in haar jeugd alles wat onder haar ogen kwam en zij schreef daarna toch zeer goede kinderboeken" (News 395 1998, 7).

Clashes of values are practically inevitable, they are a part of growing up. As parents (and, by extension, caretakers, teachers, etc.), we have to accept that our children may hold different opinions and choices, and to respect them, just as we as children differed with our parents and wanted those opinions to be respected. From this perspective, children are no different from adults. (News 99 1998, 2)³⁵²

Again, one could argue, what is at stake is an issue of might versus authority, and a matter of failing readiness on the part of those possessing authority to acknowledge might as an alternative form of power.

The divergence between children's and adults' evaluations came to the fore in 2008 as well, when a sizeable poll among child readers conducted by *Stichting Lezen Vlaanderen* in order to elect the Best Ever Children's Book.³⁵³ The long list of 99 titles included three books by Astrid Lindgren: the *Emil*-omnibus, *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, and *Pippi Longstocking*, the latter of which made the short list of ten books.³⁵⁴ The eventual top three consisted of – in descending order – Geronimo Stilton's *The Kingdom of Fantasy* [*Fantasia*], *Tow Truck Pluck* [*Pluk van de Petteflet*] by Annie M.G. Schmidt, and Roald Dahl's *Matilda*.³⁵⁵ The child voters displayed a distinct preference for the Geronimo Stilton-series, including (among other types of works) a set of adaptations of well-known children's books related by an eponymous, fictitious mouse narrator,³⁵⁶ which have been an enormous commercial success in large parts of Europe.

This partiality was not shared by the adult critics, though. The outcome of the poll is discussed in two corpus articles, in one of which the mouse's victory is merely mentioned without any further comments.³⁵⁷ By contrast, a critic in highbrow newspaper *De Standaard* dwells on the implications of the ranking, in which the young readers' votes

³⁵² “Waardenbotsingen zijn bijna onvermijdelijk, ze horen bij het volwassen worden. Als ouder (en bij uitbreiding opvoeder, leraar enzovoort) moeten we kunnen aanvaarden dat onze kinderen er andere meningen en keuzen op nahouden, en die respecteren, net zoals wij als kind met onze ouders van mening verschilden en wilden dat die meningen gerespecteerd werden. In dat opzicht verschillen kinderen niet van volwassenen.” (News 99 1998, 2)

³⁵³ The competition was organised within the scope of the 2008 Children's Book Week. See: <<http://www.hetmooistekinderboek.be/>> [Accessed 22 October 2014].

³⁵⁴ The full short list included the following ten works: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by J.K. Rowling, *Pippi Longstocking* by Astrid Lindgren, *Tow Truck Pluck* [*Pluk van de Petteflet*] by Annie M.G. Schmidt, *Jules' Granny* [*De oma van Jules*] by Annemie Berebrouckx, *The Kingdom of Fantasy* [*Fantasia*] by Geronimo Stilton, *Matilda* by Roald Dahl, *Crusade in Jeans* [*Kruistocht in spijkerbroek*] by Thea Beckman, *Witch Fairy* [*Heksenfee*] by Brigitte Minne, *The BFG* by Roald Dahl, and *Eve Mazarine* [*Eefje Donkerblauw*] by Geert De Kockere and Lieve Baeten. See (News 283 2008, 21).

³⁵⁵ The ranking of the remaining seven titles in the top ten was not disclosed.

³⁵⁶ See <<http://geronimostilton.com/portal/WW/en/home/>> [Accessed 22 October 2014]. The actual author behind the series, Italian Elisabetta Dami, avoids all publicity. See (News 287 2008: 85).

³⁵⁷ This is the case in (News 287 2008: 85).

were decisive (News 286 2008, 50).³⁵⁸ Marc Cloostermans appears to be disillusioned by the election of a hype such as *The Kingdom of Fantasy* as the Best Ever Children's Book, and he openly questions its right to the accolade. "Neither Astrid Lindgren nor Roald Dahl, but Geronimo Stilton *sloped off* with the title 'Best Ever Children's Book'", Cloostermans writes (News 286 2008, 50; emphasis added).³⁵⁹ His choice of words – with the Dutch phrase for "sloping off", "er vanonder muizen", containing a clever pun on mice – hardly conceals his sense of disappointment. He continues to state that, to him, this is "[a] surprising award, seeing as the mouse had to compete with Annie M.G. Schmidt, J.K. Rowling, and Roald Dahl" (News 286 2008, 50).³⁶⁰ To his mind, works by Lindgren, Dahl, Schmidt, and Rowling ought to be benchmarks for good children's books, and not formulaic works of questionable quality, the latter of which, as was shown above, are often preferred by child readers.

The reason why Cloostermans is not taken with the Stilton-books is that they have not succeeded in impressing the gatekeepers of children's literature in Flanders at large: "Stilton is not a name for experts, critics, and adults: the winner is a phenomenon amongst children" (News 286 2008, 50).³⁶¹ Children's books experts, Cloostermans holds, are not particularly familiar with the books, and those who have come across them are not particularly fond of them. This claim he substantiates by probing the gatekeepers' opinions on the triumph of *The Kingdom of Fantasy*. Children's book critic Richard Tiel admits to not having come across the Stilton-books before, and "Children's Consul" Gerda Dendooven expresses her concern about the availability of books of this kind, which she refers to as "literary fast food". Dendooven states that she does not have anything against *The Kingdom of Fantasy* having been awarded the title as such. Nevertheless, in her view, gatekeepers of children's literature are supposed to direct children towards high-quality reading. Hence, a source of great concern to her is their tendency to become "lazier", as she puts it: "Bite-size chunks of culture drag along many people, even teachers too. [...] Making an effort to look further themselves [...] is no longer an option. People opt for the easiest solution" (News 286 2008, 50).³⁶² Moreover, Gerda Dendooven questions the suitability of the label "Best" for this particular book, a critical note which – surprisingly

³⁵⁸ In (News 287 2008: 85), it is mentioned that over 36,000 people voted and that 68 % of the participants were younger than twenty.

³⁵⁹ "Niet Astrid Lindgren en niet Roald Dahl, maar Geronimo Stilton *muisde er vanonder* met de titel 'Mooiste Kinderboek Aller Tijden'" (News 286 2008, 50; emphasis added).

³⁶⁰ "Een verrassende bekroning, want de muis had concurrentie van Annie M.G. Schmidt, J.K. Rowling en Roald Dahl" (News 286 2008, 50).

³⁶¹ "Stilton is geen naam voor de kenners, de recensenten en de volwassenen: de winnaar is een fenomeen onder kinderen" (News 286 2008, 50).

³⁶² "Culturele hapklare brokken slepen heel veel mensen mee, ook onderwijzers. [...] Zelf de moeite doen om verder te zoeken, [...] zit er niet meer in. Men kiest voor de makkelijkste oplossing" (News 286 2008, 50).

– is shared by the Flemish publisher of the Geronimo Stilton-series, Jos Baeckens. As Cloostermans conveys, in the interview, Baeckens was “uncommonly honest, by publishers’ standards: he said that not the very best book ever had won and that Stilton capitalised on its fan base and hype” (News 286 2008, 50).³⁶³ *Stichting Lezen Vlaanderen* president Majo De Saedeleer, on the other hand, was happy with the victory as it obviously was a choice made by child readers themselves.

The main points of interest about the election for this study are, firstly, the fact that J.K. Rowling, Roald Dahl, and Astrid Lindgren are the only foreign writers included in the otherwise Dutch-language-oriented short list. This is a strong indication of these authors’ wide international appeal and import. What is more, although she did not come in among the three first, the respect Cloostermans has for Lindgren is a token of her elevated stature in the Dutch language area in general.

The Canon of Adult Sentiment

Although adult agents in the field of children’s literature generally speaking are shown to possess the largest canonising potential, not all adults involved in children’s literature actually have the authority to canonise. There is, in fact, a distinction between players with and without authority within this group itself. It is a question of potential divergence between academic and professional canonising agents on the one hand and popular, caretaking intermediaries on the other. As was explained in section 2.1, scholars use various concepts to denote the phenomenon. Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer and Gerard de Vriend term it the *plural* canon of children’s literature (van Lierop-Debrauwer and de Vriend 2001, 294). Deborah Stevenson (1997) distinguishes between canons of *significance* and *sentiment*, respectively, and Catharine R. Stimpson (1990) calls the selection supported by agents lacking canonising potential the *paracanon*. Significantly, both Stevenson and Stimpson highlight the impact of subjective criteria for the group of caretakers. Stevenson foregrounds the popular players’ tendency to preserve works which they know and love and stresses that these preferences are highly influential in non-academic or –professional circles (Stevenson 1997, 114-115). Stimpson likewise points out that arguments based on love are no part of the official canonising circuit (Stimpson 1990, 960). The works circulating in this sphere, then, are “cherished legacies from previous generations and gifts of love to the next” (Stevenson 2009, 113).

A possible explanation for adults emotional involvement in children’s literature is the inescapable given that they all used to be children themselves, once upon a time. Deborah Stevenson holds, “we all started out as the named audience for this literature, so we all have insiders’ credentials [...]. As a consequence, *popular* adult audiences feel an

³⁶³ “naar uitgeversnormen, zeldzaam eerlijk: hij zei dat niet het allermooiste boek ooit gewonnen had en dat Stilton profiteerde van zijn fanclub en de hype” (News 286 2008, 50).

ownership of this genre” (Stevenson 2009, 113; emphasis added). Adult gatekeepers operating outside of the academic and professional channels of canonisation may feel that they possess children’s books, so to speak. Their inclination to recommend those works which they themselves feel the strongest connection with can be seen as a result of this perception. Margaret Mackey in her study on Beatrix Potter’s Peter Rabbit-series (1998) maps out the proliferation of the books. She observes that grown-ups acquire Peter-paraphernalia for themselves “presumably with some view to preserving, recreating or perhaps even compensating for aspects of their own childhood” (Mackey 1998, 108). Nicholas Tucker maintains that the selection of books founded in adults’ “own literary memories” eventually can come to “make up an informal critical consensus” (Tucker 2002, 183).³⁶⁴ Sandra van Ginkel (1994) sees this as a constant in the children’s literary domain. She writes, “one thing can be predicted. Generation after generation, adults will always be able to remember their own children’s books. And all of them will send their children to libraries” telling them what titles to look for (van Ginkel 1994, 150).³⁶⁵ Klaus Doderer corroborates that recommendations are informed by childhood impressions which have stuck and which can be multiplied easily (Doderer 1969, 12) Catharine Stimpson claims, “the love affair with a paracanonical text [often] begins when a reader is young and a text is officially ‘children’s literature’” (Stimpson 1990, 970). She points out the repetitive nature of childhood reading and sees this as a foreshadowing of the paracanonical affection for certain books at a later age:³⁶⁶ “The rereadings that maintain a children’s canon rehearse the rereadings that buttress an adult paracanonical canon. Moreover, behind the latter are the memories of the former. Like the canon, then, the paracanonical canon can be a conserving, preserving force” (Stimpson 1990, 971). All of these observations touch upon what seems to be a considerable undercurrent in the field of children’s literature. Whereas only the “lucky few” get endorsed and canonised by official agents, a large amount of works proves to be handed down “under the radar”.

Katharine Jones (2006) draws attention to the consequences of adult players’ connection to their own childhood. In her view, it renders the term *children’s literature* relative. She notes,

³⁶⁴ Tucker qualifies his statement: “Keeping these books alive was therefore a comparatively simple matter [...] But times change; [...] while *Alice* remains the classic it undoubtedly is, there is less confidence now in its suitability for the very young” (Tucker 2002, 183).

³⁶⁵ “[er] is één ding dat wel voorspeld kan worden. Generatie op generatie, zullen volwassenen zich altijd hun eigen kinderboeken kunnen herinneren. En met z’n allen zullen ze hun kind naar de bibliotheek sturen” (van Ginkel 1994, 150).

³⁶⁶ Likewise, Sandra van Ginkel claims that popular children’s books would not have become so popular if it had not been for child readers’ reading them to pieces (van Ginkel 1994, 150).

this is a literature written, purchased, and reviewed by a generation of adults who were previously children, which appeals to a generation of children who will later become adults. The so-called ‘children’s literature’ I read as a child is not children’s literature but rather literature of my generation – it comes along with me as I age. (Jones 2006, 305)³⁶⁷

Similarly, M.O. Grenby acknowledges the lure of childhood reading memories, and states, “Adults buy for their children the books they themselves had enjoyed a generation before” (Grenby 2008, 5). Furthermore, he draws attention to possible discrepancies as to what children and their parents like this may lead to, noting that “the next generation may also enjoy the books their parents had been so pleased with” (Grenby 2008, 5-6; emphasis added). As a consequence of this relativity of children’s literature, some scholars claim, children’s books require some time to permeate the field properly. From this perspective, a certain distance in time appears to be a necessity in matters of canonisation. Grenby points out, “It has often been observed [...] that the popularity of children’s texts is affected by a time-lag” (Grenby 2008, 5). Kenneth Kidd posits as a requirement for canonicity the work’s having withstood one generation’s scrutiny at the very least, and preferably having gained the approval of the next in addition (Kidd 2011, 55). Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer shows that the year 1945 is a commonly accepted hinge point in the distinction between older and newer classics and that some scholars even contest the notion a “modern classic” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 181). Deborah Stevenson points out what seems to her a contradiction in terms inherent in that phrase. She notes, “‘New classic’ is, functionally speaking, oxymoronic; a classic has to be old” (Stevenson 2009, 115). She furthermore makes mention of a “mandatory waiting period” of between 50 and 100 years which canonical works of children’s literature appear to be subject to (Stevenson 2009, 115). I am not convinced that “canonical” is a label which can only be attached to “old” books. In my opinion, one can discern signs of potential canonicity, such as recognition in acknowledged channels of canonisation, in “young” works already. Nevertheless, I do believe that the proof of the pudding is in the eating and that time will be able to tell whether or not the works actually succeeds in becoming canonised.

“Sentimental” Arguments regarding Astrid Lindgren’s Works

Heidi Lexe in *Pippi, Pan and Potter* observes that in Germany upon Astrid Lindgren’s death in 2002 the question arose who Pippi Longstocking “belongs to”, and that several generations lay claim on *Pippi Longstocking* as the essential reading matter of precisely

³⁶⁷ In order to capture the correlation between audience and books, she proposes to use the term “generational literature” (Jones 2006, 305).

their generation (Lexe 2003, 41). In the corpus material, too, argumentations of a “sentimental” of “generational” nature surface. Well-known Flemish actor Michaël Pas in an interview on his reading habits indicates that his own childhood reading preferences guide his selection of books to offer to his son. Among such childhood favourites he names Roald Dahl, Paul Biegel, Annie M.G. Schmidt, and Astrid Lindgren (News 294 2009, 30). *De Standaard* critic Alexandra De Vos recommends Lindgren’s collection of fairy tales [*Sunnanäng*] based on the impact it made on her when she was young: “I was five years old when my grandmother read them to me and they haven’t lost their poetic lustre. [...] I’ll gladly have some of that nostalgia” (News 375 2012, 7).³⁶⁸ Bookseller Vera Geeraerts claims, “It is impossible to imagine a contemporary bookshop without Lindgren” (News 143 2002, 10).³⁶⁹ She names *Pippi Longstocking*, *Ronia, the Robber’s Daughter*, and Lindgren’s collected stories as the biggest sellers and adds, “Parents who recognise the works from their own youth tend to buy them for their children” (News 143 2002, 10).³⁷⁰

The majority of the sparse sentimental arguments pertains to Pippi Longstocking, though. In connection with the staging of the 1998 Flemish musical version, Nico Heemelaar points out that its producers grew up with the TV-series and that “[t]heir generation now takes their own children to the theatre with a sense of *déjà vu*” (News 402 1998, 20).³⁷¹ Wietske Vos likewise highlights Pippi’s intergenerational appeal. She reminds her readers, “Today’s parents were taken with the freckled girl with the red braids. Therefore, it is a good thing that their children, too, now can experience Pippi in person” (News 105 1998, 14).³⁷² Finally, Marijn van der Jagt couples sentiment and longevity. She attributes the lasting attraction it exerts on its audience to a bridging of generations, and writes,

In the variable universe of children’s heroes, the cheeky girl possessing superhuman powers is here to stay.

Thanks to the parents, of course, who grew up with Pippi and use their offspring as an alibi to finally buy all of the things they wanted to buy as children already. (News 430 1999, 30)³⁷³

³⁶⁸ “Ik was vijf toen mijn grootmoeder ze voorlas en ze hebben niets van hun poëtische glans verloren. [...] doe mij maar dat kindersentiment” (News 375 2012, 7).

³⁶⁹ “Lindgren is niet meer weg te denken uit de boekhandel” (News 143 2002, 10). Cf. section 2.4.

³⁷⁰ “Ouders die het werk nog kennen uit hun jeugd, kopen het vaak voor hun kinderen” (News 143 2002, 10).

³⁷¹ “Hun generatie komt nu zelf met de kinderen en een *deja vu* gevoel naar het theater” (News 402 1998, 20).

³⁷² “De ouders van nu liepen toen weg met het sproetige meisje met de rode vlechten. Daarom is het goed dat ook hun kinderen Pippi in levende lijve bezig kunnen zien” (News 105 1998, 14).

³⁷³ “Het brutale meisje met de bovenmenselijke kracht is in het wisselende universum van kinderhelden een blijvertje. Dankzij de ouders natuurlijk, die opgroeiden met Pippi en hun kroost als alibi gebruiken om eindelijk al die spulletjes te kopen die ze als kind al wilden hebben” (News 430 1999, 30).

Overall, the amount of sentimental arguments used is limited, which corroborates the finding that the far-reaching degree of canonicity Astrid Lindgren's works acquired in Flanders and in The Netherlands was obtained through established channels primarily.

3.3 Conclusion: Singing Astrid Lindgren's Praises

All in all, much of the Dutch-language criticism of Lindgren's work reads as an ode to the author. The canonisation of her oeuvre developed in a top-down fashion primarily, and her books were hardly ever met with resistance. Even though it is fair to say, as did Flemish author Bart Moeyaert, that Astrid Lindgren often caused a stir (News 148 2002, 10),³⁷⁴ the excitement her works effected rarely resonated with the Dutch and Flemish corpus contributors directly. Frequently, unfavourable opinions discernible in the corpus articles are not firsthand negative responses to Lindgren's books but rather accounts of objections expressed elsewhere, especially in foreign sources (primarily Swedish and German). Hence, when it comes to applying a critical, discerning approach to Astrid Lindgren's oeuvre, the Dutch-language reception proves to be derivative to a certain degree. It is indeed ironic that the Dutch and Flemish critics admire Lindgren for her critique of social structures, and for questioning the legitimacy of the established order between adults and children, but that there are hardly any traces of their adopting a critical disposition with regard to the works under discussion.

On the contrary, the prevalent stance towards her body of work can be characterised as overwhelmingly positive. The majority of the newspaper and journal contributors acknowledges the game-changing impact which Lindgren had on the field of children's literature and its adult gatekeepers, both in her homeland and in the Dutch language area. Well-established Flemish children's book critic Annemie Leysen, for example, highlights the import of the author's oeuvre when she states that "Astrid Lindgren [made] short shrift of the didactic, moralising atmosphere which also had afflicted Swedish children's books for a long time" (News 98 1998, 27).³⁷⁵ In 2002, after her decease, Marcel van Nieuwenborgh concludes that "in recent years, everyone had come to agree that Astrid Lindgren had made children's books more exciting and much less obedient" (News 142

³⁷⁴ Compare (JBG 19 1974, 145-146); (JBG 85 2002, 91); (LzL 7 2007, 167).

³⁷⁵ "Astrid Lindgren, die korte metten maakte met het didactische, moraliserende sfeertje dat ook Zweedse kinderboeken lang teisterde" (News 98 1998, 27).

2002, 10).³⁷⁶ Kathy Lindekens stresses that Lindgren knew that literature can have a strong influence on society. As she puts it, “The strength of art is that one can say – and keep saying – things that still have to register with society” (News 143 2002, 10).³⁷⁷ Lindekens adds that Lindgren deployed “cheerful anarchy” as her main tool for reaching that goal (News 143 2002, 10).³⁷⁸ The most obvious exponent of the ideological impact of Lindgren’s is of course Pippi Longstocking, who “symbolises children’s emancipation *avant la lettre*” (News 120 2000, 26).³⁷⁹

Overall, the emphasis placed on Astrid Lindgren’s pioneering role in calling into question both children’s books and educational principles shows that the Dutch and Flemish reviewers commend her for that. The abundance of arguments of an ideological kind allows me to draw conclusions on the literary views guiding the critics’ evaluation of Lindgren’s oeuvre. Following Dutch literary theorist Jacob Jan (J.J.) Oversteegen, I take into account the outlook on literature [literatuuropvatting] discernible in their discourse. Oversteegen uses the term to delineate “the description of the conception of a(n) (group of) author(s) or a (group of) reader(s) regarding the nature and function of literature” (Oversteegen 1982, 66).³⁸⁰ Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer en Neel Bastiaansen-Harks (2005) tie up Oversteegen’s notion with Meyer Howard Abrams’ categorisation of literary outlooks. Meyer distinguishes between four elements around which literary evaluation centres – text, author, reader, and reality – and names the four ensuing categories of views objective,³⁸¹ expressive, pragmatic, and mimetic respectively (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Bastiaansen-Harks 2005, 64-65). Given the primacy of reader-oriented arguments in the corpus, the type of outlook that is of overriding importance is the pragmatic one, in which the text and the reader are connected and the work is assessed in terms of the specific effects it induces in its readers (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Bastiaansen-Harks 2005, 64). What the Dutch-language critics make of Lindgren’s works from a purely literary point of view will be discussed in the next chapter.

³⁷⁶ “allen waren het er de jongste jaren over eens geworden dat Astrid Lindgren de kinderboeken spannender en veel minder braaf heeft gemaakt” (News 142 2002, 10).

³⁷⁷ “De kracht van kunst is dat je dingen kan zeggen en blijven zeggen die in de samenleving nog moeten doordringen” (News 143 2002, 10).

³⁷⁸ “vrolijke anarchie” (News 143 2002, 10).

³⁷⁹ “staat symbool voor kinderemancipatie *avant la lettre*” (News 120 2000, 26).

³⁸⁰ “de beschrijving van de denkbeelden van een (groep) auteur(s) of een (groep) lezer(s) omtrent aard en functie van de literatuur” (Oversteegen 1982, 66).

³⁸¹ Translated as “autonomistisch” (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Bastiaansen-Harks 2005, 64).

Chapter 4

Setting the Benchmark: The Synchronic Dimension of Canonical Works

After having scrutinised the rules of the game in children’s literature and their impact on field-internal and -external processes of canonisation, I will now turn to the three different distinctive dimensions of canonical works. Many children’s literature researchers have focussed primarily on the synchronic dimension, which is related to the “essence” criterion. As was elucidated in section 1.4, Torben Weinreich explained that this criterion pertains to quality. “Essence” derives from structural properties inherent in the work, such as its being universally applicable, multi-layered, and complex (Weinreich 2004, 17). Quality in its turn engenders exemplariness, and the coupling of these two attributes renders the work worthy of its benchmark status. Thus, this synchronic, essentialist angle is concerned mainly with the individual canonical work and its status as a standard or a norm. In the current chapter I will look into the preconditions for a work’s acquisition of that normative status as perceived by researchers of children’s literature. On account of which characteristics does it become a standard? The exposition will centre around factors which children’s literature scholars classify as internal, text-immanent.

The essentialist, textual features which are central in Bruce A. Ronda’s conception of canonical works reflect the aspects foregrounded by Torben Weinreich: “By *canon* we typically mean those texts that are said to have an enduring quality by virtue of their universal themes, literary craft, or surplus of meaning” (Ronda 1992, 32; emphasis in original). Deborah Stevenson likewise points out the import of “high literary quality” in a canonical work: “a classic has to be *classy*. Classics are books expected to give readers a real literary experience – books where the writing alone has the capacity to bring kids something important” (Stevenson 2009, 115; emphasis in original). Emer O’Sullivan, for her part, prefers an approach to canonical works in which “the appreciation of the [...]

superb” is primordial (O’Sullivan 2000a, 425).¹ In her view, the spectre of canonical properties encompasses “the particular (historical, aesthetic, innovative or representative) achievements of the works”, which should be assessed “independently of the effect” of the works so as to represent the multitude of children’s literary forms (O’Sullivan 2000a, 426).² In other words, Emer O’Sullivan advocates a strict separation of the synchronic and diachronic paradigms as far as the consideration of canonical works is concerned.

Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, as was shown before, favours a synchronic kind of discourse on canonical works (cf. section 1.4).³ She employs a set of eight criteria to judge literary works by, criteria which she regards as “essential characteristics for literary quality and hence decisive for the classic status of children’s books” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 193-4).⁴ The requirements postulated by Kümmerling-Meibauer (2003, 194-216) are the following:

- (1) Innovativity;
- (2) Representativity;
- (3) Aesthetic design of the language;
- (4) Simplicity versus complexity;
- (5) Image of the child’s experience;
- (6) Imagination;
- (7) Ambiguity;
- (8) Crosswriting;
- (9) Intertextuality.

In effect, this list of requirements covers all of the aspects other theorists mention. I will therefore use Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer’s categories to structure the account of the theoretical discourse on the topic.

Although these structural elements are generally considered to exist in and of themselves, I will discuss them with an eye to the overarching subject of this study, that is, processes of canonisation in their entirety. In the next sections, I will explore the interpretations of the essentialist properties discernible in scholarly discourse. My

¹ “die Würdigung des [...] Hervorragenden” (O’Sullivan 2000a, 425).

² “die besonderen (historischen, ästhetischen, innovativen oder repräsentativen) Leistungen der Werke”; “unabhängig von der Wirkung” (O’Sullivan 2000a, 425).

³ Compare the following statement: “the diachronic attributes of long-term effect and popularity can, to be sure, enhance the classic status, yet they are no imperative criterion for the classic status of a children’s book” [die diachronen Merkmale der Langzeitwirkung und Popularität können den Klassikerstatus zwar noch verstärken, sind jedoch nicht ein notwendiges Kriterium für den Klassikerstatus eines Kinderbuchs] (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 178).

⁴ “wesentliche Merkmale für literarische Qualität und damit [...] ausschlaggebend für den klassischen Status von Kinderbüchern” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 193-4).

review of the theoretical discourse on such synchronic properties of canonical works reveals that the discussion is fraught with contradictions and that various opinions on the topic conflict with each other. When possible, I will discuss the properties as binary clusters. Moreover, as my account progresses, the reader might sense, as did I, that the label “text-internal properties” does not entirely fit the contents of the synchronic categories. The way I see it, “text-induced” may be a better umbrella term for these essentialist features.

Subsequently, I will present the results of my investigation regarding the recurrence in the corpus material of features classified within this synchronic paradigm. While carrying out this analysis, I noticed that there is very little overlap between the theoretical discourse and the case of Astrid Lindgren’s Dutch-language reception and canonisation. Up until this point, I was able to interweave theory and representative examples. Due to the lack in concordance between theory and practice at hand in the current chapter, I opted against continuing this approach. This means that it will be more linear in its structure than the previous chapters, starting with an overview of all of the theoretical viewpoints on the matter, followed by relevant examples from the epitexts on Astrid Lindgren. Despite the perceived gap between theory and practice, these examples might still provide a solution for circumventing some of the contradictory argumentations observed in the theoretical discussions.

4.1 Theoretical Discussions of Synchronic Features

(1) Innovativity, Imagination, and Uniqueness

Out of the synchronic characteristics discussed in the theoretical discourse, innovativity, in the sense of formal experimentation, is by far the most common one. It is used by Emer O’Sullivan, for example, who pleads for a definition of canonical works which incorporates their innovative accomplishments. In her view, innovativity is an essential part of a broader array of characteristics a canonical work displays (O’Sullivan 2000a, 426; cf. supra). From Ernst Seibert’s account of the failed canonisation of certain German-language children’s books one can equally derive that he values attempts to create something new. Seibert in “The Acceptance of Children’s Literature – The Hidden Meaning of the Canon” (2007)⁵ writes that it is “astonishing what treasures often sink

⁵ “Kinderliteratur-Akzeptanz - der doppelte Boden des Kanons” (Seibert 2007).

away and what mediocre things [...] sustain themselves across generations” (Seibert 2007, 104).⁶ He continues to state, “Afflicted by oblivion or repression are works by authors which in many cases brought an enormous innovative and also artistic potential to the domain of literature for children and youngsters, but nonetheless [...] did not find continuous dissemination” (Seibert 2007, 105).⁷ It is clear that Seibert considers innovation to be an important enough reason for a work to become canonised. A far-reaching level of innovativity is central to German library scientist Birgit Dankert’s understanding of canonicity as well. As Heidi Lexe reports in *Pippi, Pan and Potter* (2003), Dankert sees as “sanctioned classics” “texts which have brought innovations in the developmental history of the idea of childhood and children’s literature” (Lexe 2003, 19).⁸ Considering matters from a polysystemic perspective, Rita Ghesquière underlines the significance of innovation in processes of canonisation at large. A work which is appreciated for introducing a new element to the system works to raise the bar within it. As such, Ghesquière explains, works which innovate – denoted as “primary models” – keep the system as a whole on its toes:

The tension between canon and non-canonised literature is [...] vitally important, especially for canonised literature. If non-canonised works do not exert any pressure, this will result in petrification or rigidity. Canonised literature will lose its vigour and lapse into stereotypicality. (Ghesquière 2009, 20)⁹

Thus, canon is a complicated matter, which is far from static (Ghesquière 2009, 20).

The predominance of innovativity in the imagination of the gatekeepers of children’s literature is indeed striking, and it is furthermore notable that it nearly always is coupled with uniqueness. These two features are for instance considered by Ann Haugland, who refers to a study by Joseph Turow dating from the late 1970s which looked into the attitudes of children’s book publishers, described by Haugland as “cultural guardians [...] [who] define the parameters of ‘good’ literature for children” (Haugland 1994, 51). She shows that, in general, they rejected repetitiveness, and that they “[cast] [s]eries books with formula stories and characters [...] as the opposite of good literature” (Haugland

⁶ “erstaunlich, welche Schätze oft versinken und was am Mittelmäßigem [...] sich über Generationen hält” (Seibert 2007, 104).

⁷ “Vom Vergessen oder aber von Verdrängung betroffen sind Werke von Autorinnen und Autoren, die in den Bereich der Literatur für Kinder und Jugendliche ein oft enormes innovatives und auch künstlerisches Potential eingebracht haben, jedoch [...] keine anhaltende Verbreitung gefunden haben” (Seibert 2007, 105).

⁸ “sanktionierte Klassiker”; “Texte, die in der Entwicklungsgeschichte der Idee von Kindheit und Kinderliteratur Innovationen brachten” (Lexe 2003, 19).

⁹ “De spanning tussen canon en niet-gecanoniseerde literatuur is [...] van levensbelang, vooral voor de canolliteratuur. Indien er geen druk uitgaat van de niet-gecanoniseerde werken, krijgen we immers snel petrificatie of verstarring. De canolliteratuur verliest levenskracht en vervalt in stereotypie” (Ghesquière 2009, 20).

1994, 51). “Good literature”, by contrast, is characterised precisely by originality, as the gatekeepers are shown to be “adamant in their expectations that good children’s literature be *innovative, unusual*, reflective of an author’s *unique aesthetic vision* and definitely not ‘formulaic’” (Haugland 1994, 51; emphasis added). This brings to mind the factors which were pivotal in Perry Nodelman’s conception of literary quality and which included “uniqueness and unity of vision, [...] subtle use of language and such” (Nodelman 1985, 3).

The bias towards originality seems to stem from a Romantic ideal of the artist as a creator of works of art which express his or her individual feelings and ideas, which has been around for quite some time. For example, Raymond Williams in his famous *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976 [2011]), identified a “Romantic preference for spontaneity and innovation” (Williams 1976 [2011], 70). As is commonly known, the Romantic norm of individual expression and the genius of the artist clashed with the Classicistic adherence to fixed artistic rules and standards, and gradually came to replace it. This Romantic notion of uniqueness achieved by means of innovation reverberates in Harold Bloom’s concept of “the anxiety of influence”, which implies that authors wanting to become recognised as influential usually try to steer clear of their own influences, avoiding direct references to their predecessors or taking on an ironic stance towards them.¹⁰ In “Interpretation and the Apparent Sameness of Children’s Novels” (2006),¹¹ Perry Nodelman draws upon this idea of Bloom’s, which he considers to be informed by the premise that people tend to value uniqueness. He argues that, consequently, when assessing works of literature, we set out to establish what sets them apart from others: “we want to determine what makes the poems and novels we consider good different from the ones we consider mediocre; and we want to explore what makes the works we consider masterpieces *special*” (Nodelman 2006, 98; emphasis added). As a result, the property of uniqueness has become an overriding aspect in our understanding of literature. As Nodelman words it, “For that reason, we assume that good books are those that transcend genre or archetype, and that demand our close attention to their *distinguishing* qualities” (Nodelman 2006, 98; emphasis added).

By way of excursion, it should be noted that within children’s literature, so-called Romantic convictions have affected the field in another way as well, not only in terms of the undercutting of formalistic tendencies but also in the form of a discarding attitude towards didacticism, one of the field’s founding pillars when it first emerged. “Romanticism” in children’s literature usually pertains to a Romantic image of children

¹⁰ See (Bloom 1996).

¹¹ Nodelman’s article (2006) was originally published in *Studies in Literary Imagination* 18.2, 1985: 5-20. The article was reprinted in the second volume of Peter Hunt’s four-volume *Children’s Literature: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* in 2006. It is the latter version of the text I will be referring to.

and childhood as being in touch with nature, and as innocent creatures who should not be spoiled by education.¹² Anne Lundin maintains, “Revisionist critics speak of ‘the Romantic ideology’ that has shaped much of the historiography of children’s literature into a conflicting paradigm of instruction versus amusement” (Lundin 2004, 5). As Lundin furthermore indicates, the combined goal of entertaining and instructing was first set forth by John Locke.¹³ Eventually, though, children’s literature evolved into its current state, where “imaginative writings [are] privileged over more educational works” (Lundin 2004, 5). In fact, imagination is a feature which is foregrounded by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, and Anne Lundin is one of very few scholars with whom this resonates. Kümmerling-Meibauer uses this criterion to “delineate the ability to meaningfully connect disparate elements”, examples of which are “coinciding realistic and fantastical events, or the discrepancy between the child’s communicative abilities [...] and the representation of the child’s [...] complex psychological state of mind” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 205).¹⁴

The innovatory quality of the canonical works at hand in the collection of essays *Beyond Babar. The European Tradition in Children’s Literature* (2006) is highlighted by Sandra Beckett. In these works, she contends, “a great deal of innovative formal experimentation” can be observed (Beckett 2006, xii). As Beckett moreover indicates, the experimental writers paved the way for others: “The authors of these novels often broke with the conventions of children’s book publishing of the time and forged new paths for their successors” (Beckett 2006, xi-xii). In Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer’s (2003) account of synchronic features, innovativity is the first quality that she names (cf. supra). She mentions that it often is linked with originality, and that “[t]his means that the work in question has introduced one or more characteristics into children’s literature and that it has converted these into literature in an exemplary fashion” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 194).¹⁵ From her explanation, it equally becomes clear that innovation is inextricably linked with exemplariness. Heinrich Kaulen, too, touches upon those qualities. He sees them as inseparable and notes that canonical works fulfil a “model

¹² Cf. a.o. (Lundin 2004, 5-6); (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 32-34).

¹³ See e.g. (Lundin 2004, 98); (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 13), (Ghesquière, Joosen and van Lierop-Debrauwer 2014, 15; 19).

¹⁴ “wird auf die Fähigkeit hingewiesen, disparate Elemente sinnvoll zu verbinden”; “das Zusammentreffen realistischer und phantastischer Ereignisse oder die Diskrepanz zwischen der [...] kindlichen Mitteilungsfähigkeit und der Darstellung der [...] komplexen psychischen Befindlichkeit des Kindes” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 205).

¹⁵ “Es besagt, dass das betreffende Werk ein oder mehrere Merkmale in die Kinderliteratur eingeführt und auf vorbildliche Weise literarisch umgesetzt hat” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 194).

function” (Kaulen 2007, 111).¹⁶ Yet, he stresses that these are not the sole criteria for “canonical capacity” (Kaulen 2007, 111).¹⁷

In this view, then, one of the feats of a canonical work is that it renews the field, an idea which was first propagated by Zohar Shavit in the aforementioned seminal study *Poetics of Children’s Literature* (1986). Shavit argues that an essential feature of canonical children’s texts is that they can bring about shifts in the system, or, in other words, that they have the potential to innovate. These texts have a tendency to introduce into children’s literature models which have become obsolete and de-canonised in adult literature. As these models are already known and approved by the adult gatekeepers, they are easily accepted. Therefore, in Shavit’s view, they are able to readily penetrate the system’s centre, and to subsequently become “subject to imitations” (Shavit 1986, 67). Due to the presupposition that innovativity engenders exemplariness and that canonical works in other words serve as models for other writers and texts, interpretations of “innovativity” such as the above bear witness to a prescriptive outlook on canonicity in which the normative nature of the canonical work as a benchmark is foregrounded.¹⁸ Such ideas harmonise with a universal need for structure and something to hold on to, identified by Renate von Heydebrand as the main impetus behind canon formation. She notes, “there is a legitimate longing for orientation towards authority, for relating to a community and that what it esteems” (von Heydebrand 1993, 3).¹⁹ Stressing the exemplary quality of canonical works is one way of creating structure in a literary field. Moreover, all of these conceptualisations tie in with a so-called “aesthetically evaluative meaning” of the word classic, described as follows by Günther Schweikle in the *Metzler Lexicon of Literature*:²⁰ “exemplary, with canonical validity (not merely in the antique meaning) for the ensuing generation of poets and artists” (cited in (Lexe 2003, 14)).²¹

Perry Nodelman sees innovatory potential as quintessential in matters of canonisation. To his mind, only those works which truly succeed in renewing their field become canonical, or, to use his term, a “touchstone”. As he puts it, “A touchstone has to be

¹⁶ “Modellfunktion” (Kaulen 2007, 111).

¹⁷ “Kanonfähigkeit” (Kaulen 2007, 111). Compare: “However, criteria such as innovativity, exemplariness, and model function [...] cannot count as fundamental or even the only criterion for their canonical capacity” [Kriterien wie Innovativität, Exemplarizität und Modellfunktion [...] können eben nicht als grundlegendes oder gar einziges Kriterium für deren Kanonfähigkeit gelten] (Kaulen 2007, 111).

¹⁸ Compare Zohar Shavit’s suggestion that canonical works over time turn into “models for imitation” (Shavit 1986, 67).

¹⁹ “[da ist] ein legitimes Bedürfnis nach Orientierung an Autorität, nach Rückbindung an eine Gemeinschaft und das, was diese hochschätzt” (von Heydebrand 1993, 3).

²⁰ *Metzler Literatur Lexikon*, Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984.

²¹ “ästhetisch wertende Bedeutung”; “vorbildhaft, mit kanonischer Geltung (nicht nur in antikem Sinne) für die nachfolgende Dichter- und Künstlergeneration” (Lexe 2003, 14).

unconventional enough to draw attention to itself, to cause controversy, perhaps to encourage imitators” (Nodelman 1985, 8), otherwise, it will be overlooked. Consequently, in Nodelman’s view, “The history of any art is always the history of the innovations that worked” (Nodelman 1985, 8). Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, as well, can be shown to adhere to such a prescriptive perspective, seeing that she argues that “the concept of the children’s classic should be founded on [...] exemplariness” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 192).²² In her view, “generativity”, or, the ability to create something, should be one of the founding principles of a canon of children’s literature. She finds that only creative, generative works of literature deserve the label of canonicity: “The works that chiefly should be read are those that have demonstrably produced and influenced literature: as generic examples, [or] as models for motifs, styles, or themes” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 192).²³ As Elena Paruolo appropriately remarks, “classics for [Kümmerling-Meibauer] are a kind of *prototype* for certain genres, topics, themes or styles” (Paruolo 2011, 14; emphasis added). Likewise, Rita Ghesquière conceives of canonical works as “worthy of imitation” (Ghesquière 2004, 55),²⁴ and Helene Høystrup points out, “The word canon normally refers to legitimacy as a model or to the ability of the works to create a model” (Høystrup 2008, 219).²⁵

In fact, Elena Paruolo also aligns herself with this prescriptive line of reasoning with regard to the canon. Paruolo draws upon the notion of the “scriptor classicus” as coined by Roman author Fronto, in whose conception the term denotes “a writer of high rank, an author of works of beauty and great literary worth, someone to take as a model” (Paruolo 2011, 15). In addition, Paruolo holds that “it was after Fronto that the *classicus* became the ‘high’ writer to watch, imitate and study in schools, one belonging to the ‘canon’” (Paruolo 2011, 15; emphasis in original). Much in the same spirit, Hans-Heino Ewers notes, “One generally understands as a literary canon a selection of works or authors which are considered to be *exemplary* and which *embody a positive norm*” (Ewers 2007a, 97; emphasis added).²⁶ Ewers points out that many such works are deemed canonical because of their present-day relevance. Hence, the criteria of exemplariness

²² “der Kinderklassikerbegriff [sollte] [...] auf Exemplarität beruhen” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 192). Compare (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 149; emphasis added): “In the broadest sense the classic meant the outstanding and the *exemplary*” [Im weitesten Sinne meinte das Klassische das Vorzügliche und Musterhafte].

²³ “Vor allem diejenigen Werke sollten gelesen werden, die nachweislich Literatur produziert und beeinflusst haben: als Gattungsmuster, als Vorlage für Motive, Schreibweisen und Themen” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 192).

²⁴ “navolgenswaard” (Ghesquière 2004, 55).

²⁵ “Ordet kanon refererer normalt till æstetisk mønstergyldighed eller till værkers mønsterdannende evne” (Høystrup 2008, 219). See also (Høystrup 2003, 62).

²⁶ “Unter einem literarischen Kanon versteht man gemeinhin eine Auswahl von Werken oder von Autoren, die als vorbildlich angesehen werden, die eine positive Norm verkörpern” (Ewers 2007a, 97).

and innovativity are the result of interpretations of the history of children's literature from an ahistorical, contemporary point of view. In his view, the attribute of exemplariness should be put in a historic perspective (Ewers 2007a).²⁷

As was mentioned before, the identification of works worthy of this high rank was the goal of the American Children's Literature Association's 1980s project of nominating children's literary "touchstones".²⁸ A supporter of the idea of canonical works as touchstones is Emer O'Sullivan, who advocates the use of the German equivalent to the term, viz. "Prüfstein" (O'Sullivan 2000a, 426).²⁹ She favours Gary D. Schmidt's interpretation of a literary "touchstone" as "a book so *excellent* that readers can use it to *judge* the excellence of other works within the same genre", precisely because it enables comparison and validation (cited in (O'Sullivan 2000a, 426; emphasis added)). As Jean Webb similarly indicates in "Genre and Convention", canonical works "defin[e] an undefined [...] *benchmark* in terms of literary quality" (Webb 2006, 68; emphasis added). Consequently, Webb looks upon canonical works as "represent[ing] standards which can be used to *critique and evaluate* other work" (Webb 2006, 60; emphasis added). She endorses the notion of a touchstone, adding that "[t]he key here is to view the identification of a canon as a starting point, a set of benchmarks to be reviewed [...], then added to and evaluated" (Webb 2006, 61). From such a point of view, canonical works indeed live up to the meaning of a canon as a measuring rod (compare section 1.1). In addition, this perspective is in keeping with Raymond Williams' definition of a "standard", which he identifies "[i]n the most interesting modern sense [as being] in the range from 'a source of authority' to 'a level of achievement'" (Williams 1976 [2011], 248). Overall, exemplariness founded on innovation clearly is a factor of primary importance to many of the researchers dealing with canonisation in children's literature.

In my view, though, some of the characteristics categorised as essentialist and belonging to the work itself in fact exceed its limitations. Rather than being restricted to the text in its own right, properties such as uniqueness, innovativity, and exemplariness work to establish a connection between that work and the literary field in which it functions. Striving to stand out from what already exists is something which is manifested intrinsically, within the text, but which in itself is essentially non-intrinsic, as it can only be realised in relation to other works. I cannot help but feel that to frame these

²⁷ Because Ewers sees contemporary canonisation as an ahistorical, synchronic process, he thinks that it should be complemented by a strictly descriptive literary historiographic perspective allowing for the selection of works which can be regarded as "landmarks" [Orientierungsmarken] (Ewers 2007a, 98). Those are works which are innovative as well as highly representative of a certain epoch or tendency in the history of children's literature, but not necessarily canonised. Ewers proposes to call them "key texts" in the history of children's literature [kinderliteraturhistorische Schlüsseltexte] instead of canonical works (Ewers 2007a, 99).

²⁸ See section 1.1.

²⁹ "Prüfstein" literally has the same meaning as "touchstone".

relationships as characteristics *of the text* would be to miss the mark to some degree. As a consequence, I wish to stress that I perceive of innovativity not as a textual property which operates in a vacuum, but rather as an attribute of the text which allows it to adopt a stance towards other literary texts, a stance from which it in turn can derive value. Furthermore, to my mind, exemplariness is closely intertwined with intertextuality, and neither of these phenomena pertain to the work as such but rather have to do with its position within the literary field at large. I feel that they surpass the synchronic dimension, which is why I opt to treat them as diachronic features instead. They will be discussed in section 5.4.

(2) Representativity

The second canonical quality mentioned by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer is representativity, a property which is fairly common in the scholarly discourse, albeit not nearly as preponderant as innovativity. It can be understood to mean serving as a prime example of a certain trend or genre, as Kümmerling-Meibauer indicates:

With this aspect attention is drawn to the fact that a work of children's literature is considered to be the most significant representative for the *establishment* of a given literary characteristic, or as an outstanding *exponent* of a development of children's literature within a certain period. (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 197; emphasis added)³⁰

An interpretation of "representative" of this kind is in keeping with the previously mentioned "aesthetically evaluative meaning" of "classic" from the *Metzler Lexicon of Literature* (1984).³¹ In this lexicon, canonicity is associated with a "[d]istinctive quality for *culmination, apogee* of an epoch, or a genre" (cited in (Lexe 2003, 14; emphasis added)).³² Here, too, the individual work is placed within a broader evolution found in children's literature. It is inscribed in a tradition and seen as an example of a feature characteristic of the field. Nevertheless, this does not mean that it suffices to merely copy the feature in the new work: a certain degree of creativity is expected as it should be put to new use. As Lana A. Whited phrases it, "Surely any books that will be deemed 'classics' [...] must

³⁰ "Mit diesem Aspekt wird darauf aufmerksam gemacht, dass ein kinderliterarisches Werk als bedeutendster Repräsentant für die Etablierung eines bestimmten literarischen Merkmals oder als herausragender Vertreter einer kinderliterarischen Entwicklung innerhalb eines Epochenabschnitts angesehen wird" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 197).

³¹ "ästhetisch wertende Bedeutung" (cited in (Lexe 2003, 14)).

³² "Kennzeichnendes Attribut für Kulmination, Höhepunkte einer Epoche, einer Gattung" (Lexe 2003, 14).

have some roots or branches in familiar forms, genres, or subgenres of literature and folklore and yet not be purely derivative” (Whited 2002, 9).

With emphasis being placed on commonality, the idea of a canonical work as an exponent of a given tradition is diametrically opposed to the qualities of originality and innovation. This is in fact one of the main issues dealt with by T.S. Eliot in his well-known essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1921 [1996]).³³ Seeing that originality and innovation are explicitly favoured by the majority of children’s literature scholars, unsurprisingly, this interpretation has raised some debate. Some other researchers point out the impact of a tendency for repetition on the field. Deborah Stevenson, for instance, acknowledges that some canonised works may be more diverse (especially linguistically speaking) than non-canonical children’s books, but argues that, within children’s literature as a whole, “Classic-ness would seem to be recursive, defining itself by what’s already there and thereby favouring not the groundbreaking but the traditional” (Stevenson 2009, 117).

Stevenson’s idea is actually aligned with an interpretation of “canonicity” advanced by Maria Nikolajeva in *Children’s Literature Comes of Age* (1996). Nikolajeva’s understanding of “canonical” diverges from generally accepted interpretations in that she does not see it as encompassing originality and innovativity. Instead, she draws upon Yuri Lotman’s distinction between canonical art on the one hand and modern art on the other. As Nikolajeva explains, Lotman postulates as the main characteristic of *modern* art violations of or deviations from the prevailing artistic norms. He therefore sees it as innovative, as opposed to *canonical* art, which is ritual and traditional: “While in ritual art breaking of the norms is comprehended as wrong, [...] in modern art it is seen as innovation and creativity” (Nikolajeva 1996, 50). Hence, from this semiotic point of view, canonical equals “complying with the prevalent norms” (Nikolajeva 1996, 50). Following Lotman’s distinction, Nikolajeva classes children’s literature as secondary and states that “most children’s literature [...] belong [sic] to the category of canonical art, while [...] much so called ‘quality’ contemporary literature [...] represents the non-canonical, or modern, art” (Nikolajeva 1996, 50). Thus, seen from this angle, all children’s books are innately representative. In Nikolajeva’s opinion, children’s literature is actually held back by the

³³ Eliot notes “our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else”, and adds, “In these aspects or parts of his work we pretend to find what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of the man. We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet’s difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors; we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously” (Eliot 1921 [1996], n.p.).

fact that it is governed by limiting rules and regulations.³⁴ Consequently, the norm-adherent tendency in children's books is considered to be a drawback. Nikolajeva's view is shared by Reinbert Tabbert, who argues that "stereotypical traits in content and language are met with rejection in criticism" (Tabbert 1994, 46).³⁵ Such a point is furthermore made by Zohar Shavit, who likewise believes children's literature to be hampered by its lack of complexity: "the norm of simple and simplified models is still prominent in most children's literature (canonized and non-canonized), as is also the case with the non-canonized adult system" (Shavit 1986, 125).³⁶

Maria Nikolajeva's interpretation of canonicity is thought-provoking and in fact reminiscent of Perry Nodelman's (2006) argumentation on the "sameness" of children's literature, the starting point of which is that works in which another author's work is imitated generally are ill-received. Nodelman explains why the requirement of uniqueness needs to be considered with caution when it comes to the evaluation of children's books. In general, Nodelman holds, originality seems to be at play only with respect to the absolute apices of *adult* literature, "whose distinctive details on the surface are evidence of uniqueness at the core" (Nodelman 2006, 98). By contrast, mediocre works of adult literature are repudiated for being repetitive and formulaic (Nodelman 2006, 99). Nodelman demonstrates that the latter also are the characteristics of many good *children's* books, in which he finds an "apparent sameness", as he words it (Nodelman 2006, 99). Putting emphasis on this sameness could result in a negative judgment of children's literature as inferior, equated with popular, non-canonised adult literature, just as in Maria Nikolajeva's Lotmanian use of the term "canonical" as "traditional", or as in Zohar Shavit's and Rita Ghesquière's polysystemic understanding of the peripheral system of children's literature as inherently non-innovative.³⁷ In contrast, this observation could also lead to an upgrading of children's literature as challenging because of the constraints

³⁴ Compare (Shavit 1986, 125): "In contrast to adult canonized literature, in which the norm of complexity [or, deviation; svdb] is the most prevalent today, the norm of simple and simplified models is still prominent in most children's literature (canonized and non-canonized), as is also the case with the non-canonized adult system. This norm [...] tends to determine not only the thematics and characterization of the text, but also its options concerning permissible structures".

³⁵ "Stereotypie in Inhalt und Sprache [stößt] in der Kritik auf Ablehnung" (Tabbert 1994, 46).

³⁶ In Shavit's view, this sets children's literature apart from – and makes it inferior to – canonised adult literature, "in which the norm of complexity [or, deviation; svdb] is the most prevalent today" (Shavit 1986, 125).

³⁷ See the following statement by Rita Ghesquière: "In its development children's literature furthermore exhibits few primary (innovative) models. It is constantly fed by models and genres which used to constitute the canon of adult literature, but now only live on in the periphery of that adult literature" [In haar ontwikkeling vertoont de jeugdliteratuur verder weinig primaire (vernieuwende) modellen. Ze wordt voortdurend gevoed door modellen en genres die in een vorige periode de gecanoniseerde volwassenenliteratuur uitmaakten, maar nu alleen nog in de periferie van die volwassenenliteratuur voortleven] (Ghesquière 2009, 20).

put on critics when assessing it. Perry Nodelman himself obviously chooses to adopt the latter stance, maintaining that the observed sameness does not devalue children's literature but rather "challenges our usual assumptions about interpretations" (Nodelman 2006, 113). Although Nodelman's optimistic outlook on representativeness may seem appealing, it has not exactly caught on well with other scholars.

In terms of their role in the field of children's literature, canonical works encompass a contradiction, in my opinion. On the one hand, they are found to be renewing, on the other hand, they embody some of the field's essential characteristics. It would appear, as Perry Nodelman observed, that canonical works are "books that are paradoxically both the most unconventional and the most representative of conventions" (Nodelman 1985, 8).³⁸ In all probability, the seemingly conflicting properties of uniqueness and representativeness are not actually evenly matched in one single work. What is more likely is that one of the two predominates. It remains to be seen which of these criteria played the largest part in the Dutch-language reception of Astrid Lindgren.

(3) Literariness and Aesthetic Quality

In this section, I will join together two individual categories suggested by Kümmerling-Meibauer which prove to be highly difficult to separate, viz. "Simplicity versus Complexity" and "Ambiguity". As the argumentations in the two categories overlap to a large degree, it seems more sensible to couple them. Complexity stands out as a token characteristic of literary quality. I should note that this requirement is *not* deemed to be self-evident when it comes to children's books, as was shown in the section on representativity above. Not uncommonly, children's literature is disdained due to perceived repetitive, formulaic, and unoriginal qualities. Emphasis on the property of complexity, and efforts to treat children's literature as *literature*, bear witness to the significance of this characteristic to stature of the field in its entirety.³⁹ Arguing in favour of a literary approach to children's books, Flemish children's book critic Annemie Leysen aptly states, "That which wants to pose as literature, should also be treated as literature" (Leysen 2004, 97).⁴⁰

Astrid Surmatz stresses that the literary aspect of children's literature has come to be valued more highly than the pedagogical (Surmatz 2005, 28). In fact, the latter used to

³⁸ See also (Nodelman 1985, 6): "the peculiar usefulness of touchstones resides in their paradoxical nature: they are the most distinguished books, and so they best represent the distinguishing characteristics of the genre they belong to".

³⁹ Compare arguments of this kind foregrounded by Anne Lundin (2004, 64) and Maria Nikolajeva (1996, 10), elucidated in the section titled "Canonsing Children's Literature".

⁴⁰ "Wat zich als literatuur wil voordoen, moet ook als literatuur behandeld worden" (Leysen 2004, 97).

dominate the field for quite a long time, as was shown in section Chapter 3 already. M.O. Grenby in his introduction to *Popular Children's Literature in Britain* also posits literary merit as an essential feature of canonical children's literature, but adds that it was shown to be of little or no consequence to child readers (Grenby 2008, 16). Zohar Shavit argues that its overriding importance with grown-up gatekeepers of children's literature results from the fact that they generally are equally well-versed in general literature, in which the criterion of literary quality preponderates. She maintains that these adult canonising agents "belong to the elite consumers of the canonized system for adults where (since the Romantic period) the norm of complexity and sophistication is prevalent. These consumers demand a high degree of complexity from the text" (Shavit 1986, 70).

One scholar to have written in this tradition is Peter Hunt, whose article "How Not to Read a Children's Book" (1995) built on the premise that literariness is a vital characteristic of a canonical work. He showed that the majority of the adults looking to canonise children's literature adopt a "literary" approach to it, and champion works which "confor[m] to the dominant literary values", such as *The Wind in the Willows* (Hunt 1995, 234). With respect to the latter, Hunt foregrounds the "incredible *complexity* of the narrative" (Hunt 1995, 234; emphasis added). Maria Nikolajeva in "Exit Children's Literature?" (1998) singles out properties of contemporary fiction for children which attest to intricacy and, consequently, high literary quality. She associates complexity with the erosion of "rigid genre distinctions" (Nikolajeva 1998, 223), "polyphonic, multi-voiced", and character-oriented narrative structures (Nikolajeva 1998, 224-225), the use of open endings and telling gaps (Nikolajeva 1998, 227), as well as metafiction and intertextuality (Nikolajeva 1998, 232).

Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer postulates an aesthetic design of the language as a requirement for canonicity (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 199). She sees this aspect as strongly dependent on the choice of genre, theme, and narrative structure. She elucidates, "Prominent features may be the combination of different styles of language, or the invention of new linguistic forms" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 199).⁴¹ Moreover, she emphasises that this can be a problematic component in children's literature. Because children's books usually take into account the target audience's age and linguistic abilities, the level of their language use may be inversely proportional to the degree of complexity required for them to be valued as literary (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 199). However, Kümmerling-Meibauer contends that this adaptation to children's linguistic competence, as well as its experience with literature, makes great demands on children's writers (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 201). Therefore, as regards children's books, simplicity definitely does not equal their being easy to compose. Kümmerling-Meibauer

⁴¹ "Herausragende Merkmale können dabei die Verbindung verschiedener Sprachstile oder die Erfindung neuer sprachlicher Formen sein" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 199).

is not alone in holding this view. Swedish professor of literary history Örjan Lindberger once stated that writing children's literature of a certain aesthetic standard is actually harder than achieving a comparable standard within adult literature, because the children's book author "has to operate within a more limited framework, due to children's interpretative capacities, sphere of experience, and knowledge" (cited in (Svensson 2003, 67)).⁴²

Also contributing to a book's complexity, in Kümmerling-Meibauer's view, is "ambiguity" [Polyvalenz] (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 207). She observes that many canonical children's books are equivocal in their "consciously designed openness of ambiguous characters and actions, the ambivalence of the ending, or the integration of metafictional passages" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 207).⁴³ Notably, the characteristic of intricacy is often paired with that of stratification in interpretive terms. If a book can be read in various ways, that is, on different strata, this adds to its degree of complication. Hence, ambiguity is a component of literary quality. Rita Ghesquière, for instance, observes that the contemporary canon of children's literature in the Dutch language area consists of works which are invested with literariness, complexity, and multi-layeredness (Ghesquiere 2009, 22). Sandra Beckett, too, couples the two qualities, when she explains that the canonised books included in *Beyond Babar* in many cases "are complex and multi-layered books that invite readings on various levels" (Beckett 2006, xii). Similarly, G. Robert Carlsen argues that what sets high-quality books apart from lesser ones is "a subtlety to be enjoyed repeatedly" (cited in (Labrobe, Brodie and White 2002, 38)).⁴⁴ Finally, the following statement of Anne Lundin's also underscores the importance of multi-interpretability: "Each reader knows what makes a classic: a book to return to in your mind if not in another reading, a book with a certain imaginative density" (Lundin 2004, 148). The property of ambiguity is furthermore related with universality, which I will discuss in the subsequent section.

(4) Identification and Childhood Image

Identification is a component which is widely discussed in synchronically-oriented theoretical discourse, but which is not particularly prominent in Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer's rationale. Several other theorists who point out the importance of

⁴² "måste röra sig inom en mer begränsad ram, med hänsyn till barns fattningsförmåga, erfarenhetssfär och kunskaper" (Svensson 2003, 67).

⁴³ "die bewusst konzipierte Offenheit ambig dargestellter Figuren und Handlungen, die Ambivalenz des Schlusses oder die Integration metafictionaler Passagen" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 207).

⁴⁴ Elena Paruolo in a comparable rationale shows that canonical literature is relevant to contemporary readers because of its ability to "open up new dimensions" (Paruolo 2011, 11).

identification for canonicity deem the choice of subject matter related to children's own lives to be an important facet in this process. Aidan Chambers in "The Reader in the Book" (2006) identifies children as an inflexible type of readers. As was shown in section 3.2, he writes, "[Children] are unyielding readers. They want the book to suit them, tending to expect an author to take them as he finds them rather than they taking the book as they find it" (Chambers 2006, 356). Hence, with children as their target audience, children's books should be recognisable and relatable for them. In this connection, Lena Kåreland (2009) points out that reading generally is a process which is based on recognition. Therefore, it can be described as "retrogressive" [regressiv], to use Kåreland's term (Kåreland 2009, 164). Many children's books can be characterised as retrogressive and are in fact valued for this reason precisely. Relatability can be achieved through an apt depiction of children's living environment, amongst other things. Indeed, within children's literature, establishing a connection with the readers' "Lebenspraxis", mentioned in the previous section, is a goal which has been placed in the foreground consistently. As Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer points out – and others with her –⁴⁵ children and their living environments are central to children's literature: "In children's books, as a rule, children and youths are the centre of interest, consequently, attention is focused on the depiction of their everyday life as well as their emotions and experiences" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 203).⁴⁶ This very property is deemed to be unique to children's literature.⁴⁷ Archetypal motifs evoking children's and youngsters' everyday lives range from a desire for power, or a search for identity typical of the *Bildungsroman*, to a coming-of-age-plot foregrounding the struggles of growing up. Tying in with events and emotions which child readers can feel connected with is a recipe for triumph, so it seems.

Seeing that it is adults who are writing for children, it is *adult* ideas on childhood which inevitably are reflected in their literary production and which guide possibilities for identification. As Anne Lundin mentions, from its inception on, children's literature has been marked by the embodiment of writers' conceptions of childhood (Lundin 2004,

⁴⁵ See also (Nikolajeva 2004); (Nodelman 1996); (Nodelman 2008).

⁴⁶ "In Kinderbüchern stehen in der Regel Kinder und Jugendliche im Mittelpunkt des Interesses, folglich richtet sich die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Schilderung ihres Alltags sowie ihrer Gefühls- und Erlebniswelt" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 203).

⁴⁷ There are of course a number of adult books in which child or teen narrators are deployed, and the child's/teenager's experience is thematised. Notable examples are Stig Dagerman's *Burnt Child* [*Bränt barn*] (1948), Henry James' *What Maisie Knew* (1987), Hjalmar Söderberg's *Martin Birck's Childhood* [*Martin Bircks ungdom*] (1901), and J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), the latter of which is often counted as a precursor to the young adult novel.

143).⁴⁸ Traditionally, one adult notion to feature prominently in children's books has been that of innocence associated with childhood.⁴⁹ It is a stage of life which often is idealised and which many adults feel nostalgia for.⁵⁰ Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer explains that these ideas have been so prevalent in children's books because childhood itself is a closed chapter in an adult's life, which means that the experience of being a child for grown-up writers only is accessible through their memories of their own youth, or through other people's accounts of theirs (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 203). This nostalgic emotion can be associated with a specific place, as Anne Lundin shows: "Children's books are the sites of adult re-creation of an earlier geography. The locales of many children's books are the enshrouded landscapes of childhood remade, re-visioned" (Lundin 2004, 116). More often than not, though, it stems from an impossible desire to return to the state of being a child.

The process of identification can be enhanced further by the occurrence of a character whom the child reader can identify with. Astrid Surmatz makes mention of an identifying reading method observed in children which is character-related, which entails that they "identify themselves with the (main) figures in the text, and take up their subject positions" (Surmatz 2005, 23).⁵¹ As Surmatz notes, John Stephens carried out important research on this topic. The concept of the "subject positions", taken from his seminal study *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction* (1992), denotes a characteristic of the socialising function of children's literature, viz. a specific kind of identification with the focalisers of a text. "[B]y this means," Stephens writes, "at least for the duration of the reading time, the reader's own selfhood is effaced and the reader internalizes the perceptions and attitudes of the focalizer and is thus reconstituted as a subject within the text" (Stephens 1992, 68). With reference to this notion of Stephens', Surmatz remarks that identification is facilitated if the protagonists are about the same age as the addressees, which is often the case in children's books (Surmatz 2005, 23).⁵² Heide Lexe identifies the principal character as the most self-evident object of identification in the corpus of works she labels as classical works of children's literature in her study *Pippi, Pan, and Potter*, seeing that the central child protagonist left their mark on the works (Lexe

⁴⁸ For a more detailed discussion of child(hood) images, see for instance Peter Hollindale's study *Signs of Childness in Children's Books* (1997), Karín Lesnik-Oberstein's *Children's Literature: Criticism and the Fictional Child* (1994), or Perry Nodelman's *The Hidden Adult. Defining Children's Literature* (2008).

⁴⁹ Maria Nikolajeva in "Exit Children's Literature?" (1998) shows that this kind of childhood image is becoming less common, as subjects which used to be taboos are thematised in children's books all the more often. As a result, she writes, "Children's literature, utopian or Arcadian by definition, has come to its own antithesis" (Nikolajeva 1998, 223).

⁵⁰ See for instance (Hunt 1995, 234), (Nodelman 2008, 77-79).

⁵¹ "ein figurgebundenes identifizierendes Leseverhalten"; "sie sich mit den (Haupt-)Figuren der Texte identifizieren und deren Subjektposition einnehmen" (Surmatz 2005, 23).

⁵² Compare (Nikolajeva 2004); (Nodelman 1996); (Nodelman 2008).

2003, 74). To her mind, this is a crucial component in the appeal of these canonised works, which procures stability for the reader: “the implied child counterpart should quickly be provided with a figure of identification: it acts as an example which for the reading/listening child serves as a constant in spite of the often-changing order and persons” (Lexé 2003, 74).⁵³

Including an argument of this kind actually moves the discussion about canonical works away from purely text-immanent features towards reader-oriented factors. In this view, Danish scholar Helene Høyrup argues that an approach to canonicity which takes into account other criteria than “autonomy-aesthetic” ones, such as originality and innovativity, is more valuable in a postmodern age when the significance of modernism’s aesthetic categories as usable instruments of evaluation is diminishing (Høyrup 2008, 222). With reference to Swedish literary theorist Anders Öhman’s *Popular Literature. The Aesthetics and History of the Popular Genres* (2002),⁵⁴ Høyrup explains that, as a consequence, it would be more productive “to relate the artistic techniques to the practice of daily life”, and to “reshape them into common aesthetic forms for the appropriation of reality” (Høyrup 2008, 222).⁵⁵ Literary value would then no longer be gauged against artistic norms solely, but, in addition, be assessed in terms of their ability to connect with individuals’ real lives [Lebenspraxis] (Høyrup 2008, 222).⁵⁶

Studies on reading practices show that such a pragmatic outlook on literature is very common among readers. Ann Haugland (1994), for example, cites research results published by Janice Radway and Elizabeth Long, who looked into women’s and reading groups’ reading habits respectively.⁵⁷ Haugland reports, “Both Radway and Long found a

⁵³ “dem mitgedachten kindlichen Gegenüber [soll] rasch eine Identifikationsfigur zur Verfügung gestellt werden: Sie fungiert als Leitfigur, die dem lesenden/zuhörenden Kind trotz vielfacher Wechsel der Orde und Personen als Konstante dient” (Lexé 2003, 74). Moreover, Lexé adds that “this central child protagonist is the factor which the series rests on, the form to which the classics of children’s literature allow themselves to be transplanted seemingly easily. Bettina Hurrelmann sees this ‘serial structure’ as an exceptional form of a ‘bond with the reader’. Hence the focus on a principal character in almost all of the titles of the works” [in dieser zentralen kindlichen Hauptfigur [begründet sich] das Moment der Serie, in die sich Klassiker der Kinderliteratur auf scheinbar so einfache Weise überführen lassen. Bettina Hurrelmann sieht in dieser ‘Serienstruktur’ eine besondere Form der ‘Leserbindung’ verwirklicht. Daher auch die Konzentration auf eine Hauptfigur in beinahe allen Werktiteln] (Lexé 2003, 74).

⁵⁴ *Populärlitteratur. De populära genrernas estetik och historia* (Öhman 2002).

⁵⁵ “at relatere de kunstneriske tekniker till hverdagens livspraksis”; “att göra dem till gemensamma estetiska former för verklighetstillägnelse” (Høyrup 2008, 222).

⁵⁶ Høyrup indicates that Öhman borrowed the term “Lebenspraxis” from German literary theorist Christa Bürger (Høyrup 2008, 222).

⁵⁷ Long, Elizabeth, “Reading Groups and the Postmodern Crisis of Cultural Authority”, *Cultural Studies* 1:3, 1987, 306-327; Radway, Janice, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.

strong desire to connect reading and life. [...] readers hoped to find in books information or insight or support for morals and values that might help them make sense of their own life experiences” (Haugland 1994, 56).⁵⁸ In a similar vein, Anne Lundin brings the concept of the horizon of expectations into the equation and points out that people generally tend to choose texts which “offer ways of reading their own experiences” (Lundin 2004, 112). Per Dahl, for his part, stresses the fact that identification transcends the textual dimension of a canonical work, and shows that it relates to several fundamental human needs, including “1) needs for self-representation and the construction of identity, 2) legitimising (in the form of justification and delineation vis-à-vis other groups), and 3) orientation of one’s actions” (Dahl 2002, 86).⁵⁹ The former certainly is commonly thematised in children’s books.

Reinbert Tabbert, too, in an effort to explain the success of acclaimed children’s books, highlights the significance of identification. The point of view Tabbert adopts is reception-theoretical as well,⁶⁰ and he argues that “[i]n reception-aesthetic respect, literary figures are carriers of possibilities for identification, which are of eminent importance for the success of books” (Tabbert 1994, 52).⁶¹ Tabbert equally draws attention to the fact that “readers [...] generally turn to stories in order to test and confirm their own identities”, which explains the importance of identification (Tabbert 1994, 48).⁶² Tabbert began to develop this theoretical perspective in a 1980 article on the impact of children’s books, in which he ties in with influential ideas put forward by reception

⁵⁸ Anne Haugland furthermore suggests that a preference for “usefulness or relationship to real life” is supposed to be typical of lower-taste cultures, as opposed to higher-taste cultures which tend to display “adherence to aesthetic standards” (Haugland 1994, 53). Moreover, the latter “place a high value on form over substance, innovation and experimentation over repetition and familiarity” (Haugland 1994, 53). Compare the discussion on text-immanent versus reader-oriented factors in evaluating literary works related in section 4.1.

⁵⁹ “1) behøve for selvfremsstilling og identitetsdannelse, 2) legitimering (i form af retfærdiggørelse og afgrænsning over for andre grupper) og 3) handlingsorientering” (Dahl 2002, 86).

⁶⁰ In an article Tabbert co-wrote with Kristin Wardetzky, the label of reception theory is questioned. Tabbert and Wardetzky explain that “Jauss’s and Iser’s theories, with their focus on ‘horizons of expectations,’ ‘indeterminacies,’ and ‘implied readers,’ have been summed up as the ‘aesthetics of reception[.]’”. They continue to qualify it as follows: “‘Aesthetics of impact’ would, however, be a more appropriate term, because it is more concerned with the book’s share in the reading process (impact) than with the reader’s share (reception)” (Tabbert and Wardetzky 1995, 2).

⁶¹ “In wirkungsästhetischer Hinsicht sind literarische Figuren die Träger von Identifikationsangeboten, die für den Erfolg von Büchern herausragende Bedeutung haben” (Tabbert 1994, 52). Compare a further argument of Tabbert’s which goes along the same lines: “More important with respect to the success, certainly, is the factor of collective bonding, which is associated with a character who is succinct and easy to grasp” [Wichtiger im Hinblick auf den Erfolg ist wohl das Moment kollektiver Bindekraft, das an eine prägnante und leicht auffaßbare Gestalt geknüpft ist] (Tabbert 1994, 50).

⁶² “Leser [...] sich im allgemeinen Geschichten [zuwenden], um ihre eigene Identität zu erproben und zu bestätigen” (Tabbert 1994, 48).

studies pioneer Hans Robert Jauss. As Tabbert remarks, Jauss “has pointed out that in the history of European literature five modalities of identification can be distinguished: associative, admiring, sympathetic, carthartic [sic], ironic” (Tabbert 1980, 47-48). When it comes to children’s books, Tabbert finds the associative kind of identification to be predominant: “On the pretext of the notion that birds of a feather flock together, a presented figure should exhibit traits which young readers can recognise themselves in” (Tabbert 1994, 52).⁶³ However, he modifies Jauss’ categories by means of the following comment: “What I find missing is a type which would mean that the hero of a book is a kind of peer of the normal reader, as in many realistic children’s books” (Tabbert 1980, 48). This kind of identification, Tabbert argues, is what could explain, for instance, the enormous success of *Tom Sawyer* and *Treasure Island*, which could be shown to result from the fact that “their heroes, having day-dreams just as their readers, function in that peer-role, but being allowed to live out these day-dreams to the full also answer to the receptive disposition of admiration” (Tabbert 1980, 48).

This outlook is added on by M.O. Grenby, who, following Frank Whitehead,⁶⁴ establishes that “children prefer books ‘in which they find it easy to identify themselves with the hero or heroine’” (Grenby 2008, 15). Grenby indicates that Whitehead in seeking to identify the cause of this effect found that those favoured books were mostly narratives governed by a very specific kind of identification, evoked by the element of wish-fulfilment, which tended to be “comparatively open and undisguised” (Grenby 2008, 15). Put differently, what Whitehead found was that

the principal motive for children’s taste in books was the extent to which ‘vicarious imaginative satisfaction of a wish-fulfilment kind’ was available from a text. In other words, it was of no importance whether a particular book was naturalistic or fantastic, or was set in the present or the past, as long as the text allowed its readers to identify with characters whom they would like to be. (Grenby 2008, 15)

Consequently, according to Reinbert Tabbert, Frank Whitehead, and M.O. Grenby, in children’s literature, the two most powerful modes of identification are the associative and the admiring ones. In fact, they show that the notion of identification seems to consist of a combination of these two modalities: an associative factor, implying that child readers sympathise with characters to whom they are akin, which is supplemented by an element of reverence. The latter stems from the ability present in the object of identification to achieve things which are beyond the child reader’s reach. As Tabbert

⁶³ “Nach dem motto gleich und gleich gesellt sich gern sollte eine dargestellte Figur Züge haben, in denen sich ein junger Leser wiedererkennen kann” (Tabbert 1994, 52).

⁶⁴ Grenby quotes from Whitehead’s empirical studies “The Attitudes of Grammar School Pupils towards some Novels Commonly Read in School” (1956) and *Children and their Books* (1977) (Grenby 2008, 14-15).

puts it, “A figure does not become attractive until it can be looked down upon or looked up to, allowing for compensation of one’s own fundamental subordination” (Tabbert 1994, 52).⁶⁵ Young readers not only occupy an inferior social position, Tabbert believes,⁶⁶ but also within the field of children’s literature, in what he calls the “positional distinction” between children and adults (Tabbert 1994, 51),⁶⁷ more commonly referred to as “asymmetry” (cf. section 3.1). In his view, objects of identification in children’s books have “the capacity to compensate for weaknesses or deficiencies which are proper to children, considering the superiority of adults” (Tabbert 1994, 50-51).⁶⁸ As a result, Tabbert holds, “The Siegfried-esque strength of Pippi Longstocking or Superman means more to children than to adults” (Tabbert 1994, 51).⁶⁹

Astrid Lindgren’s oeuvre is in fact dealt with regularly in studies on identification. With respect to the Pippi Longstocking-books, she is found to have evoked identification in a number of fairly unusual ways. Firstly, as Reinbert Tabbert points out, Pippi and her neighbours Tommy and Annika fulfil different roles, as a result of which the two modes of identification characteristic of canonical children’s literature are both realised independently, “the admiring one by Pippi herself and the peer-role one by [Tommy] and Annika” (Tabbert 1980, 48). In Tabbert’s view, the presence of Tommy and Annika as peers for average child readers might work to foreground Pippi’s exceptional nature, and hence result in “reinforcement of the receptive disposition of admiration” (Tabbert 1980, 48).⁷⁰ Astrid Surmatz likewise draws attention to the divergent roles in terms of identification taken up by Pippi on the one hand and by Tommy and Annika on the other: “Without Tommy and Annika as contrast figures, as audience and as less dangerous possibilities for identification for the readers, as it were, the constellation of characters would not have been complete, and they foreground Pippi’s status as a strange child in the Romantic sense of the term” (Surmatz 2005, 83).⁷¹

⁶⁵ “Anziehend wird eine Figur aber erst dann, wenn man zu ihr hinauf- oder hinunterschauen kann, um damit die eigene grundsätzliche Unterlegenheit zu kompensieren” (Tabbert 1994, 52). See also (Tabbert and Wardetzky 1995, 4): “In order to be accessible, a hero or heroine must share some traits with an ordinary reader, but in order to be attractive, there must also be a difference that makes the reader either look up admiringly to or look down sympathetically at the central figure”.

⁶⁶ Cf. (Tabbert and Wardetzky 1995, 4).

⁶⁷ “positionellen Unterschied” (Tabbert 1994, 52).

⁶⁸ die Fähigkeit, Schwächen oder Mängel zu kompensieren, wie sie in Anbetracht der Überlegenheit von Erwachsenen [...] Kindern eigen sind” (Tabbert 1994, 50-51).

⁶⁹ Die siegfriedhafte Stärke einer Pippi Langstrumpf oder eines Supermanns bedeutet Kindern mehr als Erwachsenen” (Tabbert 1994, 51).

⁷⁰ Cf. (Harris 1997, 17-19).

⁷¹ “Ohne Tommy und Annika als Kontrastfiguren, als Publikum und als gleichsam ungefährlichere Identifikationsmöglichkeiten für die Leser wäre die Figurenkonstellation nicht vollständig, und sie heben Pippis Status als fremdes Kind im romantischen Sinne hervor” (Surmatz 2005, 83).

Moreover, Pippi Longstocking herself proves to be dualistic. Heidi Lexe points out that she is an odd character who elicits reader identification partly by means of her position as an outsider:

When one of the sailors follows Pippi, who is disappearing far off, with his eyes, uttering 'a remarkable child', it expresses nothing other than that feeling evoked by the 'eccentric'. Precisely in comparison with the contrasting figures Tommy and Annika, Pippi appears to be different, uncommon, peculiar. (Lexe 2003, 76)⁷²

So, in effect, Pippi is someone to look up to and to look down on all rolled into one.⁷³ Astrid Lindgren was well aware of the potential for identification Pippi embodies, and stressed that she herself saw the element of wish-fulfilment as the key to the figure's success. Mentioning Bertrand Russell's theory on children's desire for power caused by their weak position with respect to adults (cf. section 3.1), Lindgren asserted that Pippi as a figure possessing authority satisfies children's yearning for power (Harris 1997, 11). In this respect, Astrid Surmatz notes, "The reproach as to Pippi's continuous centrality, which is found to be domineering with regard to the other children, [...] can thus be interpreted in the sense that she as the key figure persistently expresses typical traits of childlike fantasies about omnipotence" (Surmatz 2005, 86).⁷⁴

(5) Modes of Narrative Address

The synchronic feature of narrative address is closely related to identification, yet this particular interpretation, which includes adult readers, contradicts the requirement of specifically targeting the child audience. As was shown in section 3.2, the property of dual address affects processes of canonisation within children's literature to a large degree. Barbara Wall indicates, "that most stories for children which have achieved the status of classics are stories whose narrators satisfactorily address adults, either as part of a dual audience, or by oscillating between child and adult narratee" (Wall 1991, 22). In the

⁷² "Wenn einer der Matrosen der in der Ferne verschwindenden Pippi mit einem 'Ein merkwürdiges Kind['] nachblickt [...], wird damit nichts anderes eingefangen als jenes Gefühl, das der 'Sonderling' hervorruft. Gerade im Vergleich zu den Kontrastfiguren Thomas und Annika erscheint Pippi anders, seltsam, merkwürdig" (Lexe 2003, 76).

⁷³ Lexe furthermore adds that "[s]he offers the child, that is being told about her, the much-needed distance in order not to feel taken in; folly and strength, by means of which she compensates for her outsider position, again guarantee the ideal identification potential" [Sie bietet dem Kind, dem von ihr erzählt wird, die notwendige Distanz, um sich nicht vereinnahmt zu fühlen; Verrücktheit und Stärke wiederum, mit der sie ihre Außenseiterposition kompensiert, sichern das ideale Identifikationspotential] (Lexe 2003, 76).

⁷⁴ "Der Vorwurf, Pippi stehe immer zentral und dominiere die anderen Kinder [...] läßt sich in dem Sinne interpretieren, daß sie als zentrale Figur weiterhin typische Züge kindlicher Allmachtsphantasien ausdrücke" (Surmatz 2005, 86).

introductory chapter to *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter. Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon* (2002), editor Lana A. Whited refers to *New York Times* book critic William Safire's discussion of "dual-level" narration as a characteristic shared by some of the landmarks of children's literature (Whited 2002, 8). In "Besotted with Potter" (2000), the critical essay quoted by Whited, Safire expresses the conviction that only books which attract an adult readership can be deemed to be real children's classics. For instance, Safire argues, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* "was a children's fantasy, complete with a Wicked Witch of the West, but dealt deftly with heartlessness, mindlessness and cowardice" (Safire 2000, n.p.). It is only because of such "multilevel" subject matter that these works can be considered valuable (Whited 2002, 9). To Safire's mind, within children's literature, a requisite for a canonical work is that it is "written on two levels, entertaining one generation while instructing another" (Safire 2000, n.p.). In his opinion, the Harry Potter-books do not meet this requirement, as a result of which, as Whited paraphrases, the series "fail[s] the test of what constitutes a classic" (Whited 2002, 8).

Both Wall and Safire hint at a connection between dual address and canonicity, which might prove to be relevant in the present study. Wall suggests that it is only when an author succeeds in pleasing the adult mediators – apart from the child readers – that his or her book can be taken into consideration by those mediators and possibly be canonised, for instance by means of book reviews or scholarly articles. Wall continues to state that authors who only attract a child audience will find it much more difficult to gain access to those processes of canonisation. This linkage between dual address and canonicity is made explicit in Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer's *Children's Literature, Canon Formation and Literary Evaluation* (2003). In her opinion, "Crosswriting [writing for a dual audience; svdb] can [...] exert a strong influence on the canonisation of a certain author" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 250).⁷⁵ She had already explored the connection in her chapter in *Transcending Boundaries: Writing for a Dual Audience of Children and Adults*, where she wrote, "canonical works for children are those books that do not only appeal to children, but also have an underlying depth or meaning that is satisfying to a mature sensibility" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999a, 15). It is abundantly clear that she considers crosswriting to be an indispensable component of children's books of high literary quality.

Astrid Surmatz maintains that this kind of implied readership which is twofold, though not dichotomous, has become an essential property of high-quality children's books (Surmatz 2005, 31). Reinbert Tabbert finds it striking that "precisely successful books tend to attract a very *diversified* readership" (Tabbert 1994, 46),⁷⁶ all of whom seem to find

⁷⁵ "Crosswriting kann dabei einen großen Einfluss auf die Kanonisierung eines Autors ausüben" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 250).

⁷⁶ "gerade erfolgreiche Bücher [sprechen] sehr unterschiedliche Menschen" (Tabbert 1994, 48).

something to relate to in these books. Hence, identification and multi-layeredness prove to be related. Dutch children's literature expert Joke Linders notes that a feature which many classics of children's literature have in common is that they allow for ambiguous identification: "The fact that readers of any age [both in the sense of period and of time spent alive; svdb] and generation can project themselves in the protagonist's fears, insecurities and desires; they present varied *possibilities for identification*" (Linders 1994, 151; emphasis in original).⁷⁷ The gist of Linders' observation is that canonical works are multi-interpretable and make sense to different kinds of readers in various contexts. In Sandra Beckett and Maria Nikolajeva's countercanon presented in *Beyond Babar*, crosswriting equally is counted as a pivotal feature of canonised works.⁷⁸ Beckett notes that canonical works displaying this characteristic are considered to be "books without borders", seeing that they "transcend and blur the so-called borders between adult and children's literature" (Beckett 2006, xiii).⁷⁹ In a similar vein, J.D. Stahl notes, "it can be (and has been) argued that the best children's literature is not exclusively for children" (Stahl 1992, 12). Aidan Chambers, too, sees dual address as an advantage. He finds, "every good book read by youngsters is automatically a good book for adults" (quoted in (Noorduijn 2011, 315)).⁸⁰ Author C.S. Lewis states, provocatively, "A children's story that can only be enjoyed by children is not a good children's story in the slightest".⁸¹

My goal with the study at hand is by no means to engage in a narratological analysis of Lindgren's works, but it does seem relevant to take into account dual address when looking into the processes of canonisation pertaining to her oeuvre. Hence, I will identify in the corpus articles references to the aspect of dual address. It evidently is an important issue, almost inherent in children's literature, as it is so closely related to an essential trait of the children's literary field – the asymmetrical communication between adult author and child reader. Therefore, it cannot be overlooked. Barbara Wall's goal with her book *The Narrator's Voice* was "to determine empirically which books are for children and which are not" (Wall 1991, 22). Although I am not entirely convinced that this aim can ever be

⁷⁷ "Voor veel van deze [klassieke] boeken geldt dat lezers van alle (leef)tijden en generaties zich in de angsten, onzekerheden, verlangens van de hoofdfiguur kunnen verplaatsen; ze bieden uiteenlopende identificatiemogelijkheden" (Linders 1994, 151).

⁷⁸ "Many of these novels are, in fact, crossover books that are read by a dual audience of adults and children. [...] these works offer multiple layers of meaning for readers of all ages" (Beckett 2006, xiii).

⁷⁹ Beckett indicates that she borrowed this phrase from Claire Malarte-Feldman (Beckett 2006, xiii).

⁸⁰ "ieder goed boek dat door jongeren gelezen wordt is automatisch ook een goed boek voor volwassenen" (Noorduijn 2011, 315).

⁸¹ <<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/6493-a-children-s-story-that-can-only-be-enjoyed-by-children>> [Accessed 21 March 2014]. See also (McDowell 2006, 53): "C.S. Lewis was undoubtedly right to claim that a book that could only be read by a child was a poor child's book". (This text of McDowell's was originally published as an article in *Children's Literature in Education* 10 in 1973 and was reprinted in Peter Hunt's four-volume *Children's Literature: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* in 2006. It is the latter version of the text I will be referring to.)

truly achieved seeing that any analysis of a work of fiction is a matter of subjective interpretation, I do believe that the connection Wall sees between the status of a certain book and its mode of narrative address can be applicable within the framework of this study. According to the reviewers studied here, did Lindgren in her stories succeed in creating an atmosphere where both child and adult readers find themselves to be talked to? Do her works in other words address a dual readership? Does this aspect come forward as a factor contributing to Astrid Lindgren's success and thus the canonisation of her works?

(6) Universality

A further question to consider here, which ensues from the previous discussion, is how such inclusive narrative address can be attained. Flemish literary critic Luc Lannoy agrees with the line of thought linking canonicity with multiple address and argues that "a true classic can be read by anyone, anytime and anywhere" (Lannoy 1993, 214).⁸² Key components in the realisation of this broad appeal, Lannoy holds, are "[a]rchetypes and universality, a glowing basic layer underneath the surface of enthralling action and intriguing adventures" (Lannoy 1993, 214).⁸³ Canonical works are, in other words, not only ambiguous, but also universal.⁸⁴ In a piece on the meaning of classics within children's literature, Susanna Ekström argues that only those canonised works which are "*universal* and interesting literature" are worth paying attention to (Ekström 1987, 23; emphasis added).⁸⁵ Dutch children's book author Els Pelgrom addresses the same issue in her eponymous contribution to the collection of essays *As Good as Classic*,⁸⁶ with the subtitle "The Enigma of What Becomes Classic, Why, and When" (1995).⁸⁷ Pelgrom suggests that if one were to work out what the common denominator of all canonical works of children's literature is, one would have to focus on their contents. Their form and shape may have been subject to trends, she holds, but the subject matter remains and one will find that that is the case because it "[appeals] to feelings and experiences which are *universal*" (Pelgrom 1995, 17; emphasis added).⁸⁸

⁸² "een echte klassieker kan iedereen, altijd en overal lezen" (Lannoy 1993, 214).

⁸³ "Archetype en universaliteit, een gloeiende dieptelaag onder de oppervlakte van boeiende actie en intrigerende avonturen" (Lannoy 1993, 214).

⁸⁴ Compare Torben Weinreich's and Per Dahl's argumentations related in section 1.4.

⁸⁵ "allmängiltig och intressant litteratur" (Ekström 1987, 23).

⁸⁶ *Zo goed als klassiek*. This volume consists of the conference proceedings of the annual symposium on children's literature held at Tilburg University in 1994.

⁸⁷ "Het raadsel van wat klassiek wordt, waarom en wanneer" (Pelgrom 1995).

⁸⁸ "[appelleert] aan gevoelens en ervaringen die *universeel* zijn" (Pelgrom 1995, 17; emphasis added).

Universality can be achieved by means of universal themes and long-standing narrative elements, phenomena which arguably have become canonised in themselves. In this respect, Reinbert Tabbert considers “tradition-directed” texts such as fairy tales, myths, and sagas to be of great importance within children’s literature (Tabbert 1994, 46).⁸⁹ In their introduction to *This You Must Read* Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer and Piet Mooren also highlight the value of tying in with folk culture (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 11). They observe that engagement with both folk literature and the “great” literary tradition characterises the work of many acclaimed Dutch children’s authors, and argue, “Through this presence in two literary domains they double their range of action and consequently their chances of being recognised as canonical authors” (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 11).⁹⁰ The canonical value of common themes and narrative structures, however, would seem to conflict with the role innovation can play in the acquisition of canonicity. Whereas identification and universality are founded in recognition, renewal of such subjects and models on the contrary appeals to a “progressive” kind of reading, in which readers are looking for something unknown (Kåreland 2009, 164). The property of “exclusivity” [sluttethed] hinted at by Per Dahl (cf. section 1.4) likewise contradicts universality, as the Danish adjective “sluttet” denotes something which is “not open or accessible to all, but only for a specific (particularly selected) group of people”.⁹¹ Canonical works, then, comply with both of these conflicting requirements.

As Luc Lannoy aptly remarks, it is furthermore the question what “universal” entails: “What kind of norms and values are they, those which appeal to different generations? People easily mention ‘universal values’. Do such things exist: values and norms counting forever and for everyone?” (Lannoy 1993, 210)⁹² In Lannoy’s opinion, the key to universal validity lies in the presence of different layers of meaning. He explains, “a classic story contains so much meaning that it can defy changes in readers’ expectations or approaches to a certain (unknown) extent” (Lannoy 1993, 210).⁹³ Likewise, Renate von Heydebrand argues that because canonical works are long-lived, the underlying norms

⁸⁹ “traditionsgeleitet” (Tabbert 1994, 46).

⁹⁰ “Met die aanwezigheid in twee literaire domeinen verdubbelen ze hun actieradius en daarmee hun kans op erkenning als canonauteurs” (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 11).

⁹¹ “ikke åben eller tilgængelig for alle, men kun for en bestemt (særlig udvalgt) gruppe personer”. Definition taken from *The Danish Dictionary [Den danske ordbog]*, consulted online at <<http://ordnet.dk/ddo/ordbog?query=sluttet&search=S%C3%B8g>> [Accessed 4 April 2014].

⁹² “Wat voor waarden en normen zijn dat, die verschillende generaties aanspreken? Mensen hebben het al gauw over ‘universele waarden’. Bestaat dat: eeuwig en voor iedereen geldende waarden en normen?” (Lannoy 1993, 210)

⁹³ “een klassiek verhaal bergt zoveel betekenis in zich dat het veranderingen in de verwachting van, in de benadering door lezers tot op zekere (onbekende) hoogte kan trotseren” (Lannoy 1993, 210).

may be perceived as fixed, everlasting and self-evident, whereas the exact opposite is the case. “In actuality,” she writes, “findings are rather paradoxical: [canonical works] are long-lived precisely due to the fact that very diverse norms can be and are derived from them” (von Heydebrand 1993, 6).⁹⁴ As such, these argumentations are in keeping with the requirement of ambiguity postulated by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, discussed in the previous section. Once more, key constituents of canonicity prove to be contradicting, an observation which adds to the paradox of canonical works. What is beyond dispute, though, is that due to their universal validity and multi-interpretability they indeed seem to have become works which have never finished saying what they have to say, to conclude with Italo Calvino’s words.⁹⁵

4.2 The Synchronic Paradigm Put into Practice

In general literary theory, the distinction between essentialist, text-immanent and functionalist, work-external criteria of canonicity, advocated by Torben Weinreich and Per Dahl, amongst others, works quite well (cf. section 1.4). It mirrors divergent preoccupations in scholars, who, to put it in Meyer Howard Abrams’ terms, favour objective or pragmatic opinions on the function of literature respectively. As was explained in the previous chapter, authors or readers entertaining objective viewpoints on literature foreground the literary work in itself, whereas the response a text effects in its audience is prioritised in a pragmatic outlook (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Bastiaansen-Harks 2005, 64). In theoretical considerations of textual indications of canonicity within children’s literature research, pragmatic and objective arguments are intermingled. Both types of criteria can be seen at work, with a preponderance of literary and aesthetic arguments (innovativity, representativity, and literariness) over pragmatic ones (identification, childhood image, and narrative address).

It turns out that argumentations of an objective kind are not nearly as predominant in the Dutch and Flemish epitexts under scrutiny. A rare instance of such arguments is found in a review of the *Simon Small* story collection, where critic Leo Roelants applauds “Astrid Lindgren’s virtuosity and rich artistic gifts” (LG 13 1971, 51).⁹⁶ He does not, however,

⁹⁴ “Tatsächlich aber ist der Befund eher paradox: Langlebig sind die gerade deshalb, weil sehr unterschiedliche Normen aus ihnen abgeleitet werden können und werden” (von Heydebrand 1993, 6).

⁹⁵ Cf. (Calvino 1989, n.p.). Available at <<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1986/oct/09/why-read-the-classics/>> [Accessed 21 March 2014].

⁹⁶ “Astrid Lindgrens virtuositeit en rijke artistieke gaven” (LG 13 1971, 51).

specify what these talents are. Indeed, generally speaking, the reviewers' assessment of Lindgren's works is often phrased in a rather vague manner. Moreover, it is rarely substantiated with elaborate reasonings and transparent arguments.⁹⁷ A further example of this phenomenon is Mariette van Halewijn's judgment on *Emil Gets into Mischief*. Van Halewijn finds it to be "[a] wonderful children's book (and most definitely suitable for the top-quality list) in the Swedish writer's *typical narrative voice and style*" (JBG 9 1969, 108; emphasis added).⁹⁸ The fact that the components of Lindgren's "narrative voice and style" are not stated overtly but are taken to be common knowledge demonstrates that there is consensus amongst critics on some sort of implicit poetics with respect to Lindgren's work. Moreover, the self-evidence with which her work is granted top-quality status illustrates the far-reaching degree of canonicity her oeuvre had reached at that point in time already. Consequently, though, it is not self-evident to distil from the corpus materials a definitive pattern of value criteria shared by all of the critics, but I will nevertheless attempt to convey the main factors in their evaluations in a thematically organised manner.

A further issue complicating the matter was the lack of concordance between theory and practice, mentioned at the beginning of this fourth chapter already. The understanding of originality perceivable in theoretical discourse does not correspond with the interpretation visible in the corpus materials. This is caused by one of the most salient differences, namely that innovativity, in the sense of formal experimentation, does not appear to be important to the Dutch-language gatekeepers at all, whereas it is prominent in the theoretical discussion. The opposite quality of representativeness is not even taken into consideration at all. Criteria pertaining to literary merit, such as sophistication and complexity, are hardly ever used explicitly in the corpus. Identification and universality prove to be fairly significant both in theory and in practice, but the main discrepancy lies in the interpretation of narrative address. While scholars of children's literature favour dual address, the Flemish and Dutch reviewers strongly appreciate Lindgren's use of single address, in which child readers are prioritised. In the sections below, I will go through the synchronic features that surfaced in my phenomenographical analysis of the corpus material. I should stress that the

⁹⁷ Rita Ghesquière observes a lack of depth in children's literature criticism in general and sees this as symptomatic of the low status of children's literature in relation to general literature (Ghesquière 2009, 21). She asserts, "Children's literature criticism is often confined to brief summaries, the judgment being nothing more than a vague preference. Only rarely an opinion is given on the literary qualities of the text" [De kritiek op jeugdliteratuur beperkt zich vaak tot korte samenvattingen, het oordeel is niets meer dan een vage preferentie. Men spreekt zich slechts zelden uit over de literaire kwaliteiten van de tekst] (Ghesquière 2009, 21).

⁹⁸ "Een heerlijk kinderboek (en beslist voor de keurlijst) in de *typische verteltrant en stijl* van de Zweedse schrijfster" (JBG 9 1969, 108; emphasis added).

opinions rendered here are those of the Dutch and Flemish corpus contributors primarily. Whenever I am giving my own take on the matter, I will indicate this as clearly as possible.

(1) Uniqueness

A telling quote from a 2012 review by Flemish children's book author Michael De Cock of an audio version of *Rasmus and the Tramp* reveals how Astrid Lindgren is perceived in the Dutch-language press in general. In his opinion, this book attests to Lindgren's talent as "a masterly storyteller" (News 366 2012, 57).⁹⁹ In connection with the Hans Christian Andersen Award that same book earned, another critic points out just how unique this story is (News 8 1966, n.p.). Throughout the entire corpus of newspaper articles, a limited number of characteristics recur consistently. These are pinpointed as distinctive of Astrid Lindgren's style and considered to render her body of work unique. In a 1960 review of that same *Rasmus and the Tramp* published in Dutch daily *De Volkskrant*, the unspecified author names a few specific features which eventually prove to be referred to time and again as typical of Lindgren's writing: "With inexhaustible humour, warmth and never-failing vividness the author unfolds her multi-layered story. She is truly moving, without transgressing the border to sentimentality; her way of distributing tension, humour, and emotion is unparalleled" (News 6 1960, n.p.).¹⁰⁰ Half a century later, Lindgren's style is typified as follows:

Astrid Lindgren didn't become a writer of classics for no reason at all. Just like all the great children's book authors from her generation, she unerringly intuited what should never be missing from a good children's book: a spoonful of laughter, a spoonful of tears, and two spoonfuls of action. (News 814 2010, 9)¹⁰¹

It is astonishing that the second citation resembles the first one quite closely, and that the foregrounded elements are practically identical, despite the fifty-year time gap between them. The two quotes can in actuality serve as a summary of the argumentations pertaining to Astrid Lindgren's unique style preponderant in the corpus in its entirety.

The qualities hinted at in both excerpts, including Lindgren's use of humour and suspense, as well as the vivacity and friendly quality contained in her work, are generally

⁹⁹ "een magistrale verhalenverteller" (News 366 2012, 57).

¹⁰⁰ "Met onuitputtelijke humor, met warmte en nooit verslappende levendigheid doet de auteur haar verhaal uit de vele doeken. Zij ontroert waarachtig, zonder de grens naar de sentimentaliteit te overschrijden; zij verdeelt spanning, humor en ontroering op onnavolgbare wijze" (News 6 1960, n.p.).

¹⁰¹ "Astrid Lindgren is niet zomaar een schrijfster van klassiekers geworden. Net als alle grote kinderboekenauteurs uit haar generatie voelde zij feilloos aan wat in een goed kinderboek nooit mag ontbreken: een soeplepel lach, een soeplepel traan en twee soeplepels actie" (News 814 2010, 9).

considered to be trademarks of hers. A reissue of *The Brothers Lionheart* dating from 2003, for instance, is judged in comparable terms, which demonstrates the continuous preponderance of these stylistic elements in the newspaper reviewers' assessment of Lindgren's body of work. Flemish children's book author and critic Ed Franck warmly recommends *The Brothers Lionheart*, which he considers to be "of lasting value" (News 201 2003, 19).¹⁰² He argues, "It remains an endearing book, written in Lindgren's fluent style, with *indispensable* suspense and emotions" (News 201 2003, 19; emphasis added).¹⁰³ Many of the (professional as well as academic) journal contributors also ask themselves what makes Lindgren stand out from other writers and what her recipe for a successful book is.

Suspense and Adventure

To the Flemish and Dutch reviewers, the element of suspense is quite important (27 instances).¹⁰⁴ It is frequently coupled with adventurous plot elements (30 examples),¹⁰⁵ as is the case in this review of – again – *Rasmus and the Tramp*: "it contains a wonderful adventure involving crooks, in which the careful measurement of the quantities of suspense, fear and relief stands out" (News 34 1975, n.p.).¹⁰⁶ Adventures are found to be of great importance in the stories about Pippi Longstocking, Master Detective Bill Bergson, and in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, the latter of which is deemed to be "bloodcurdling" (News 545 2003, 43).¹⁰⁷ Ancient Icelandic heroic sagas as well as the *Edda*-poems are identified as significant sources of inspiration for exciting plot elements in *The Brothers Lionheart* (LG 21 1975, 86). Eventually, Lindgren's name seems to have become

¹⁰² "een blijver" (News 201 2003, 19).

¹⁰³ "Het blijft een vertederend boek, geschreven in de vlotte Lindgrenstijl, met de nodige spanning en gevoelens" (News 201 2003, 19; emphasis added).

¹⁰⁴ (En nu 16 1983, 165); (En nu 23 1994, 35); (JBG 22 1977, 31); (JBG 36 1982, 95); (JBG 37 1982, 28); (JBG 53 1988, 334); (JBG 59 1990, 242); (JBG 82 2000, 337); (JBG 94 2004, 92); (JBG 97 2005, 339); (LG 43 1986, 476), (LG 44 1992, 140); (News 6 1960, n.p.); (News 8 1965, n.p.); (News 25 1971, n.p.); (News 30 1974, n.p.); (News 32 1974, n.p.); (News 53 1980, n.p.); (News 134 2002, n.p.); (News 142 2002, 10); (News 194 2003, n.p.); (News 256 2007, 21); (News 368 2012, 7); (News 483 2002, 28); (News 545 2003, 43); (News 706 2007, 9); (News 709 2007, 4).

¹⁰⁵ (En nu 16 1983, 165); (En nu 18 1986, 212); (JBG 44 1986, 48); (JBG 97 2005, 339); (LG 43 1986, 476); (LG 21 1975, 86); (LzL 5 2002); (News 18 1967, n.p.); (News 26 1972, n.p.); (News 29 1974, n.p.); (News 31 1974, n.p.); (News 34 1975, n.p.); (News 60 1982, n.p.); (News 68 1992, n.p.); (News 88 1996, n.p.); (News 93 1997, n.p.); (News 97 1998, n.p.); (News 194 2003, n.p.); (News 203 2003, 4); (News 204 2003, 15); (News 216 2004, 21); (News 218 2004, 11); (News 301 2009, 41); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 518 2002, 3); (News 699 2007, 21); (News 701 2007, 99); (News 704 2007, 25); (News 706 2007, 9); (News 745 2008, 24).

¹⁰⁶ "er komt een pracht avontuur [sic] met boeven in voor, waarin vooral de zorgvuldige dosering van spanning, angst en opluchting opvalt" (News 34 1975, n.p.). These exact elements are said to be in keeping with child readers' preferences.

¹⁰⁷ "bloedstollend" (News 545 2003, 43).

synonymous with adventurous story lines, as is evidenced by a comment made on a documentary about the Dutch government's ecological policy. The film zooms in on the life of Remy and Timo, two young brothers who are so adventurous that it feels to the critic feels as if they “walked right out of a children's book by Astrid Lindgren” (News 451 2001, 10).¹⁰⁸

Humour

Secondly, Lindgren's particular sense of humour is identified as one of the key factors in her success. Her books are often described as funny (58 examples),¹⁰⁹ or witty (eight instances).¹¹⁰ The works which are most often referred to in this context are those about Karlsson and Pippi Longstocking, as well as *Rasmus and the Tramp*, [*Astrid Lindgren's Collected Stories*],¹¹¹ and *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*. The latter is nominated by Tilly Stuckens, critic for Flemish daily *De Standaard*, as her preferred Lindgren-book. She claims, “[it is] [o]ne of the best children's books I know”, and attributes this to the fact that it is “youthful and fresh”, as well as “humorous” (News 143 2002, 10).¹¹² An anonymous reviewer describes Lindgren as “a writer who manages to amuse children enormously”, and goes on to explain, “Her books are often read with a chuckle, jokes are retold in the afterglow” (News 25 1971, n.p.).¹¹³ The key to Lindgren's sense of humour appears to be her keen eye for opportunities to make puns: her jokes are successful “[d]ue to the fact that she plays with words a lot; has her protagonists interpret them literally,

¹⁰⁸ “De avontuurlijke broers [...] zouden zo uit een kinderboek van Astrid Lindgren kunnen komen” (News 451 2001, 10).

¹⁰⁹ (En nu 16 1983, 166); (En nu 18 1986, 212); (En nu 25 1996, 146-150); (En nu 35 2007, 331); (IDIL 7 1960, n.p.); (IDIL 16 1966, n.p.); (IDIL 17 1966, n.p.); (JBG 3 1966, 115); (JBG 4 1966, 6); (JBG 6 1967, 11); (JBG 7 1969, 46); (JBG 12 1973, 28); (JBG 15 1974, 3); (JBG 17 1974, 9); (JBG 20 1975, 164); (JBG 22 1977, 31); (JBG 26 1980, 63); (JBG 45 1986, 78); (JBG 46 1987, 23-24); (JBG 56 1990, 19); (JBG 60 1990, 242); (JBG 62 1991, 31); (JBG 67 1991, 355); (JBG 69 1992, 238); (JBG 82 2000, 337); (JBG 92 2003, 246); (JBG 98 2007, 230); (JBG 100 2007, 330); (LG 1 1958, 188); (LG 38 1982, 234); (LzL 5 2002); (News 3 1959, n.p.); (News 5 1959, n.p.); (News 6 1960, n.p.); (News 8 1965, n.p.); (News 11 1965, n.p.); (News 16 1967, n.p.); (News 25 1971, n.p.); (News 31 1974, n.p.); (News 34 1975, n.p.); (News 42 1978, n.p.); (News 54 1981, n.p.); (News 58 1981, n.p.); (News 70 1970, n.p.); (News 74 1992, n.p.); (News 143 2002, 10); (News 144 2002, 15); (News 194 2003, n.p.); (News 213 2004, 12); (News 240 2006, 65); (News 274 2007, 40); (News 403 1998, 7); (News 471 2002, 1); (News 477 2002, 1); (News 483 2002, 28); (News 504 2002, 18); (News 638 2007, 6-7); (News 806 2010, n.p.).

¹¹⁰ (IDIL 8 1960, n.p.); (LG 10 1969, 49-50); (News 9 1965, n.p.); (News 24 1971, n.p.); (News 39 1977, n.p.); (News 42 1978, n.p.); (News 71 1992, n.p.); (News 477 2002, 1).

¹¹¹ *Alle verhalen van Astrid Lindgren*. This collection was compiled by publishing house Ploegsma and issued only in Flanders and the Netherlands.

¹¹² “Een van de beste jeugdboeken die ik ken”; “jeugdig en fris”; “met zin voor humor” (News 143 2002, 10).

¹¹³ “een schrijfster die kinderen bijzonder weet te amuseren”; “Haar boeken worden vaak grinnikend gelezen, nog nagenietend worden er grappen uit verteld” (News 25 1971, n.p.).

which is a kind of banter which young school children are very much taken with” (News 25 1971, n.p.).¹¹⁴ Rita Verschuur also foregrounds Astrid Lindgren’s sense of humour, which she describes as “incredible” (News 144 2002, 15).¹¹⁵ However, Verschuur qualifies the emphasis put on the latter’s wittiness. She maintains that Lindgren definitely also had a melancholic side, which she didn’t show very often, although it is discernible in her fairy tales (News 144 2002, 15).

Warmth, Cosiness, and Emotion

The atmosphere emanating from Astrid Lindgren’s narratives is characterised as warm (thirteen instances),¹¹⁶ friendly (News 39 1977, n.p.), and cosy (eleven examples).¹¹⁷ A comparable factor is the overall sense of delight which emanates from her narratives, such as the Emil-stories: “children will undoubtedly be thrilled with Emil’s pranks, which are described with such an elated joy” (News 17 1967, n.p.).¹¹⁸ Likewise, *Seacrow Island* is labelled a “feelgood-book”, containing “[s]tories in which not much happens, withough being boring. [...] Stories like babbling brooks, with the right amount of speed and variety to be compelling, and above all, with heaps of snugness” (News 530 2003, 28).¹¹⁹ Flemish author and self-proclaimed committed Lindgren-fan Bart Moeyaert indicates that the latter quality is rather pervasive in Lindgren’s works and that he himself “unconsciously keep[s] associating her books with warmth, recognisability and the sense of being at home” (News 137 2002, 15).¹²⁰ In his view, this warm feeling is for instance invoked by the way in which she “portrayed a very safe world in a village where everybody knows each

¹¹⁴ “Dat komt omdat ze veel met woorden speelt; ze letterlijk laat opvatten door haar hoofdpersonen, en dat is een soort van grappenmakerij waar jonge schoolkinderen enorm voor geporteerd zijn” (News 25 1971, n.p.).

¹¹⁵ “onvoorstelbaar” (News 144 2002, 15).

¹¹⁶ (JBG 60 1990, 242); (LG 46 1992, 202-203); (LG 47 1992, 491); (News 6 1960, n.p.); (News 24 1971, n.p.); (News 29 1974, n.p.); (News 44 1978, n.p.); (News 72 1992, n.p.); (News 74 1992, n.p.); (News 165 2002, n.p.); (News 504 2002, 18); (News 530 2003, 28); (News 810 2010, 96).

¹¹⁷ (JBG 36 1982, 95); (JBG 50 1988, 88); (JBG 64 1991, 171); (JBG 68 1992, 210); (News 9 1965, n.p.); (News 25 1971, n.p.); (News 36 1975, n.p.); (News 42 1978, n.p.); (News 48 1980, n.p.); (News 72 1992, n.p.); (News 165 2002, n.p.)

¹¹⁸ “Maar kinderen zullen Michiel's streken, met zo'n uitbundig plezier beschreven, ongetwijfeld prachtig vinden” (News 17 1967, n.p.).

¹¹⁹ “Verhalen waarin weinig gebeurt zonder dat het saai wordt. [...] Verhalen als voortkabbellende beekjes, met net genoeg vaart en afwisseling om meeslepend te zijn en, vooral, met een hoop gezelligheid” (News 530 2003, 28).

¹²⁰ “onbewust blijf ik haar boeken associëren met warmte, herkenbaarheid, een gevoel thuis te zijn” (News 137 2002, 15). Compare (News 275 2007, 41): “The warmth and recognisability of Lindgren’s work was what most appealed to the young Bart Moeyaert” [De warmte en herkenbaarheid oefenden de meeste aantrekkingskracht uit op de jonge Bart Moeyaert]?

other and in a family where everybody is close” (News 148 2002, 10).¹²¹ Thus, it is informed by the atmosphere of a warm nest her books resonate with (News 144 2002, 15). Author and critic Ed Franck hints at a similar sensation evoked by the Mardie-books, which he in fact sees as a key factor in their appeal:

even though Lindgren’s stories feel slightly outdated, they radiate the kind of homeliness, warmth and security which leaves children of any generation defenceless. These stories about an idyllic childhood in the safe nest of a harmonic family [...] come across as a kind of archetypical example of what is considered to be a story for reading out loud. They remain a safe haven[.] (News 205 2003, 13)¹²²

Dutch critic Marieke Henselmans even crowns Lindgren “the queen of the warm-hearted children’s book” (News 468 2001, 26).¹²³

Adding to the warm atmosphere of her books is the intensity of the emotions displayed, which is likewise met with approval. Leo Roelants can be shown to praise the depth of those feelings. About the Emil-stories, he writes that they are “passionate in a typically female or maternal way that few other than Astrid Lindgren can pull off” (LG 7 1968, 126).¹²⁴ In his assessment of *Rasmus and the Tramp*, too, this element is hinted at. He judges that it is a wonderful book, due to the fact that it relates the heartfelt history of orphan boy Rasmus who is yearning for love” (LG 15 1971, 118).¹²⁵ Another critic writing for *Lektuurgids* sees the emotional depth as a strength in Lindgren’s fairy tales. Because they are moving and compelling, they provide food for thought (LG 37 1981, 472). Majo de Saedeleer describes Lindgren’s writing as profound and emotional (News 137 2002, 38), and Bart Moeyaert reads this specific component in an autobiographical way. He links it to fundamental occurrences in her own life: “She went through a lot in her lifetime. Raising

¹²¹ “toonde een heel veilige wereld met het dorp waarin iedereen elkaar kende en het gezin dat goed aan elkaar hing” (News 148 2002, 10). See also (News 147 2002, 10).

¹²² “hoewel de verhalen van Lindgren wat ouderwets aandoen, stralen ze het soort knusheid, warmte en geborgenheid uit waartegen kinderen van welke generatie dan ook weerloos zijn. Deze verhalen over een idyllische jeugd in het veilige nest van een harmonisch gezin [...] voelen aan als een soort oervoorbeeld van wat men onder een voorleesverhaal verstaat. Ze blijven een veilige toevluchtshaven” (News 205 2003, 13).

¹²³ “de koningin van het warmhartige kinderboek” (News 468 2001, 26).

¹²⁴ “zo typisch vrouwelijk of moederlijk doorvoeld als bijna alleen Astrid Lindgren het klaarspeelt.” (LG 7 1968, 126).

¹²⁵ “met de doorvoelde geschiedenis van de naar liefde hunkerende weesjongen Rasmus” (LG 15 1971, 118). See also (LG 27 1979, 140).

two children all by herself,¹²⁶ losing her husband: she never wanted to be reminded of those things, but the books she wrote about them say enough” (News 147 2002, 10).¹²⁷

To one particular critic, all of that sentiment also has a downside. In a discussion of [*Astrid Lindgren’s Collected Stories*], an edition honouring the author’s 85th birthday, Carolien Zilverberg shows disapproval for Lindgren’s tendency to be “brazenly sentimental”, as she puts it (News 74 1992, n.p.).¹²⁸ She finds, “It is all heartwarming, albeit only just”, and her final judgment is that the sentimental tone is a nuisance, because “when one reads the stories one after the other, especially, [...] all of the beatitude becomes aggravating” (News 74 1992, n.p.).¹²⁹ However, Zilverberg is willing to forgive these weaknesses as the collection luckily “also includes a great deal of wonderfulness” (News 74 1992, n.p.).¹³⁰ In general, however, the warm, sentimental trait in Lindgren’s work criticised by Zilverberg is appreciated by the reviewers. For example, the unspecified author of the review of *Rasmus and the Tramp* quoted above feels that Lindgren does not lapse into sentimentality despite the overt display of emotions, a view which is shared by a Dutch journalist reviewing *Mardie* for *NRC Handelsblad*, who states, “The ingredients of the story provide ample opportunities to write a sweet little book about Mardie, but, fortunately, Astrid Lindgren does not fall into that trap” (News 27 1974, n.p.).¹³¹

Imagination

Astrid Lindgren’s lively imagination and ability to conjure up fantastical occurrences and environments are usually considered typical of her writing.¹³² Therefore, one would expect these qualities to feature prominently in the Dutch-language reception of her works as well. They are indeed qualities which are praised repeatedly (26 times, to be

¹²⁶ This is not entirely correct. Lindgren’s son Lars was raised first by a foster family in Denmark, and later by her parents in Vimmerby. Moreover, when her husband Sture Lindgren died in 1952, her children were already grown up. Lars was 26 at the time, Karin 18 (see <<http://astridlindgren.se/en/person/family>> [Accessed 24 November 2014]).

¹²⁷ “Ze heeft in haar leven veel meegemaakt. Twee kinderen alleen opvoeden, je man verliezen: ze wilde daar absoluut niet aan herinnerd worden. Maar de boeken die ze daaromheen geschreven heeft, zeggen genoeg” (News 147 2002, 10).

¹²⁸ “schaamteloos sentimenteel” (News 74 1992, n.p.).

¹²⁹ “Hartverwarmend allemaal, maar op het randje”; “zeker als je [...] alle verhalen achter elkaar leest begint al die gelukzaligheid te irriteren” (News 74 1992, n.p.).

¹³⁰ “er zit ook een hoop prachtigs bij” (News 74 1992, n.p.).

¹³¹ “Er zijn dus mogelijkheden genoeg om een zoet boekje over Madieke te schrijven, maar Astrid Lindgren laat zich gelukkig niet kennen” (News 27 1974, n.p.). See also (News 706 2007, 9).

¹³² See for instance *Astrid Lindgren - Vildtoring och lägereld* (1992) and *Det svänger om Astrid* (2007), both by Vivi Edström, or Sonja Svensson’s chapter on children’s literature in *Den Svenska litteraturen*: “Så skulle världen bli som ny – barn- och ungdomslitteratur efter andra världskriget” (Svensson 1999, 547).

precise),¹³³ but not quite as common as I had anticipated. In what follows, I will discuss the main evaluations of this particular topic. Firstly, as was shown above, Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer sees as essential components of the imaginative property the connection of “coinciding realistic and fantastical events or the discrepancy between the child’s communicative abilities [...] and the representation of the child’s [...] complex psychological state of mind” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 205).¹³⁴ Coincidentally, these are two aspects of Lindgren’s writing which the Dutch-language reviewers deem truly important. The author herself valued reading and imagination very highly and is reported to have seen them as “the foundation for individual growth” (News 77 1993, n.p.).¹³⁵

Lindgren’s own imaginative powers are evidently appreciated by the critics. A striking example of her inventiveness is Karlsson on the Roof. The Karlsson-books are valued because of the fact that “imagination reigns supreme” in them (IDIL 7 1960, n.p.),¹³⁶ and frivolous Karlsson is found to be a “divine invention” (News 23 1970, n.p.).¹³⁷ In a 1960 review of *Karlsson on the Roof* which appeared in *Lektuurgids*, critic Leo Roelants shows great admiration for this invention of Lindgren’s: “One should of course possess the inexhaustible imagination and the virtuoso design of Astrid Lindgren in order to be able to invent – besides her fantastic *Pippi Longstocking* – an equally peculiar Karlsson” (LG 2 1960, 183).¹³⁸

The way a critic for *Algemeen Dagblad* sees it, this inventiveness of Lindgren is motivated by “an unbridled inspiration, which mainly entices her to [write] fantasy stories” (News 50, 1980, n.p.).¹³⁹ In particular, Lindgren’s juxtaposing and/or blending realistic and dream worlds in such narratives is assessed as a feature which sets her writing apart from that of other authors.¹⁴⁰ Margot Klompmaker, for example, finds that the portrayal of emotions experienced by the characters in *Ronia, the Robber’s Daughter* is

¹³³ (JBG 6 1967, 11); (JBG 7 1969, 46); (JBG 13 1973, 44); (JBG 17 1974, 9); (JBG 37 1982, 28); (JBG 45 1986, 78); (JBG 56 1990, 19); (JBG 97 2005, 339); (LG 1 1958, 188); (LG 20 1974, 321); (News 20 1969, n.p.); (News 25 1971, n.p.); (News 29 1974, n.p.); (News 39 1977, n.p.); (News 50 1980, n.p.); (News 51 1980, n.p.); (News 54 1981, n.p.); (News 58 1981, n.p.); (News 59 1981, n.p.); (News 68 1992, n.p.); (News 70 1970, n.p.); (News 71 1992, n.p.); (News 92 1997, n.p.); (News 471 2002, 1); (News 630 2006, 15); (News 771 2009, 18).

¹³⁴ “das Zusammentreffen realistischer und phantastischer Ereignisse oder die Diskrepanz zwischen der [...] kindlichen Mitteilungsfähigkeit und der Darstellung der [...] komplexen psychischen Befindlichkeit des Kindes” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 205).

¹³⁵ “als basis voor individuele ontwikkeling” (News 77 1993, n.p.).

¹³⁶ “De fantasie viert hoogtij” (IDIL 7 1960, n.p.). See also (IDIL 24 1969, n.p.); (JBG 7 1969, 46); (JBG 17 1974, 9).

¹³⁷ “verrukkelijke vondst” (News 23 1970, n.p.).

¹³⁸ “Je moet wel de ontuitputtelijke verbeelding en de virtueuze vormgeving van Astrid Lindgren hebben, om naast haar fantastische *Pippi Langkous* een al even wonderlijke Karlsson te bedenken” (LG 2 1960, 183).

¹³⁹ “een tomeloze inspiratie die haar vooral tot fantasieverhalen verleidt” (News 50 1980, n.p.).

¹⁴⁰ (En nu 24 1995, 29); (JBG 16 1974, 3); (JBG 74 1995, 92); (JBG 79 1999, 112); (JBG 83 2001, 219); (JBG 86 2002, 147); (JBG 102 2007, 330-331); (LG 22 1975, 488); (LzL 5 2002, 142-145); (News 58 1981, n.p.); (News 196 2003, 51).

so intense that it “makes fantasy and reality grade into one another” (News 58 1981, n.p.).¹⁴¹ In the Pippi Longstocking-trilogy, too, the boundaries between the two are blurred, and this ambiguity is even typical of Pippi’s environment.¹⁴² Flemish actress Mieke Laureys, who played Pippi in a musical production, points out, “That girl’s world is filled with fantasy, which frequently cannot be separated from reality any longer. Her mindset is completely different” (News 196 2003, 51).¹⁴³ This very quality is echoed in the ALMA-jury’s evaluations of laureates Lygia Bojunga and Kitty Crowther. In 2004, one of the judges’ main motivations to reward Bojunga was “her unique ability to join the boundaries of fantasy world and reality” (News 207 2004, 70).¹⁴⁴ The resemblance with argumentations on Lindgren’s body of work is clear. Moreover, in a similar vein, 2010 awardee Kitty Crowther was hailed as a “master [...] in creating the right atmosphere. In her world, the door between fantasy and reality is always wide open” (News 308 2010, 31).¹⁴⁵

In an essay criticising J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter-series, Bart Moeyaert sings the praises of Astrid Lindgren’s vivid imagination (News 115 2000, 36). With reference to Lindgren’s list of recommendations for those aspiring to write for children,¹⁴⁶ he extols her creativity, which went beyond the type of “iron stove stories” using random animate objects, which she herself had repudiated in said article. Moeyaert states that Lindgren’s kind of imagination suits him, because he feels that it makes sense. In his view, “She made the implausible more plausible by incorporating fantastical elements in her characters in a logical way. As if they were inborn, like protruding ears. With Lindgren, imagination was intense, yet at the same time subdued, on solid ground” (News 115 2000, 36).¹⁴⁷ He particularly values the level of imagination displayed in the Pippi Longstocking-books, which he finds to be utterly convincing. He writes,

The best liars not only believe themselves, they never lie too much. If the lie is too obvious, the reader is constantly reminded that he is reading fiction. Pippi has long since exceeded fiction. She *exists*. One isn’t surprised that she lifts a horse every now

¹⁴¹ “doet fantasie en werkelijkheid in elkaar overvloeien” (News 58 1981, n.p.).

¹⁴² Compare Rita Verschuur’s remarks on this matter (News 401 1998, 17), related in section 3.2.

¹⁴³ “De wereld van dat meisje zit vol fantasie, die dikwijls niet meer te onderscheiden is van de realiteit. Ze heeft een totaal andere manier van denken” (News 196 2003, 51).

¹⁴⁴ “weet als geen ander de grenzen van de fantasiewereld en de realiteit met elkaar te verbinden” (News 207 2004, 70).

¹⁴⁵ “een meester [...] in het creëren van de juiste sfeer. In haar wereld staat de deur tussen fantasie en werkelijkheid wagenwijd open” (News 308 2010, 31).

¹⁴⁶ See (Lindgren 1978); (En nu 1 1974); or (Lindgren 1978 [2002]).

¹⁴⁷ “Ze maakte het onwaarschijnlijke waarschijnlijker door de fantastische elementen op een logische manier bij de personages te laten horen. Alsof ze aangeboren waren, zoals flaporen. De verbeelding was bij Lindgren doorvoeld, en tegelijk ingehouden, met vaste grond onder de voeten” (News 115 2000, 36).

and then, because that's just part of her nature. (News 115 2000, 36; emphasis in original)¹⁴⁸

Harry Potter, on the other hand, does not exist, at least not in Moeyaert's view.

A fantastical dimension indeed is perceived as characteristic of the Pippi-stories, and the playfulness, creativity, and unbridled imagination which Lindgren exhibits in them is valued by the critics.¹⁴⁹ Nico Hemelaar in a critique of the 1998 musical version foregrounds the “wonderful Astrid Lindgren-terminology” in particular (News 402 1994, 20). By way of example, he mentions Vilekulla Cottage [Villa Kakelbont] and South Sea Island [Taka-Tuka-eiland] (News 402 1994, 20),¹⁵⁰ both of which admittedly sound much more playful in Dutch than in the English translation. Moreover, one of the main components of this fantastical dimension is found to be the protagonist's wordplay, which contributes to the books' overall air of infectious antiauthoritarianism. As Marijn van der Jagt points out, the anarchistic atmosphere in the stories is not only created by the figure's physical strength, but also by “the witty answers to boring questions Pippi comes up with, her preference for a cheerful lie over the bland truth, and the inimitable reasonings parodying adults”, such as her explanation for walking backwards (News 404 1998, 12).¹⁵¹

In addition, Lindgren's imaginative powers are also discussed in an altogether different context, namely when it comes to her fairy tale-like stories in which figments of the imagination offer a release of tension or an escape from reality in difficult circumstances (cf. infra). Several critics note that Lindgren injected fantastical elements in those narratives in order to make difficult subjects such as child neglect, illness, or death bearable and to make the characters and the readers forget their sorrows.¹⁵² In such cases, imagination invests the stories, centring around “material and moral poverty”,¹⁵³ with a sense of hope and optimism. This counts for works such as *Mio, my Son*, *The Brothers Lionheart*, *The Red Bird*, [*Nils Karlsson-Pyssling*], and [*In the Land of the Twilight*]. According to Karin van Camp, the bottom line of the latter is that imagination can be a tool for

¹⁴⁸ “De beste leugenaars geloven niet alleen zichzelf, ze liegen ook nooit te veel. Als de leugen er te dik op ligt, wordt de lezer er de hele tijd aan herinnerd dat hij fictie aan het lezen is. Pippi is de fictie allang overstegen. Ze bestaat. Het verbaast je niet dat ze af en toe een paard optilt, want dat ligt nu eenmaal in haar aard” (News 115 2000, 36).

¹⁴⁹ (JBG 6 1967, 11); (JBG 26 1980, 63); (LG 30 1979, 443); (LG 46 1992, 203); (News 480 2002, 11).

¹⁵⁰ “de heerlijke Astrid Lindgren-terminologie” (News 402 1994, 20).

¹⁵¹ “de geestige antwoorden die Pippi bedenkt op saaie vragen, haar voorkeur voor een smakelijke leugen boven de kleurloze waarheid, en de onnavolgbare redeneringen waarmee ze de volwassenen parodieert” (News 404 1998, 12). See also (News 430 1999, 30).

¹⁵² (JBG 16 1974, 3); (LG 0 1956, 220); (LG 13 1971, 51); (LG 32 1980, 329); (LG 33 1980, 282); (News 274 2007, 40); (News 630 2006, 15).

¹⁵³ “materiële en morele armoede” (LG 18 1972, 174).

overcoming reality (JBG 74 1995, 92). On the whole, the range of imaginative abilities displayed by Lindgren in her oeuvre is quite broad.

Versatility

The broad range and versatility of Lindgren's are quoted as further positive qualities (eleven examples).¹⁵⁴ Dutch critic Bas Maliepaard mentions in this connection a "broadly branched inventive power" (News 681 2007, 10-11).¹⁵⁵ In some of the obituaries, too, it is stressed that she is an all-round author. One reviewer observes, "The exceptional thing about Astrid Lindgren was that she could write such divergent books" (News 483 2002, 28).¹⁵⁶ This leads another critic to conclude that she was "possibly the most famous and definitely the most many-sided children's book writer of the twentieth century" (News 471 2002, 1).¹⁵⁷

Already in 1967, fifteen years after the introduction of *Pippi Longstocking* to the Dutch-speaking reading public, Lindgren's multifacetedness is recognised. This is for instance the case in an article on *Emil gets into Mischief* in Dutch newspaper *Het Parool*, the (unspecified) author of which is of the opinion that "Astrid Lindgren is not only talented but also very productive and surprisingly many-sided" (News 17 1967, n.p.; emphasis in original).¹⁵⁸ In order to prove this point, the reviewer compares the Emil-book at hand with *Mio, my Son*, and concludes that "it is hard to believe that both were written by the same woman. Because *Mio* is a very poetic and heavily symbolic story, whereas Emil is devised solely to entertain his audience with his incredibly naughty pranks" (News 17 1967, n.p.).¹⁵⁹ The critic goes on to consider the similarities of the two books with other well-known works of children's literature. *Mio, my Son* is compared with *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and *Emil gets into Mischief* coupled with the series of *Pietje Bell*-books written by Dutch author Chris van Abkoude,¹⁶⁰ which were rather famous in Holland and Flanders at that time. Pietje, the mischievous protagonist in the series,

¹⁵⁴ (En nu 39 2007, 353), (JBG 18 1974, n.p.), (LzL 6 2004, 118); (LzL 7 2007, 168); (News 17 1967, n.p.); (News 24 1971, n.p.); (News 59 1981, n.p.); (News 71 1992, n.p.); (News 471 2002, 1); (News 483 2002, 28); (News 681 2007, 10-11).

¹⁵⁵ "wijdvertakte scheppingskracht" (News 681 2007, 10-11).

¹⁵⁶ "Het bijzondere aan Astrid Lindgren was dat ze zulke verschillende boeken kon schrijven" (News 483 2002, 28).

¹⁵⁷ "misschien de beroemdste en zeker de meest veelzijdige kinderboekenschrijfster van de twintigste eeuw" (News 471 2002, 1).

¹⁵⁸ "Astrid Lindgren is niet alleen talentvol, ze is ook bijzonder produktief én verrassend veelzijdig" (News 17 1967, n.p.; emphasis in original).

¹⁵⁹ "dan kun je nauwelijks geloven, dat ze door dezelfde vrouw zijn geschreven. Want Mio is een heel dichtertlijk en zwaar symbolisch verhaal, terwijl Michiel uitsluitend is bedacht om zijn publiek te amuseren met zijn onvoorstelbaar stoute streken" (News 17 1967, n.p.).

¹⁶⁰ The *Pietje Bell*-series was originally published between 1914 and 1936.

developed into a prototype of the naughty boy character in Dutch-language children's literature. As the critic aptly points out, the divergence between both types of books – the mischievous versus the symbolic – is rather large. Therefore, he or she states that in Lindgren's oeuvre "les extrêmes [sic] se touchent!" (News 17 1967, n.p.) The exclamation point is an indication of the impression Lindgren made on this particular critic due to her versatility.

In a 1970 discussion of the collection of stories [*Nils Karlsson-Pyssling*] an unnamed critic equally draws attention to this characteristic, arguing that Lindgren writes "with a steady hand alternately sensitively and rowdily, wittily and gravely, playfully and deeply" (News 24 1970, n.p.).¹⁶¹ In 1974, which was a decisive turning point in the Dutch-language reception of Lindgren's oeuvre (cf. section 2.3), an elaborate portrait of the author published in *Jeugdboekengids* includes an ode to her versatility, which critic Fred de Swert interestingly connects with her closeness to children. He finds,

Astrid Lindgren's writing can't really be pinned down to *one* 'sanctifying' [definitive; svdb] children' literary genre. Fundamentally, this body of work embodies the manysided interest that is inherent in a child's emotional and imaginative world. Solemnity and mirth go hand in hand, there is an undisputable reciprocity between imagination and reality. (JBG 18 1974, n.p.; emphasis in original)¹⁶²

Whereas de Swert associates Lindgren's multifacetedness with one particular aspect of her personality, namely her close-knit tie with children, Rita Verschuur sees it as an exponent of Lindgren's personality in its entirety. Verschuur states, "She is all of her books. That enormous versatility, light-heartedness and humour, that is her. That eternal quip, but also melancholy" (News 477 2002, 1).¹⁶³ In her view, the broad range in her oeuvre, varying from the gloomy fairy tales on one end of the spectrum, to the utterly absurd humouristic stories at the other extremity, captures her entire being (News 477 2002, 1).

Upon the publication of [*Astrid Lindgren's Collected Stories*] in 1992, Dutch critic Selma Niewold explicitly names this all-round quality of Lindgren's as an asset. Overall, she does not think much of the collection, which she discards as a "birthday present that turned

¹⁶¹ "met een vaste hand beurtelings gevoelig en baldadig, geestig en ernstig, speelt en diep." (News 24 1971, n.p.)

¹⁶² "Het werk van Astrid Lindgren kan je bezwaarlijk vastpinnen op één 'zaligmakend' genre in de jeugdliteratuur. In wezen belichaamt dit oeuvre dan ook de veelzijdige belangstelling welke inherent is aan de gevoels- en verbeeldingswereld van een kind. Ernst en luim gaan hand in hand, fantasie en realiteit vertonen een onmiskenbare wisselwerking" (JBG 18 1974, n.p.).

¹⁶³ "Ze is al haar boeken. Die enorme veelzijdigheid, lichtvoetigheid en humor, dat is zij. Die eeuwige kwinkslag, maar ook het weemoedige" (News 477 2002, 1).

out sloppy” (News 71 1992, n.p.),¹⁶⁴ and which is redeemed merely by the grace of Lindgren’s multifaceted way of writing: “Astrid Lindgren is an entertaining and versatile writer. This renders [*Astrid Lindgren’s Collected Stories*] a nice book all the same, which reflects her work well” (News 71 1992, n.p.).¹⁶⁵ Again on the negative side, though, is Niewold’s comment that some of the stories in the collection (those concerning the celebration of Christmas in particular) “do not differ much” (News 71 1992, n.p.).¹⁶⁶ In effect, a critical opinion of this kind proves to be utterly uncommon in the reviewers’ analyses of Astrid Lindgren’s work, and it contrasts with the overall positive judgments on the many-sided nature of her oeuvre.

In fact, dr. Vandeveld in *Jeugdboekengids* implies that Lindgren’s displays of all-round talent are what keeps her oeuvre interesting and attractive. Writing in 1980, Vandeveld observes, “Lindgren can write for the littlest ones, that we have known for a very long time, and yet every new book is a surprise” (JBG 27 1980, 63).¹⁶⁷ Likewise, Leo Roelants in *Lektuurgids* points out how *The Brothers Lionheart* can be seen as a revelation in that late stage of Lindgren’s active writing career. He writes,

It’s hard to keep track of the number of national and international awards and accolades which have fallen to Astrid Lindgren’s share for many long years now... On these grounds, one might start to fear that the writer would have reached her apex, would keep to well-trodden paths, and would have arrived at a ‘fin de carrière’.

But no, out of the blue appears a spanking new Astrid Lindgren, who breaks new ground and amazes the world with *The Brothers Lionheart*. (LG 21 1975, 85)¹⁶⁸

Hence, it could be argued that versatility is a quality which can keep an author relevant and so to speak fans the fire of interest expressed in them. In my view, it should therefore get more attention in the theoretical discourse on canonicity in children’s literature.

¹⁶⁴ “slordig uitgevallen verjaardagscadeau” (News 71 1992, n.p.).

¹⁶⁵ “Astrid Lindgren is een onderhoudend en veelzijdig schrijfster. Dat maakt *Alle verhalen van Astrid Lindgren* toch tot een aardig boek, dat een goede afspiegeling van haar werk vormt” (News 71 1992, n.p.).

¹⁶⁶ “Veel verschillen ze niet van elkaar” (News 71 1992, n.p.).

¹⁶⁷ “Lindgren kan schrijven voor de allerkleinsten, dat weten we sinds heel lang en toch is ieder boek een verrassing” (JBG 27 1980, 63).

¹⁶⁸ “De prijzen en onderscheidingen, die Astrid Lindgren sedert lange jaren zijn te beurt gevallen op nationaal en internationaal vlak zijn bijna niet meer te tellen... en dan ga je wel eens vrezen dat de schrijfster haar hoogtepunt zou hebben bereikt, verder de vertrouwde paden zou gaan bewandelen en aan een ‘fin de carrière’ kon toe zijn gekomen. Maar neen, dan is daar eensklaps een spiksplinternieuwe Astrid Lindgren, die nieuw terrein ontgint en de wereld verrast met *De gebroeders Leeuwenhart*” (LG 21 1975, 85).

Stylistic Features

Another frequently mentioned feature which may account for the success of Lindgren's works is the author's distinctive style or voice, although critics rarely specify what they mean by it exactly. For example, events in *The Six Bullerby Children* are described as "very charmingly related" (IDIL 2 1958, n.p.).¹⁶⁹ About *Mio, my Son*, reviewers remark that it is "[n]icely written" (LG 0 1956, 220),¹⁷⁰ or "a well-written fairy tale, of a marvellous style" (IDIL 1 1957, n.p.).¹⁷¹ Statements of this kind attest to the general vagueness and lack in detail of the arguments observed throughout the corpus. Nevertheless, a few stylistic characteristics do recur, and most prominent among these are simplicity (7 examples),¹⁷² fluency (twelve),¹⁷³ and vivacity (four).¹⁷⁴ Yet, the number of instances is low compared to some of the features discussed earlier on in this section.

One of the aspects which is appreciated is the simplicity of Lindgren's writing. *Lotta's Easter Surprise*, for example, is described as unpretentious (JBG 64 1991, 171). Marita de Sterck summarises that Lindgren's style is "simple yet smooth" (JBG 32 1981, 30),¹⁷⁵ and points out that recurrent motifs, functional repetitions, and remarkably short sentences add to this perception (JBG 34 1981, 125).¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, when renowned Dutch children's author Paul Biegel was asked what he saw as Lindgren's main strength, comprehensibility was precisely what he highlighted: "That simplicity of writing. To be able to do something much better than others by merely linking dead simple things, that I am in vast awe of" (News 477 2002, 1).¹⁷⁷ Overall, her typical style is found to be calm, and her language unadorned (JBG 47 1987, 27), and *Samuel August in Sevedstorp and Hanna in Hult*, for instance, is deemed to be a gem, written "[i]n Astrid Lindgren's unaffected style, straight from the heart" (LG 26 1978, 481).¹⁷⁸ Simplicity in style and subject matter is an aspect of the Noisy Village-series which a critic named Vandeveld highly

¹⁶⁹ "alleraardigst verteld" (IDIL 2 1958, n.p.).

¹⁷⁰ "Fijn geschreven" (LG 0 1956, 220).

¹⁷¹ "Het is een knap geschreven sprookje, prachtig van stijl" (IDIL 1 1957, n.p.).

¹⁷² (IDIL 1 1957, n.p.); (IDIL 21 1967, n.p.); (JBG 29 1980, 94); (JBG 32 1981, 30); (JBG 59 1990, 242); (JBG 63 1991, 113); (JBG 64 1991, 171).

¹⁷³ (En nu 16 1983, 165); (En nu 39 2007, 354); (JBG 9 1969, 108); (JBG 32 1981, 30); (JBG 33 1981, 58); (JBG 44 1986, 48); (JBG 62 1991, 31); (JBG 67 1991, 355); (JBG 100 2007, 330); (LG 43 1986, 476); (LG 44 1992, 140); (LG 45 1992, 202).

¹⁷⁴ (JBG 35 1981, 155); (LG 4 1965, 48); (News 143 2002, 10); (News 477 2002, 1).

¹⁷⁵ "eenvoudige maar vlotte stijl" (JBG 32 1981, 30).

¹⁷⁶ Compare (LG 22 1975, 488) on *Brenda Brave*: "Masterly due to its simple depiction in short sentences and clear language" [Meesterlijk door de eenvoudige uitbeelding in korte zinnen en duidelijke taal].

¹⁷⁷ "Die eenvoud van schrijven. Met doodsimele dingen achter elkaar iets beter doen dan anderen, daar heb ik grenzenloze [sic] bewondering voor" (News 477 2002, 1).

¹⁷⁸ "In de ongekunstelde stijl van Astrid Lindgren, direct uit het hart" (LG 26 1978, 481).

appreciates, as becomes evident in the following remark: “Even when Astrid Lindgren writes about nothing, she makes something of it. [...] Austerity makes happy and rich, even in art. That Lindgren knows all too well” (JBG 29 1980, 94).¹⁷⁹

Tying in with the perceived sense of simpleness is a fresh and lively quality, a “thoroughly sound” air that typifies much of Lindgren’s work (LG 4 1965, 48).¹⁸⁰ Dutch children’s book author Thijs Goverde finds that “Astrid Lindgren is fresh in comparison with virtually everything” (News 477 2002, 1).¹⁸¹ Tilly Stuckens emphasises the liveliness about *Ronia, the Robber’s Daughter*, which in her opinion is narrated “[n]ot in a bombastic, tiresome way, but vividly and freshly” (News 143 2002, 10).¹⁸² Finally, the poeticness of her narrative voice is highlighted, which is an entirely different quality. Descriptions of her style as “fairytalelike” and “symbolic” also fit in with this particular outlook (seven examples).¹⁸³ To a certain extent, then, the different qualities considered as distinctive of Lindgren’s style reflect her versatility.

Defining the “Lindgren-esque”

By way of concluding the section on uniqueness, one can turn to analyses of reviewers who contemplate the question of what is undeniably “Lindgren-esque” as far as subject matter is concerned. Karin van Camp, for example, in an enumeration of the shared features of Lindgren’s fairy tales points out that they often center around a lonesome child (boy or girl) who befriends “a fairy-tale like figure of some kind”,¹⁸⁴ together with whom the protagonist might need to wage a war against evil, which customarily is won (JBG 76 1997, 17). Other critics looking for common denominators in her works draw similar conclusions. Flemish (children’s book) author and critic Marita de Sterck holds that “the most important motifs in Lindgren’s oeuvre [are]: the battle between good and evil; the struggle of a lonely child to get some attention; [and] emotional growth through an imagined journey” (JBG 58 1990, 238).¹⁸⁵ Other distinctive features are, also according to de Sterck, “the warm narrative tone, the bright dialogues, [and] the pungent descriptions of nature” (JBG 54 1989, 282).¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁹ “Ook als Astrid Lindgren over niets schrijft, maakt zij er iets van. [...] Soberheid maakt gelukkig en rijk, ook in de kunst. Dat weet Lindgren maar al te goed” (JBG 29 1980, 94).

¹⁸⁰ “dat kerngezonde” (LG 4 1965, 48).

¹⁸¹ “Astrid Lindgren is in vergelijking met alles fris” (News 477 2002, 1).

¹⁸² “Niet op een opgeschroefde, drammerige manier, maar levendig en fris” (News 143 2002, 10).

¹⁸³ (En nu 24 1995, 29); (En nu 39 2007); (JBG 43 1986, 26); (JBG 44 1986, 48); (JBG 58 1990, 238); (LzL 5 2002); (LzL 8 2007, 92).

¹⁸⁴ “een of andere sprookjesachtige figuur” (JBG 76 1997, 17).

¹⁸⁵ “de belangrijkste motieven uit Lindgrens werk: de strijd tussen goed en kwaad; het gevecht van een eenzaam kind voor aandacht; emotionele groei doorheen een fantasiereis” (JBG 58 1990, 238). See also (JBG 72 1994, 78).

¹⁸⁶ “de warme verteltoon, de vinnige dialogen, de rake natuurbeschrijvingen” (JBG 54 1989, 282).

Similarly, Odile Jansen considers the picture book [*In the Land of the Twilight*] unmistakably to be an Lindgren-esque story, exhibiting aspects characteristic of her unique style of writing. She finds, “Even in this ‘minor’ narrative, Lindgren’s major qualities as an author manifest themselves, such as her gift for naturally and probingly wording emotions and for creating a warm and secure atmosphere” (En nu 24 1995, 29).¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, *The Brothers Lionheart* is seen as a work which epitomises Lindgren’s capacities as a writer. Leo Roelants hardly hides the reverence he holds for the author when he asserts that the ability “[t]o devise and conceive a story like this, to develop it into a logical whole, which is compelling, gripping, and surprising, is granted to very few people only. Astrid Lindgren is one of those few” (LG 21 1975, 86).¹⁸⁸ He expresses the hope that many thousands of children all over the world will be able to take something away from the book (LG 21 1975, 86), which again shows just how significant Lindgren’s work is to him.

In summarising her viewpoints on a new edition of *Seacrow Island*, Annemie Leysen likewise captures the main ingredients of what the Dutch-language critics believe to be Lindgren’s recipe for success. She notes that it is “yet again a wonderful bucolic adventure about a vacation on a small island off the Swedish coast. Witty, thrilling, sensitive, and of course extremely beautifully written” (News 194 2003, n.p.; emphasis added).¹⁸⁹ The adverb “of course” packs a great deal of meaning. It implies that, by the turn of the century, the beauty of Lindgren’s works has become a given, and that the Flemish and Dutch reviewers’ understanding of her poetics is orchestrated to such an extent that there no longer is a need to explicitly mention all of its main components.

(2) Innovativity and Representativity

Section 4.1 showed that a commonly held conviction among children’s literature researchers is that part of the originality perceived in an author’s work derives from that writer’s skill to renew genres or styles, or to reinvent themselves. This property of innovativity is situated at one end of a gliding scale, with representativity – a tendency to stick to traditions – at its other end. Neither of these criteria are particularly prominent

¹⁸⁷ “Ook in deze ‘minor’ vertelling komen Lindgrens grote kwaliteiten als schrijfster tot uiting, zoals haar gave voor het natuurlijk en indringend verwoorden van gevoelens en het scheppen van een warme en geborgen atmosfeer” (En nu 24 1995, 29).

¹⁸⁸ “Een verhaal als dit uitdenken en concipiëren, het uitbouwen tot een logisch geheel, [sic] dat boeit en aangrijpt en blij verrast, is in de wereld voor weinigen weggelegd. Astrid Lindgren is één van die weinigen” (LG 21 1975, 86).

¹⁸⁹ “alweer een heerlijk bucolisch avontuur over een vakantie op een klein eiland voor de Zweedse kust. Geestig, spannend, gevoelig en *uiteraard* bijzonder mooi geschreven” (News 194 2003, n.p.; emphasis added).

in the Dutch-language gatekeeper discourse on Astrid Lindgren. The factor of representativity does not appear to have occurred to the Dutch-language reviewers when expressing their evaluations of Astrid Lindgren's oeuvre. Quite on the contrary, Lindgren is found to have departed from the majority of children's literature written before her time (News 866 2012, n.p.). This is due to her conception of childhood, which the reviewers find groundbreaking, as was shown elaborately in section 3.1. Appreciation for her innovative use of existing narrative patterns and motifs falls into this category (twelve instances),¹⁹⁰ as do arguments pertaining to formal renewal, which can only be found in three articles (all dealing with the same topic).¹⁹¹

As far as formal innovation is concerned, it is striking that only one concrete instance is mentioned in the corpus, viz. Lindgren's use of so-called soundspelling in the second Pippi Longstocking-book.¹⁹² Here, reference is made to a letter Pippi writes to herself. Seeing that she is practically illiterate, Pippi uses language in a creative way. In the Dutch translation, the letter reads as follows (the passage from the Swedish original is included in a footnote):

live pippi wees tog niet
ver3tig wei hebben mooi
 weer giester heeft tomy 1 *reus8*
ige muis dootgemaakt nu
 4en wei feest.
 groenten van pippi
 (Lindgren 2002a, 157; emphasis added)¹⁹³

The instances of soundspelling highlighted in the excerpt above are all examples where parts of a word that are synonymous with numerals are substituted for those numerals. Hence, “*verdrietig*” is replaced by “*ver3tig*”, “*een*” by “*1*”, “*reusachtige*” by “*reus8ige*”, and “*vieren*” by “*4en*”. Writing at the turn of the twenty-first century, journalist Jan Kuitenbrouwer points out that this kind of wordplay bears resemblance to contemporary internet language, but also draws attention to similarities with shorthand used in telegraph communication (News 454 2001, 1). He sees Lindgren's use of soundspelling as

¹⁹⁰ (En nu 29 2000, 186); (LzL 6 2004, 129); (News 29 1974, n.p.); (News 60 1982, n.p.); (News 142 2002, 10); (News 144 2002, 15); (News 471 2002, 1); (News 477 2002, 1); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 487 2002, 28); (News 573 2004, 13); (News 866 2012, n.p.).

¹⁹¹ (News 454 2001, 1); (News 455 2001, 7V); (News 457 2001, 1).

¹⁹² (News 454 2001, 1); (News 455 2001, 7V); (News 457 2001, 1).

¹⁹³ Cf. (Van Coillie 1999, 112). In the Swedish original, the passage reads as follows: “*3VLIKA PIPPI / DU ER. VÄL INTTE SKUK / SKJUK 7K DET. VORE / FÖR LÄSSAMT ÅM DU / VORE 7K SÄLV ER JA / TOTALT FRISSK VÄDERET / ERE HELLER INGE FEL / PÅ? IGÅR DREPTE / TOMY EN STOR. R8 JA / DÅ JODE HAN / HELSNINGAR FRÅM / PIPPI*” (Lindgren 2009, 38; emphasis added). The highlighted words are the relevant examples of soundspelling.

innovative because she was ahead of her time, and indicates that Lewis Carroll, James Joyce, Gerard Reve, and singer Prince (or, Taftkap) also were early adopters.¹⁹⁴ What Kuitenbrouwer does not seem to be aware of, though, is that Astrid Lindgren trained as a secretary and used to compose her books in stenography.¹⁹⁵ To her, it may have come natural to use soundspelling. Nevertheless, the fact that this reviewer highlights this particular characteristic of Lindgren's writing as innovative, attests to his respect for her.

In addition, it is argued that Lindgren can be described as an innovator owing to her tendency to turn familiar stories upside down. Wilmy Perridon shows that Lindgren applied this device to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (En nu 29 2000, 186). Lindgren inverted not only well-known narrative models but also motifs such as traditional family constellations. Critic and translator and Wilmy Perridon, for example, states that Astrid Lindgren's portrayal of a parentless child in the Pippi Longstocking-books in the 1940s went against the grain of sentimental literature popular at that time such as the aforementioned *Anne of Green Gables* (En nu 29 2000, 186). Also in this connection, Pieter Steinz notes that Pippi Longstocking only resembled Peter Pan, but that "she had little in common with goody-goody children's book heroes à la Heidi and Remi [sic] (*Nobody's Boy*)" (News 866 2012, n.p.).¹⁹⁶ Equally revolutionary, Kyra de Kruif shows, was the way in which Pippi Longstocking was made to play a parental role towards Tommy and Annika (LzL 6 2004, 129). For all of these reasons, her books often caused controversy, which can be seen as a side effect of her innovative way of writing. Rita Verschuur, for her part, emphasises Lindgren's role as a pioneer in a very broad sense, as having renewed the field of children's literature at large. She holds, "When Astrid made her debut, 'children's literature' as a whole didn't amount to much. She wrote in an entirely new way about children. She showed a great many writers the way" (News 144 2002, 15).¹⁹⁷ Precisely because of the fact that she wrote in a child-friendly way from the very beginning, Astrid Lindgren is perceived as having been far ahead of her time in terms of use of narrative address (JBG 66 1991, 314; cf. infra).

The use of imagination as a means to flee from reality present in *The Brothers Lionheart* is characteristic of much of Lindgren's work, as was shown above. It should be noted that this specific element could be interpreted as progressive in itself, regardless of the contemporary context of the books, at least if we couple it with a thesis of Maria Nikolajeva's, put forward in "Exit Children's Literature?", that a preference for symbolic narratives (as opposed to realistic ones) signals a postmodern view on literature.

¹⁹⁴ (News 454 2001, 1); (News 455 2001, 7V).

¹⁹⁵ <<http://www.astridlindgren.se/en/node?page=4>> [Accessed 26 November 2014].

¹⁹⁶ "met de brave kinderboekhelden à la Heidi en Remi [sic] (*Alleen op de wereld*) had ze weinig gemeen" (News 866 2012, n.p.).

¹⁹⁷ "Toen Astrid debuteerde, stelde de hele 'jeugdliteratuur' echt niets voor. Ze schreef echt op een heel nieuwe manier over kinderen. Ze heeft heel veel schrijvers de weg gewezen" (News 144 2002, 15).

Nikolajeva observes, “we see clearly a shift in recent children’s literature from the mimetic toward the symbolic approach to artistic representation. This has to do with the postmodern interrogation of the possibility of literature reflecting reality by means of language” (Nikolajeva 1998, 233). A reading of Lindgren’s symbolic works in keeping with this perspective makes her come across as a particularly innovative writer. However, none of the Dutch-language reviewers picked up on this possible interpretation.

The Brothers Lionheart did not fit in with the literary trends prevalent at the time of its publication, as three articles show. The heavily symbolic fantasy appeared in the early 1970s at a time when largely realistic narrations which criticised social relations were becoming the vogue. Lindgren did not comply with these tendencies, and is shown to have done so consciously. In an anonymous notice in Dutch daily *Trouw*, the author is reported to have pointed out, “it’s not a political book. It’s an adventure story, full of imagination and dreams [...]. Sometimes children want to read things that *aren’t* about reality. Far too many books deal with that already” (News 29 1974, n.p.; emphasis in original).¹⁹⁸ In this connection, attention is again drawn to the piece of advice Lindgren gave to aspiring children’s book authors.¹⁹⁹ Marieke Henselmans indicates that Lindgren called on aspiring writers not to follow “the fashionable recipe” (News 487 2002, 28).²⁰⁰ In an interview, Dutch professor of children’s literature Helma van Lierop argues that the message contained in the 1970s innovative, realistic novels often was far too obvious (News 573 2004, 13). Political correct themes were prioritised, and due to their commercial success and ensuing great demand, the formal design of the books was neglected. As a result, these so-called “problem books” became formulaic pieces of writing “in which the new contents weren’t matched with a new form”, which is precisely what Lindgren’s polemical essay reacted against, as Van Lierop shows (News 573 2004, 13).²⁰¹

A similar note is struck by a Dutch reviewer commenting on the publication of *Ronia, the Robber’s Daughter*. This adventure novel is likewise shown to conflict with what is looked for in a good, “sensible” children’s book, which is “expected to procure food ‘for mind and heart’, or, to put it in more modern words, to inform children about the world and to give them insight into the meaning of existence” (News 60 1982, n.p.).²⁰² However,

¹⁹⁸ “‘t is geen politiek boek. ’t Is een avonturenboek, vol fantasie, droom [...]. Een kind wil eens niét over de realiteit lezen. Daar zijn al zoveel boeken over” (News 29 1974, n.p.; emphasis in original).

¹⁹⁹ See (Lindgren 1978); (En nu 1 1974); or (Lindgren 1978 [2002]).

²⁰⁰ “het modieuze recept” (News 487 2002, 28).

²⁰¹ “waarbij de nieuwe inhoud niet gevolgd wordt door een nieuwe vorm” (News 573 2004, 13).

²⁰² “het verantwoorde kinderboek”; “behoren [...] voedsel te bieden ‘voor hoofd en hart’, of iets moderner uitgedrukt: kinderen te informeren over de wereld en inzicht te geven in de zin van het bestaan (News 60 1982, n.p.).

the unnamed critic does not deem these objectives and the genre of the adventure story to be irreconcilable, quite on the contrary. He or she maintains, “Fortunately there are writers who realise that one does not capture children with lessons but with adventures, in which a great deal of insight into the meaning of existence can be hidden. Astrid Lindgren is among those writers” (News 60 1982, n.p.)²⁰³

On the whole, Lindgren’s books were rarely representative of a genre prevalent at a given time. Marcel van Nieuwenborgh sees this contrary, self-willed attitude as an asset which was defining for Lindgren’s career: “The author never bothered with literary fads and spoke disdainfully of writers who fill their children’s books with sex and third world-problems” (News 142 2002, 10).²⁰⁴ Odile Jansen, too, is in awe of Lindgren’s consistent wilfulness, and lauds the fact that she “wrote her own story, against all tendencies and trends, with a distinct sound of its own” (News 480 2002, 11).²⁰⁵ Overall, this is believed to hold true for the books on Pippi, Karlsson, Emil, Jonatan and Scotty Lionheart, and Ronia in particular (News 477 2002, 1). Finally, Judith Eiselin argues that Lindgren’s indifference with regard to fashions mirrors her tendency to disregard taboos and discuss difficult topics (News 471 2002, 1), a key characteristic of her understanding of childhood.

Innovation indeed proved to be vastly important with respect to Lindgren’s child image. Appreciation for her groundbreaking ideological position and pedagogical viewpoints were shown to play a significant part in the canonisation of her works in Flanders and the Netherlands. The critics perceive Astrid Lindgren as an innovator when it comes to the inversion of behavioural patterns,²⁰⁶ pedagogical beliefs (En nu 39 2007, 354), and gender role patterns.²⁰⁷ These are precisely the kind of innovative features identified by Astrid Surmatz in her study of the German reception of *Pippi Longstocking* (2005). She shows that it deviates from the literary norms prevalent in the 1940s, and that it “is ahead of numerous characteristics which in the meantime have come to count as typical components of newer, innovative children’s literature” (Surmatz 2005, 86).²⁰⁸ Her

²⁰³ “Gelukkig zijn er ook schrijvers die beseffen dat je kinderen niet met lessen vangt maar met avonturen, en dat daarin heel wat inzicht over de zin van het bestaan verborgen kan zijn. Tot hen behoort Astrid Lindgren” (News 60 1982, n.p.).

²⁰⁴ “De schrijfster heeft zich van modetrends nooit iets aangetrokken en sprak minachtend over schrijvers die hun kinderboeken volstoppen met seks en derdewereldproblemen” (News 142 2002, 10).

²⁰⁵ “schreef tegen alle stromingen en trends in haar eigen verhaal, met een onmiskenbaar eigen geluid” (News 480 2002, 11).

²⁰⁶ See furthermore (En nu 29 2000, 186); (JBG 78 1998, 396); (LzL 1 1995, 159); (LzL 2 1995, 167-169); (LzL 6 2004, 124); (LzL 9 2010, 38).

²⁰⁷ (En nu 39 2007, 343); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.).

²⁰⁸ “mithin zahlreiche Merkmale vorausnimmt, die inzwischen als typische Bestandteile der neueren, innovativen Kinderliteratur gelten” (Surmatz 2005, 86). This feat it owes to its inclusion of “a large portion of dialogue, colloquial language, hints of dialect, onomatopoeic particles, nonsensical elements, sayings, neologisms, as well as taboo words” [einen hohen Dialoganteil, Umgangssprache, dialektale Einschläge,

conclusion is that “the book serves an emancipating purpose in a variety of respects, with respect to contemporary pedagogical and social conventions, fixed gender roles, children’s roles in society, literary conventions, and the then predominant pedagogical and educational function of children’s literature” (Surmatz 2005, 86).²⁰⁹

By contrast, formal innovation turns out to be of negligible importance in the Dutch-language reviewers’ perception of Lindgren’s works, and representativity is not found to be important either. What they seem to appreciate most, then, is the fact that Lindgren steered a course of her own, true to her child image and moral convictions. However, according to Swedish Lindgren-scholar Helene Ehriander, the fact that *The Brothers Lionheart* was out of tune with literary norms at the time may be interpreted as ensuing from a *conservative* stance of Lindgren’s. She points out it was not acceptable for Lindgren to have all too deviant opinions on good children’s literature in neither her capacity as an author nor as an editor (Ehriander 2012, 100). Nevertheless, Ehriander writes,

At the beginning of her career she has the opportunity to be innovative both as an author and as a publisher, but after nearly 25 years in the business other winds begin to blow and new requirements are imposed on children’s books in order for them to fit the day and age. (Ehriander 2012, 100)²¹⁰

What Ehriander suggests, then, is that Lindgren due to the combination of her unparalleled acclaim and influential position as an editor, may have been set in her ways and perhaps even got caught in an ivory tower of some sort. This insight could definitely shed another light on the Dutch-language reviewers’ evaluation of the self-willed quality of her body of work as positive.

(3) Literariness, Quality, and Ambiguity

The literature review (section 4.1) shows that theorists widely support and encourage the resolve to treat children’s literature as literature, but this preoccupation with purely literary criteria is scarcely reflected in the corpus materials. An unnamed journalist in

onomatopoetische Partikel, nonsenshaft Elemente, Redewendungen, Sprachschöpfungen sowie Erwähnungen tabuisierter Wörter] (Surmatz 2005, 86).

²⁰⁹ “Das Buch wirkt in mehrerlei Hinsichte emanzipatorisch in Bezug auf damalige pädagogische und gesellschaftliche Konventionen, die festgeschriebenen Geschlechterrolle, die Kinderrolle in der Gesellschaft, literarische Konventionen und die damals übergeordnete pädagogische und erzieherische Funktion von Kinderliteratur” (Surmatz 2005, 86).

²¹⁰ “Hon har i början av sin karriär möjlighet att vara nyskapande både som författare och som förlagsredaktör, men efter nästan 25 år i branschen börjar andra vindar att blåsa och nya krav att ställas på hur barn- och ungdomslitteratur ska se ut för att ligga rätt i tiden” (Ehriander 2012, 100).

1974 foregrounds literariness as an important element in Astrid Lindgren’s achievements. The critic in question observes, “Her work has been printed in twelve million copies, besides the Swedish Government Artistic Award, she has been awarded nearly every national and international prize *for the high literary standard of her books*” (News 29 1974, n.p.; emphasis added).²¹¹ Some of her works are indeed considered to be high-quality by the writers of the Dutch and Flemish epitexts, although the number of instances is very low (fifteen articles in total), which demonstrates that a “literary” train of thinking rarely is applied. The following of Lindgren’s works are explicitly named as meeting a high literary standard (in chronological order):

Table 9 Literary arguments

<i>Happy Times in Noisy Village</i>	(LG 6 1966, 46)
<i>Pippi Longstocking</i>	(LG 6 1966, 46); (News 98 1998, 27)
<i>Seacrow Island</i>	(IDIL 15 1966 n.p.)
<i>Master Detective Bergson Lives Dangerously</i>	(JBG 21 1976, 74)
The Emil-trilogy	(LG 42 1986, 470)
<i>My Nightingale is Singing</i>	(JBG 43 1986, 26)
[<i>Astrid Lindgren’s Collected Stories</i>]	(News 69 1992, n.p.)
<i>Mio, my Son</i>	(JBG 79 1999, 112)
<i>Ronia, the Robber’s Daughter</i>	(JBG 79 1999, 112); (News 98 1998, 27); (News 480 2002, 11)
<i>The Brothers Lionheart</i>	(JBG 79 1999, 112); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 630 2006, 15)

It is safe to say that the impact of this type of argument in the canonisation processes at large is negligible. Nevertheless, however small the number of relevant epitexts may be, the fact that all of them appeared well into the latter half of the twentieth century or even in the noughties corroborates Anne de Vries’ finding that literary-aesthetic arguments did not catch on until circa 1970 (cf. section 3.2).

Lektuurgids critic Leo Roelants is an ardent supporter of Lindgren’s books. In a 1966 review of reissues of the second of the Pippi Longstocking- and Noisy Village-books, he wonders, “Need I stress that in each case, Astrid Lindgren’s work is magnificent and of the finest quality?” (LG 6 1966, 46)²¹² As a result, he feels that he is left with no choice but to urge parents and librarians to buy the books (LG 6 1966, 46). Critic and docent of

²¹¹ “Haar werk bereikte een oplage van 12 miljoen exemplaren, ze ontving behalve de Zweedse Staatsprijs bijna alle nationale en internationale prijzen voor het hoge literaire gehalte van haar boeken” (News 29 1974, n.p.).

²¹² “Moeten we nog onderstrepen, dat het bij Astrid Lindgren telkens prachtwerk van allereerste orde betreft?” (LG 6 1966, 46)

children's literature Annemie Leysen, who was shown to be an advocate of literariness (cf. section 4.1), is likewise eager to point out that books such as *Pippi Longstocking* and *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* “set the trend for well-written children's literature to prevail” (News 98 1998, 27).²¹³ In the assessment of *Seacrow Island* in the IDIL-guide, multi-layeredness and literary quality stand out as important features. The book is described a “poetic depiction [...] of landscape, animal world and family life. A rich book, which rises far above mediocrity both aesthetically and pedagogically speaking” (IDIL 15 1966 n.p.).²¹⁴ Furthermore, [*Astrid Lindgren's Collected Stories*] as a whole is found to be a “splendid sample sheet of Lindgren's narrative skill” (News 69 1992, n.p.).²¹⁵ The narratives in the collection are deemed to be “genuine' in artistic terms”, and “finger exercises” for her more complex novels (News 69 1992, n.p.).²¹⁶ Critic Odile Jansen highlights the intricacy of *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* and *The Brothers Lionheart* and argues, “It probably is no coincidence that precisely these books, which Lindgren wrote late in her life, are invested with a sense of depth and power of expression which exceeds her other works” (News 480 2002, 11).²¹⁷ Lies Schut equally emphasises the “[b]eauty and reflection” which are essential to *The Brothers Lionheart* (News 630 2006, 15).²¹⁸

A striking instance in which literariness is the overriding factor in the evaluation of Astrid Lindgren's works is a piece entitled “Children's Literature's Grand Lady”,²¹⁹ in which the writer and her works are introduced to the readers of *Jeugdboekengids*. It attests to the acclaim she gained, seeing that Lindgren wins praise with its writer, Fred de Swert, because she displays all of the distinctive features of what he deems to be a skilful author:

If [one] presupposes the following characteristics as being essential to a ‘good novelist’: observation, memory, and personal impact (to which language, composition, style, etc. are intrinsic), it truly is striking that precisely all of the above elements can be found in the literary achievements of this Swedish lady. (JBG 18 1974, n.p.)²²⁰

²¹³ “Met *Pipi [sic] Langkous* en *Ronja de Roversdochter* gin[g] [...] aandacht voor goedgeschreven jeugdliteratuur de hoofdtoon voeren” (News 98 1998, 27).

²¹⁴ “poëtische schildering [...] van landschap, dierenwereld en gezinsleven. Een rijk boek, dat zowel esthetisch [sic] als pedagogisch ver uitsteekt boven de middelmaat” (IDIL 15 1966 n.p.).

²¹⁵ “een schitterende staalkaart van Lindgrens vertelkunst” (News 69 1992, n.p.).

²¹⁶ “‘waarachtig’ in artistieke zin”, “vingeroefening” (News 69 1992, n.p.).

²¹⁷ “Het is vast niet toevallig dat juist deze twee laatste boeken die Lindgren op latere leeftijd schreef, een diepgang en zeggingskracht hebben die haar andere werk overstijgt” (News 480 2002, 11).

²¹⁸ “Schoonheid en reflectie” (News 630 2006, 15).

²¹⁹ “Grand Lady van het Kinderboek” (JBG 18 1974, n.p.).

²²⁰ “Wanneer [men] als kenmerken van een ‘goed romancier’ vooropstelt: observatie, herinnering, en de persoonlijke impact (waaraan inherent: taal, compositie, stijl, etc...) dan is het toch wel opmerkelijk dat net deze elementen terug te vinden zijn in de literaire prestaties van deze Zweedse dame” (JBG 18 1974, n.p.).

Although de Swert is somewhat critical of certain aspects of Lindgren's style of writing, he conveys his judgment on her oeuvre as a whole, founded in literary arguments, in an outspokenly lyrical fashion. He marvels,

It doesn't happen very often that a children's book in its entirety makes me 'nervous'. Each time I open a book of Lindgren's – despite how often I get annoyed at the style which sometimes is immature and/or awkward– excitement is in me. I more or less find myself again. And then there are the sparse memories, the compelling élan, the tangible atmosphere, even though you realise that all of it is mere imagination. Epic children's literature. As far as I am concerned, one needn't look any further. (JBG 18 1974, 148)²²¹

Pippi Longstocking is one of Lindgren's titles which the Dutch-language reviewers value most highly, due to its innovativity and ambiguity, among many other things. The multiple layers are precisely what is missing from the 1998 musical adaptation, at least in critic Roel Verniers' view. He sees *Pippi Longstocking* as a multi-interpretable story, one "which one as a reader can 'colour in' at one's own pace" (News 106 1998, 11).²²² Clearly, Verniers considers this a strength of the book, seeing that he deplores the loss of stratification. He states, "Not much is left of that in the [musical] version[,] where everybody colours strictly within the lines, and with very mediocre pencils, at that" (News 106 1998, 11).²²³ Flemish author Bart Moeyaert also appreciates the ambiguous nature of the Pippi-trilogy, and in a similar vein criticises J.K. Rowling for having left no room for the reader to interpret the stories (News 115 2000, 36), or, for neglecting to include "telling gaps", to use a term coined by Wolfgang Iser. Moeyaert slates Rowling for producing "fast food"-literature, "in which it doesn't matter whether the food is cold or hot" (News 115 2000, 36).²²⁴ "J.K. Rowling", he writes, "has made sure that nobody needs to leaf backward, at no time. Nothing remains vague" (News 115 2000, 36).²²⁵ To his mind, the fact that her Potter-books are obvious and hence one-dimensional makes them inferior to Lindgren's Pippi-stories. Dutch children's writer Thijs Goverde does like the Harry Potter-series, but is equally convinced that they do not compare to Astrid

²²¹ "Het gebeurt niet zo vaak dat een kinderboek me in zijn totaliteit 'nervuus' maakt. Telkens ik een Lindgren-boek in handen neem – en hoe vaak ik me ook erger aan de soms wel eens onvolwassen en/of onbeholpen stijl – is de onrust in me. Vind ik mezelf enigszins terug. En zijn er de spaarzame herinneringen, is er dat meeslepende élan, die tastbare sfeer, terwijl je mooi weet dat er gefantaseerd wordt. Epiek in het kinderboek. Verder hoeft je, wat mij betreft, niet meer te zoeken" (JBG 18 1974, n.p.).

²²² "dat je als lezer in eigen tempo kunt inkleuren" (News 106 1998, 11).

²²³ "In de versie van Tabas&Co blijft daar niet veel van over. Daar kleurt iedereen strikt binnen de lijntjes en dan nog met een zeer middelmatige kwaliteit van potloden" (News 106 1998, 11).

²²⁴ "De snelle hap, waarbij het eigenlijk niet uitmaakt of die hap koud of warm is" (News 115 2000, 36).

²²⁵ "J.K. Rowling heeft er [...] voor gezorgd dat niemand hoeft terug te bladeren, op geen enkel moment. Niets blijft vaag" (News 115 2000, 36).

Lindgren's books. Author Mies Bouhuys agreed that the latter are "of a much higher literary level" (News 477 2002, 1).²²⁶

In this connection, too, Lindgren's stance against routine work and literary trends is relevant. Four of the reviewers point out Lindgren's role as an advocate of high-quality children's books,²²⁷ and at her death in 2002, a representative of publishing house Ploegsma relates that Lindgren and her literary agent in Holland made a pact to promote the "better" kind of children's books (News 151 2002, 11). However, this does not mean that Lindgren repudiated the idea of children reading lower-quality books. Based on her argumentation in favour of having children read as much as possible, she comes off as adhering to a stepping stone theory, in which simple or formulaic books are seen as useful and valuable tools in expanding children's reading experience. As is indicated in a review of *Samuel August in Sevedstorp and Hanna in Hult*, Lindgren in this booklet "ardently points out the importance of a high quantity of reading, and that it doesn't matter whether those books are good or bad. Just as long as the child is reading" (News 42 1978, n.p.).²²⁸

In the same book, Lindgren moreover condemns the general tendency to question the significance and quality of children's books in themselves. An anonymous critic quotes the passage from *Samuel August in Sevedstorp and Hanna in Hult* where Lindgren expresses disapproval as regards disparaging attitudes towards children's literature. She averts the derisive question what a good children's book should look like by stating, "It should be good." (News 44 1978, n.p.)²²⁹ The full stop signals that she deems all further explanation to be superfluous. This furthermore becomes clear when Lindgren goes on to note, "How come no one ever asks 'What should a book of poetry, or a novel, look like?'" (News 44 1978, n.p.)²³⁰ In the unnamed reviewer's interpretation, Lindgren is shown to find it odd that adult novelists and poets are trusted to draw on their own souls when creating literature, whereas children's book authors are not (News 44 1978, n.p.).

Astrid Lindgren in fact shares this attitude with Dutch author Guus Kuijer, the 2012 ALMA winner. In his acceptance speech at the ALMA award ceremony, Kuijer admits to having fallen into the trap described by Lindgren in *Samuel August in Sevedstorp and Hanna in Hult*, namely to question the value of a book as a *children's* book (News 363 2012, L9-10). Remarkably, this occurred precisely when he, as a grown-up, read *The Brothers Lionheart*:

²²⁶ "Astrid Lindgren is van een veel hoger literair niveau" (News 477 2002, 1).

²²⁷ (LG 26 1978, 480); (News 115 2000, 36); (News 487 2002, 28); (News 573 2004, 1).

²²⁸ "heel heftig, wijst Astrid op het belang van het veel lezen, waarbij het er niet toe doet, of die boeken nu slecht of goed zijn. Als het kind maar leest" (News 42 1978, n.p.)

²²⁹ "Het moet goed zijn." (News 44 1978, n.p.) Cf. (En nu 15 1983, 157).

²³⁰ "Hoe komt het dat nooit iemand vraagt 'Hoe moet een gedichtenbundel, een roman, eruit zien?'" (News 44 1978, n.p.) Cf. (En nu 15 1983, 157).

The book enthralled me from beginning to end, but although it was presented as a children's book, I discovered – much to my surprise – that I didn't fully understand it. I fell into the trap that educators and critics all over the world have fallen into a thousand times. I wondered whether *The Brothers Lionheart* was a children's book, and my answer was no. (News 363 2012, L9-10)²³¹

What led him to this false conclusion, Kuijer argues, was that his interpretation was informed by a restricted, schoolish notion of “understanding”, one which excludes children's books from serious consideration. However, he continues, “if one reflects on it, one discovers that this viewpoint isn't tenable. Do we fully understand Dostoyevski? Is there, in fact, any significant work of art that we understand through and through?” (News 363 2012, L10)²³² This remark of Kuijer's again underlines the importance of density and stratification as a feature of great, canonical art. Yet, Kuijer finds that the indefensible judgment as to the value of children's books is far from uncommon:

When I started writing children's books myself, I kept being confronted with the same mistake. ‘This children's book is a good book, but it isn't suitable for children.’ Just how often do children's book writers hear that comment? Imagine that someone were to write, ‘This book of Dostoyevski's is a good book, but not suitable for humans.’ In uttering such a view, a critic would make an utter fool of themselves. How come it is acceptable to say such a thing about children's books? (News 363 2012, L10)²³³

Kuijer deems the criterion of “suitability” to be a fallacy, and in doing so, proves to align himself with Astrid Lindgren's position in the matter.²³⁴

²³¹ “Het boek boeide me van het begin tot het eind, maar hoewel het werd gebracht als een jeugdboek, ontdekte ik tot mijn verbazing dat ik het niet helemaal begreep. Toen trapte ik in de val waarin recensenten en pedagogen over de hele wereld duizenden malen zijn ingetrapt. Ik stelde me de vraag of [*D*]e *Gebroeders Leeuwenhart* een jeugdboek was en mijn antwoord was nee.” (News 363 2012, L9-10)

²³² “wanneer je even doordenkt, ontdek je dat dat standpunt niet houdbaar is. Begrijpen wij Dostojevski wel helemaal? Bestaat er eigenlijk wel enig kunstwerk van belang dat wij door en door begrijpen?” (News 363 2012, L10)

²³³ “Toen ik zelf kinderboeken begon te publiceren, werd ik keer op keer geconfronteerd met dezelfde vergissing. ‘Dit kinderboek is een goed boek, maar niet geschikt voor kinderen.’ Hoe vaak krijgen kinderboekenschrijvers dat niet te horen? Stel je voor dat iemand zou schrijven: ‘Dit boek van Dostojevski is een goed boek, maar niet geschikt voor mensen.’ Met een dergelijke opinie zou een criticus zich onsterfelijk belachelijk maken. Hoe komt het dat je zoiets wel van kinderboeken kunt zeggen?” (News 363 2012, L10)

²³⁴ Kuijer furthermore maintains that no art form can reach all people, “Not even Astrid Lindgren's books or Ingmar Bergman's films. Which is why art in contemporary society is called ‘elitist’” [Er is geen enkele kunstvorm die alle mensen bereikt. Dat doen zelfs de boeken van Astrid Lindgren of de films van Ingmar Bergman niet. Daarom wordt kunst in deze populistische tijd ‘elitair’ genoemd] (News 363 2012, L10). This does not seem like a problem to Kuijer, who is convinced that this issue can be circumvented by adopting the right attitude: “The matter is this: everything is elitist, even walking, riding a bike, or riding a car, when one isn't

Some ten years earlier, literary columnist Bob Frommé had made similar observations in *Het Parool*. Frommé states that due to the lack in harsh criticism against it “[t]he children’s book is in a weird position” (News 442 2000, 2).²³⁵ He ponders the difference between the fields of children’s and adult literature, and concludes,

An adult book that displeases a critic is pierced with a rapier or chopped to bits with an axe. [...] But when faced with a children’s book writer, the critic all of a sudden gets pudgy hands. In this pink realm, no blows can be distributed. (News 442 2000, 2)²³⁶

Frommé’s decision to consider the matter was prompted by utterances of popular Dutch children’s book writer Carry Slee, who a few days earlier had lashed out at critics who discard her work because they deem it to be lacking in literariness (News 440 2000, 6). Tellingly, Slee argues that many authors which later on became established were despised by critics initially. She holds that “Astrid Lindgren and Annie M.G. Schmidt also were reviled at first”, and sees further similarities between herself and the aforementioned canonised writers: “Just like me, they weren’t weighed down by it. I am successful” (News 440 2000, 6).²³⁷ In admitting to “being in league” with her readers,²³⁸ Carry Slee proves to be writing in an outer-directed fashion, which according to Reinbert Tabbert is not preferable (cf. section 4.1). Frommé seems to find Slee’s opinion repugnant. Slee’s self-proclaimed understanding of what themes suit and appeal to children appears presumptuous to him, and the fact that she compares herself with Lindgren and Schmidt is “beyond presumptuous, that is chutzpah. [Because] Slee’s best work doesn’t come near Schmidt’s and Lindgren’s worst work” (News 442 2000, 2).²³⁹ I do not wish to judge the quality of Carry Slee’s writing myself, but this polemic does illustrate just how important an author Astrid Lindgren is. Moreover, it demonstrates that in the Dutch-language field of children’s literature, her work has come to be associated with a high standard to a very large extent (cf. section 5.4).

willing to learn. Therefore, let us procure quality and not strive for popularity” [De kwestie is deze: alles, zelfs lopen, fietsen of autorijden, is elitair wanneer je niet tot leren bereid bent. Laten we daarom proberen kwaliteit te leveren en niet te streven naar populariteit] (News 363 2012, L10). To a curious and inquisitive reader, Kuijjer seems to suggest, all literature is valuable, and nothing is out of one’s reach.

²³⁵ “Met het kinderboek is het vreemd gesteld” (News 442 2000, 2).

²³⁶ “Een boek voor volwassenen dat een criticus mishaaft, wordt met een rapier doorboord of met een bijl in mootjes gehakt. [...] Maar de criticus heeft ineens poezelige handjes als hij een kinderboekenschrijver tegenover zich heeft. In deze roze wereld mogen geen klappen vallen.” (News 442 2000, 2)

²³⁷ “Astrid Lindgren en Annie M.G. Schmidt werden in eerste instantie ook verguisd”, “Zij gingen er net als ik niet onder gebukt. Ik heb succes” (News 440 2000, 6).

²³⁸ “Ik heul met de lezer” (News 452 2000, 8).

²³⁹ “niet eens aanmatigend, dat is een gotspe. Sles beste werk kan niet tippen aan het slechtste werk van Schmidt en Lindgren” (News 442 2000, 2).

(4) Identification

The process of identification in reading is deemed to be valuable by theorists of children's literature. It also resonates with the Dutch and Flemish gatekeepers, although to a limited extent (seventeen examples). It turns out that many of these critics see identification as enhanced by the use of so-called universal topics, a relatable child image, and a straightforward address of the child reader. These three elements of support are so closely entwined with the umbrella effect of identification that the discussions presented in this and the following three sections should be seen as complimentary.

Astrid Lindgren's ability to invoke identification in her readers is a strength in her writing which is widely identified in the corpus discourse.²⁴⁰ For example, *Smidge and Karlsson on the Roof* is found to "catch one off guard and is narrated in such a direct way that one, unnoticed and naturally, relinquishes one's own, familiar reality in favour of mister Karlssons's fantastical existence" (News 5 1959, n.p.).²⁴¹ In connection with *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, which first appeared in 1981, *Leids Dagblad* critic Margot Klompmaker points out that "the manner in which emotions and feelings (love-friendship-hate) are depicted and experienced deeply involves the reader in the events" (News 58 1981, n.p.).²⁴² Dutch children's book author Thijs Goverde feels that the aspect of identification comes to the fore most prominently in *The Brothers Lionheart*. In his view, Jonathan and Scotty are evolving towards archetypal stature, seeing that all children who read about them want to be them (News 477 2002, 1). Adding to this monumental status, Goverde continues to state, is that "as a writer you want to make books of this kind" (News 477 2002, 1).²⁴³ Some of the critics who discuss this topic suggest that this faculty of Lindgren's ensues from her strong sense of empathy (cf. infra).

Overall, the element of identification is discussed most frequently in connection with the Pippi Longstocking-trilogy (nine out of seventeen instances).²⁴⁴ It is a commonly held opinion that children wish that they could be like Pippi: independent, naughty, and powerful (both literally and figuratively speaking). She is a vision from children's dreams, including Tommy and Annika's, children who would rather eat sweets than take cod liver oil (News 393 1998, 3). What is particularly engaging about the Pippi-character, Dana

²⁴⁰ E.g. (JBG 40 1983, 15); (JBG 65 1991, 262).

²⁴¹ "is zo onmiddellijk en overrompend verteld, dat men zijn eigen en gekende werkelijkheid ongemerkt en als vanzelfsprekend prijs geeft voor het fantastische bestaan van meneer Karlsson" (News 5 1959, n.p.).

²⁴² "de manier, waarop emoties en gevoelens (liefde-vriendschap-haat) [...] worden uitgebeeld en beleefd, betreft de lezer heel nauw bij het gebeuren" (News 58 1981, n.p.).

²⁴³ "als schrijver wil je zulke boeken maken" (News 477 2002, 1).

²⁴⁴ (JBG 45 1986, 78); (JBG 56 1990, 19); (News 95 1997, n.p.); (News 385 1998, 13); (News 393 1998, 3); (News 403 1998, 7); (News 432 2000, 3); (News 476 2002, 10); (News 795 2010, 33).

Linssen explains, is the fact that “her brutality and maladjusted behaviour appeals to the imagination of pre-school children who have just started to discover just how wonderful it is to outsmart adults” (News 385 1998, 13).²⁴⁵ Nell Westerlaken tellingly concludes, “Deep down we all longed to be a heroine like Pippi” (News 476 2002, 10).²⁴⁶

An important detail, though, is that it is not Pippi Longstocking but rather Tommy and Annika who offer the best subject positions for identification.²⁴⁷ Pippi herself, appealing as her conduct may be, proves not to be an entirely viable object of identification. Even though young readers may long to be like Pippi, there is a barrier between them. What separates Pippi from average children is the fact that she can get by without adults, and live by herself. To some readers, Hanneke de Klerck and Nell Westerlaken suggest, this may seem frightening.²⁴⁸ As distant as Pippi might seem, Tommy and Annika, appear more accessible, by contrast. As Westerlaken adds,

However, we weren't Pippi, we were her neighbours Tommy and Annika. Obediently, we put on the stupid clothes our mothers bought for us, we did the nasty, tedious sums the teacher gave us, and we allowed ourselves to be put to bed on time at night. (News 476 2002, 10)²⁴⁹

Hanneke de Klerck and Dana Linssens moreover highlight the reassuring effect of the distance put between the protagonist and the child readers who are prone to identify with Tommy and Annika. Linssens points out that this identification is induced by the fact that child readers may feel closer to the “partly glorifying, partly reproving” attitude of the neighbour’s children, whereas Pippi’s excessive behaviour may be going too far for them (News 385 1998, 13).²⁵⁰ De Klerck concludes that the soothing distance is pivotal in terms of the books’ impact on its readers: “What is pleasant about this book is that it allows you [as a child reader; svdb] to safely observe, together with children who resemble yourself, a child that embodies a fantasy shared by all children: power” (News 95 1997, n.p.) (cf. section 3.1.).²⁵¹

²⁴⁵ “haar brutaliteit en onaangepaste gedrag spreken tot de verbeelding van kleuters die net ontdekken hoe heerlijk het is om volwassenen te slim af te zijn” (News 385 1998, 13). Compare (News 403 1998, 7).

²⁴⁶ “Een heldin als Pippi wilden we diep in ons hart allemaal wel zijn” (News 476 2002, 10).

²⁴⁷ (JBG 45 1986, 78); (JBG 56 1990, 19); (News 95 1997, n.p.); (News 385 1998, 13); (News 476 2002, 10); (News 723 2008, 12).

²⁴⁸ (News 95 1997, n.p.); (News 476 2002, 10).

²⁴⁹ “Maar we waren Pippi niet, we waren haar buurkinderen Tommy en Anika. We trokken braaf de stomme kleren aan die onze moeders voor ons kochten, we maakten de vervelende rotsommen die de meester ons opgaf en we lieten ons ‘s avonds op tijd in bed stoppen” (News 476 2002, 10).

²⁵⁰ “half verheerlijkt, half terechtwijzend” (News 385 1998, 13).

²⁵¹ “Het fijne van het boek is dat je veilig kunt meekijken met kinderen die op jou lijken naar een kind dat de wensdroom van alle kinderen belichaamt: macht” (News 95 1997, n.p.).

Broadly speaking, Astrid Lindgren is found to invoke identification in her readers in an outer-directed fashion, because she feels for and ties in with themes generally favoured by children. In this context, Reinbert Tabbert in his inquiry into which elements account for the success of canonical children's books (1994) draws upon dichotomous twin concepts coined by American sociologist David Riesman. The notions Tabbert borrows are those of "inner-directed" and "outer-directed" personalities, which he then applies to children's literary texts. Tabbert sees as "inner-directed" [innengeleitet] children's books which originate from an author's "inner, in-depth considerations of their own childhood which they haven't come to terms with" (Tabbert 1994, 46).²⁵² The "outer-directed" [aussengeleitet] type of children's books, on the other hand, arises from "an orientation towards that which many children like" (Tabbert 1994, 46).²⁵³ He adds that it is precisely this frame of mind which results in formulaic, unoriginal subject matter and language use which is repudiated by critics (cf. section 4.1 (2)). By contrast, inner-directedness is a property which he associates with high literary quality.

Tellingly, Tabbert considers Astrid Lindgren to be one of the main exponents of the inner-directed kind of literature. He reports that Lindgren once stated that she attributes her appeal to child readers to the fact that she remembers exceedingly well what it was like being a child (Tabbert 1994, 46). As a counterexample, Tabbert names Enid Blyton, whom he classes as an "outer-directed" writer. By way of illustrating what drives her as an author for children, he quotes her stating, "I love them and understand them, and know exactly what they want" (Tabbert 1994, 46). Tabbert is fairly critical of this stance, uttering that the author-reader-connection in this case could be described as flattery (Tabbert 1994, 47). Conversely, he is utterly appreciative of "inner-directed" writing, which is less adult-centred. Again referring to Lindgren to substantiate his point, he writes,

Characteristic of the [inner-directed] type [...] is that here, the positional distinction [or, asymmetry; svdb] comes into play in the bifurcation of the author's adult-'I' and child-'I'. A Lindgren-book is attractive for a child not because of its orientation on Lindgren's adult-'I', but through the concordance with her child-'I' [...] (Tabbert 1994, 47)²⁵⁴

²⁵² "inneren Auseinandersetzungen mit der eigenen unbewältigten Kindheit" (Tabbert 1994, 46).

²⁵³ "einer Orientierung an dem, was viele Kinder gerne hätten" (Tabbert 1994, 46).

²⁵⁴ "Entscheidend für den [innengeleiteten] Typus [...] [ist] daß hier der positionelle Unterschied in der Doppelung von Erwachsenen- und Kind-Ich des Autors ins Spiel kommt. Ein Lindgren-Buch ist für ein Kind nicht attraktiv durch die Zuwendung von Lindgrens Erwachsenen-Ich, sondern durch den Einklang [...] mit ihrem Kind-Ich" (Tabbert 1994, 47).

Tabbert clearly prefers inner-directedness, however, the type of identification brought about by outer-directed writing in Astrid Lindgren's work is much appreciated by the Dutch-language critics. This shows for instance in the following remark made by a journalist dealing with *Rasmus and the Tramp* at its first appearance: "This sympathy for the youthful protagonist implies a greater appreciation for book and author than many lines of writing exemplify" (News 6 1960, n.p.).²⁵⁵ So, in this unnamed critic's view, the fact that a reader empathises with Astrid Lindgren's characters is a far more important form of recognition of her craftsmanship than the opinions voiced by critics.

(5) Universal Themes

Transgressing the Boundaries of Time and Place

Torben Weinreich points out that the essence criterion [væsenskriterium] of canonical works comprises universality [almengyldighed] (cf. section 1.4), an aspect which mostly has to do with the themes which are tackled in these works. Astrid Lindgren once stated, "Mankind is preoccupied with two great things: death and love; these catch the interest of all ages".²⁵⁶ Universal, archetypal themes of this kind in effect turn out to appeal to the Dutch and Flemish reviewers to a fairly large degree (46 instances in total). The critics find that many of the topics Lindgren dealt with indeed could mean something to all kinds of readers. One contributor states, for instance, "Any child will find something to its taste" in her works (JBG 52 1988, 302).²⁵⁷

An aspect which suits many children's taste is the fact that Pippi Longstocking embodies a desire for power, which was discussed elaborately in section 3.1. As that desire is generally believed to be shared by all children, this property in fact renders the character universal (News 432 2000, 3). Likewise, the characteristic trait of nonconformity is claimed to appeal not only to children, but also to adults. Pondering on the world-wide, continued success of the Pippi-figure, Herman Eetgerink notes, "There are scholars who claim that inside every woman there is a little Pippi who doesn't want to become just like all the other dull people but who just wants to remain her own self" (News 475 2002, n.p.).²⁵⁸ He suggests that Pippi's universality exceeds her young readership and comprises even grown-up readers. The assumption that children's preferences as regards subject

²⁵⁵ "Die betrokkenheid bij de jeugdige hoofdpersoon houdt een grotere waardering voor boek en auteur in, dan vele regels duidelijk maken" (News 6 1960, n.p.).

²⁵⁶ <<http://astridlindgren.se/en/more-facts/quotes>> [Accessed 31 October 2014].

²⁵⁷ "Er zal voor elk kind allicht wat naar zijn gading in zitten" (JBG 52 1988, 302).

²⁵⁸ "Er zijn geleerden, die zeggen dat er in elke vrouw nog een kleine Pippi zit die niet hetzelfde wil worden als al die andere saaie mensen maar gewoon zichzelf wil blijven" (News 475 2002, n.p.).

matter are fairly stable from a longitudinal point of view is taken into consideration by Olaf Tempelman. In an essay on national stereotypes in children's literature, Tempelman argues that children's books produced in different nations may diverge greatly, whereas the audience of child readers generally is fairly homogeneous. He states, "Children of all time have a lot in common, children's books less so" (News 738 2008, 26).²⁵⁹ In his view, children's books are utterly suitable as vehicles for symbols of national identity, but he makes the important point that some works tend to transgress this particular function: "The brothers Grimm, Roald Dahl and Astrid Lindgren surpass junctures and cultural zones; lesser gods, especially those with a didactic mindset, rarely manage to do so" (News 738 2008, 26).²⁶⁰ This contrast between canonical authors, capable of going beyond national and even temporal borders, with "lesser gods" who are unable to achieve that, clearly underlines the importance of universality as a factor in the acquisition of canonical status. A trait of Lindgren's writing which can further the transgression of temporal and geographical boundaries is the fact that the settings are almost unvariably indeterminable in terms of time or place (LzL 9 2010, 43). Renowned literary critic Pieter Steinz regards Pippi Longstocking as a prime example of a character with the potential to go beyond such borders. He sees her as one of the several European cultural landmarks which are the ties that bind the continent together (News 866 2012, n.p.).²⁶¹ Pippi deserves this title, Steinz argues, due to the fact that she conquered all of Europe and the world and in her capacity of rebel became an example for enterprising children (News 866 2012, n.p.).

Some corpus contributors try to pinpoint the essential components of the universality of Lindgren's books. In their view, part of the explanation is that it emanates from the presence of "big" emotions, which are identified as red threads running through Lindgren's oeuvre. Noticeable examples are human flaws and problems in general.²⁶² Loneliness and abandonment, in particular coupled with small, weak boy characters,²⁶³ also feature prominently in Lindgren's works. The latter motifs are in effect often intertwined with the fundamentally human topic of death (or, the transcendence of life),²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹ "Kinderen van alle tijden hebben veel gemeen, kinderboeken minder" (News 738 2008, 26).

²⁶⁰ "De gebroeders Grimm, Roald Dahl en Astrid Lindgren stijgen uit boven tijdsgewrichten en cultuurzones; mindere goden, vooral didactisch ingestelde, lukt dat vaak niet" (News 738 2008, 26).

²⁶¹ Other such uniting phenomena included in Steinz' list are a.o. the Sistine Chapel, fashion house Chanel, Plato, Romanticism, Leo Tolstoy, the Magnum photographers, De Stijl, Johann Sebastian Bach, Frédéric Chopin, Federico Fellini, ABBA, Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, and Gregorian song (News 866 2012, n.p.).

²⁶² (News 5 1959, n.p.); (News 44 1978, n.p.); (News 401 1998, 17); (News 468 2001, 26).

²⁶³ (En nu 33 2003, 214); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (JBG 93 2003, 332). Cf. *infra*.

²⁶⁴ (En nu 33 2003, 213-214); (JBG 20 1975, 164); (JBG 102 2007, 330); (LzL 8 2007, 91-92); (News 289 2008, 26); (News 703 2007, 16); (News 704 2007, 25).

and the possibility of an afterlife,²⁶⁵ for instance in the mythical world of Nangijala (News 848 2012, 9). In connection with the weighty subjects tackled in *The Brothers Lionheart*, an unnamed critic reviewing a Dutch musical adaptation of the book indicates that he or she finds the moral of the story rather heavy. To this reviewer, the narrative's motto, viz. the idea to avoid being guided by fear in order not to be deemed a rag, comes across as quite bombastic (News 704 2007, 25). This is, however, the only negative interpretation of this well-known plea for courage.

Indeed, as far more corpus contributors point out, the heaviness of the topic of death is generally counterbalanced by a strong sense of hope and comfort.²⁶⁶ Illustrative in this respect is the role of the protagonist in *Mio, my Son*, who engages in a battle with evil personified and is claimed to be able to resurrect the dead (JBG 83 2001, 220), which is strongly reminiscent of a messiah-motif. Furthermore, the gloom brought about by battles between good and evil, so common in Lindgren's writing,²⁶⁷ is counterbalanced by the hopeful atmosphere inherent in her narrative universe. This is found to spring from the consistent prevalence of good forces, which always seem to triumph in such confrontations with evil.²⁶⁸ On a similar positive note, the quest for happiness is also thematised (News 468 2001, 26).

Equally topical as the antithesis between good and bad are a number of binary oppositions, such as faith and betrayal (or, the importance of friendship and ensuing rivalry),²⁶⁹ and courage and fear.²⁷⁰ The use of twofold concepts is in fact deemed to be distinctive of much of Lindgren's writing. Karin van Camp remarks, "The subject matter of dualistic worlds of poverty and fortune, of good and evil, of earth and paradise Lindgren used in quite many of her short stories and later on also in some novels" (JBG 93 2003, 332).²⁷¹ Speaking of duality, the plot in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* is typified as a universal *Romeo-and-Juliet*-script.²⁷² Moreover, protagonists Ronia and Birk are likened to Maria and Tony, the main characters in the popular musical *West Side Story*, which is based on a similar script.²⁷³ In *Ronia*, the ageless and rich concept of a family feud is also

²⁶⁵ (En nu 33 2003, 213-214); (LzL 8 2007, 91-92); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 848 2012, 9).

²⁶⁶ (En nu 33 2003, 213-214); (JBG 52 1988, 302); (JBG 85 2002, 91); (JBG 102 2007, 330); (LzL 8 2007, 91-92).

²⁶⁷ (News 468 2001, 26); (News 704 2007, 25).

²⁶⁸ (JBG 44 1986, 48); (JBG 77 1997, 337); (JBG 79 1999, 112); (JBG 83 2001, 220); (JBG 93 2003, 332); (LzL 5 2002).

²⁶⁹ (En nu 23 1994, 35); (JBG 52 1988, 302); (JBG 65 1991, 262); (JBG 79 1999, 112); (News 704 2007, 25).

²⁷⁰ (News 704 2007, 25); (News 747 2008, 18).

²⁷¹ "[De] thematiek van dualistische werelden van armoede en geluk, van goed en kwaad, van de aarde en het paradijs heeft Lindgren gebruikt in heel wat van haar kortverhalen en later ook in enkele romans" (JBG 93 2003, 332).

²⁷² (En nu 14 1982, 132); (En nu 23 1994, 35); (News 83 1994, n.p.); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 545 2003, 43); (News 659 2007, 9).

²⁷³ (News 610 2006, 8); (News 659 2007, 9). Cf. section 5.4.

foregrounded (News 659 2007, 9). Significantly, the novel inspired a twenty-first-century secondary school in Amsterdam to attempt to resolve “clan”-related issues amongst its pupils by staging a play based on the book (News 610 2006, 8). To Karin van Camp’s mind, the *Ronia*-narrative essentially deals with “Love”, her use of the capital L indicating that she sees it as one of the so-called big emotions (JBG 79 1999, 112).²⁷⁴ However, she describes the use of the theme as dual as well, seeing that the novel likewise considers “how hard it is to maintain the sincerity of this love, because hatred resides within the same heart and perpetually lies in wait...” (JBG 79 1999, 112)²⁷⁵

A similar conception of the human mind as twofold and torn underlies a particularly eye-catching article in *NRC Handelsblad*, in which Dutch philosopher Michiel Leezenberg compares the Pippi Longstocking-books to Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899) (cf. section 3.2). Leezenberg takes the idea of universality quite far and argues that Conrad’s Africa and Lindgren’s South Sea Island appear to be “archetypes, which express primal images and primary emotions” (News 732 2008, 4-5).²⁷⁶ In his view, both settings meet the fundamentally human longing to be free, as well as epitomizing the barbaric and the primitive, that which we are most afraid of. He observes,

On the one hand, they represent our [...] dreams about a temporary liberation from the straitjacket of the civilised and orderly world, in which we are served, admired, and worshiped by an indigenous people that is close to nature. But at the same time they vent our deepest fears – such as the fear of the unknown [...] – and our fantasies about human cruelty. (News 732 2008, 4-5)²⁷⁷

Recognising the playful Pippi inside oneself may not be particularly challenging, but Leezenberg wonders whether the average reader would be equally keen to acknowledge one’s potential internal Mister Kurtz. As a result, he concludes that at the core of both works is “an exploration of the unknown and the barbaric within oneself: the journey to the heart of darkness is simultaneously an attempt to ally the dark in one’s own heart” (News 732 2008, 4-5).²⁷⁸ In any case, this kind of rationale implies that Leezenberg thinks highly of Lindgren’s Pippi Longstocking-series.

²⁷⁴ “Liefde” (JBG 79 1999, 112).

²⁷⁵ “hoe moeilijk het is deze liefde oprecht te houden, omdat de haat in hetzelfde hart woont en steeds op de loer ligt...” (JBG 79 1999, 112)

²⁷⁶ “archetypen, die oerbeelden en primaire emoties uitdrukken” (News 732 2008, 4-5).

²⁷⁷ “Enerzijds verbeelden ze onze [dromen] over een tijdelijke bevrijding uit het keurslijf van de beschaafde en geregelde wereld, waarin we worden bediend, bewonderd en aanbeden door een nog dicht bij de natuur staande lokale bevolking. Maar tegelijkertijd geven ze uiting aan onze diepste angsten – zoals de angst voor het onbekende [...] – en aan onze fantasieën over menselijke wreedheid” (News 732 2008, 4-5).

²⁷⁸ “een verkenning van het onbekende en barbaarse in jezelf: de reis naar het hart der duisternis is ook een poging om het duister in je eigen hart te bezweren” (News 732 2008, 4-5).

Overall, the main conclusion to be connected to Lindgren's tendency to draw upon general themes is that it renders her stories recognisable,²⁷⁹ a feature of great importance with regard to identification. The quality of recognisability in turn lends to the works authenticity,²⁸⁰ and, most importantly, timelessness.²⁸¹ As Karin van Camp argues, the universal themes in Astrid Lindgren's books (in the case of this specific review the picture book *Lotta's Bike*) are recognisable and ageless to such an extent that they will be relevant and agreeable for many subsequent generations (JBG 91 2003, 239). This, of course, is one of the essential pillars of canonisation: the transmission of books to future groups of readers. Seen from this angle, it seems that due to its "generalisability" the future of Astrid Lindgren's oeuvre is guaranteed.

Representing Swedish National Identity

What is remarkable is that Astrid Lindgren's writing, at the same time as being experienced as universal, contradictorily enough is perceived as quintessentially Swedish. When Lindgren passed away, Swedish children's literature scholar Lena Kåreland stated, "there aren't many authors who are so deeply rooted in Swedish tradition as Astrid Lindgren" (Kåreland 2002, n.p.).²⁸² The result of this embedment is that "[m]uch of what she wrote has acquired a strong symbolic value and for most people appears to be an incarnation of the typically Swedish" (Kåreland 2002, n.p.).²⁸³ Evidence of such a perspective on her works is also present in the corpus, albeit less prominent than arguments pertaining to the universal streak of Lindgren's oeuvre. For one, Hans Beerekamp in *NRC Handelsblad* observes that the author was an admirer of old traditions and etiquette (News 415 1998, 17). German illustrator Ole Könnecke, who spent his early childhood in Sweden, considers a joyful and relaxed attitude to be typical of Swedish culture and explicitly links this trait with Lindgren's oeuvre, which he sees as a perfect

²⁷⁹ (En nu 39 2007, 353); (JBG 42 1985, n.p.); (JBG 53 1988, 334); (JBG 55 1989, 331); (JBG 66 1991, 134); (JBG 69 1992, 238); (JBG 86 2002, 147); (JBG 91 2003, 239).

²⁸⁰ (JBG 86 2002, 147); (JBG 104 2010, 297).

²⁸¹ (En nu 39 2007, 353); (JBG 78 2007, 396); (JBG 91 2003, 239); (JBG 98 2007, 229-230); (JBG 104 2010, 297).

²⁸² "det [är] inte många författare som har en så fast förankring i svensk tradition som Astrid Lindgren" (Kåreland 2002, n.p.).

²⁸³ "Mycket av det hon skrivit har fått ett starkt symbolvärde och framstår för de flesta som en inkarnation av det typiskt svenska" (Kåreland 2002, n.p.). Astrid Surmatz corroborates this finding: "in Sweden, Lindgren was seen in the first place in her role as advocate of national and traditional culture" [in Schweden [wurde] [Lindgren] vor allem in ihrer Rolle als Verteidigerin ländlicher und traditioneller Kultur betrachtet] (Surmatz 2005, 3).

embodiment of it. Hence, he concludes, “Those marvellous books of Astrid Lindgren [...] couldn’t have been created anywhere else than in Sweden” (News 749 2009, 13).²⁸⁴

A slightly more common idea is that Astrid Lindgren’s works contributed to the notion of Sweden as Edenic. In particular, the books set in the rural environment in Småland where Lindgren grew up bear out the image of Sweden as pastoral. Especially in scenes taking place in the summertime, her stories depict the Swedish countryside as “an idyllic world full of simplicity, love, and amiable humour” (News 728 2008, 6).²⁸⁵ For children, the critics hold, these narratives are particularly appealing as they make Swedish summers appear adventurous, heavenly, and a site where children are allowed to be children.²⁸⁶ Illustrator Marit Törnqvist points out that the depiction of such rural sites is tightly interwoven with the way in which Swedish traditions are experienced, informed by the change of the seasons (News 87 1996, n.p.). As a result, Törnqvist argues, Lindgren’s oeuvre has become the cork of Swedish cultural identity (News 87 1996, n.p.). Remarkably, *NRC Handelsblad* critic Judith Eiselin is the only corpus contributor to point out the contrast between universality and Swedishness in Lindgren’s works. She notes, “No matter how typically Swedish the landscapes and figures in Lindgren’s books may be, they are at the same time universal” (News 471 2002, 1).²⁸⁷ No further traces of awareness of this duality were detected in the corpus.

In connection with Lindgren’s affirmative and emancipatory child image, author Wally de Doncker points out that it is no coincidence that a strong, liberated character such as Pippi Longstocking came into being in Sweden. He sees this as typical of Swedish society, where women are highly emancipated (News 148 2002, 10). He brings to mind the fact that Lindgren was a single mother by choice and contends that, in this respect, Lindgren was one of the best ambassadors for Sweden imaginable (News 148 2002, 10). His conclusion is that “Sweden is Lindgren” (News 148 2002, 10).²⁸⁸ In an essay on Stieg Larsson’s Millennium-trilogy, *NRC Handelsblad* critic Stine Jensen likewise points out women’s far-reaching emancipation, but she furthermore draws attention to the downside of Swedish progressiveness. Her thesis is that since there are hardly any social battles left to wage [as for instance during the Modern Breakthrough in the late 1800s; svdb], Swedish literature and art have taken a despondent turn. In her view, this explains the preponderance of themes such as “dark family secrets, perverted male/female

²⁸⁴ “Die fantastische boeken van Astrid Lindgren [...] hadden nergens anders kunnen ontstaan dan in Zweden” (News 749 2009, 13).

²⁸⁵ “een idyllische wereld vol eenvoud, liefde en goedge humor” (News 728 2008, 6). Compare (LG 47 1992, 491).

²⁸⁶ (JBG 82 2000, 337); (JBG 94 2004, 92).

²⁸⁷ “Hoe typisch Zweeds de landschappen en de figuren uit Lindgrens boeken ook zijn, ze zijn tegelijkertijd universeel” (News 471 2002, 1).

²⁸⁸ “Zweden is Lindgren” (News 148 2002, 10).

relations, and psychological agonies” (News 734 2008, 4-5).²⁸⁹ Jensen sees Lindgren’s strong female characters as an exponent of this evolution, as opposed to more general interpretations in an optimistic, empowering, and progressive light. She writes,

The Swedish soul is for instance shaped by Astrid Lindgren’s unruly boyish girls, and by the work of August Strindberg, who is reputed to be a misogynist. The Swedes require complicated and enormously emancipated characters, which are equally deep as the Swedish lakes. (News 734 2008, 4-5)²⁹⁰

Although the rationale is somewhat divergent from other argumentations presented here, the outcome is the same, viz. that Astrid Lindgren’s works somehow embody quintessentially Swedish traits.

(6) Image of Childhood

The third chapter demonstrated that Astrid Lindgren’s image of children played a substantial role in the canonisation of her works in Flanders and the Netherlands. In the current section, I will deal with some similar elements which likewise enhanced the processes of canonisation and which can be identified as further essential components of her conception of childhood. This type of argumentation is discernible in 124 of the corpus articles, making this a very significant criterium indeed. In this case, these aspects are found to speak not so much to the adult gatekeepers as to the child readers.

Authentic Slices of Life

The appreciation uttered by the Dutch-language reviewers with respect to genuineness is fairly unanimous; they agree that Lindgren knows very well how to include her readers in her stories due to the relatable image of childhood. Underpinning this assessment is, firstly, the light preference the critics display for lifelike scenes, characters and settings. They lean towards such realistic narrative components because they believe them to tie in with children’s environment and experiences (21 instances),²⁹¹ which results in the

²⁸⁹ “duistere familiegeheimen, geperverteerde man-vrouwverhoudingen en de kwellingen van de psyche” (News 734 2008, 4-5).

²⁹⁰ “De Zweedse ziel wordt bijvoorbeeld gevormd door de tegendraadse jongensachtige meisjes van Astrid Lindgren, en het werk van August Strindberg, die te boek staat als vrouwenhater. De Zweed heeft gecompliceerde en gigantisch geëmancipeerde karakters nodig, die zo diep zijn als de Zweedse meren” (News 734 2008, 4-5). Cf. section 5.4.

²⁹¹ (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (JBG 24 1979, 157); (JBG 40 1983, 15); (JBG 42 1985, n.p.); (JBG 50 1988, 88); (JBG 55 1989, 331); (JBG 60 1990, 242); (JBG 66 1991, 314); (JBG 69 1992, 238); (JBG 98 2007, 229); (LG 23 1976, 109); (LG 34 1980, 237);

stories' being recognisable for child readers (ten examples),²⁹² and easy to immerse oneself into (JBG 65 1991, 262). Hence, the child reader's perspective seems to prevail, which also shows in the critics' approval of occurrences from children's daily life as a starting point for a story. Therefore, "entirely ordinary common-or-garden adventures" (News 25 1971, n.p.),²⁹³ which are endearing in all their smallness (News 36 1975, n.p.), are explicitly endorsed in the discourse on Lindgren's oeuvre. This applies to her realistic works in particular, including titles such as the Noisy Village-books, *The Children on Troublemaker Street*, *Mardie*, and *Seacrow Island*. Those books depict fairly uneventful childhoods, although the level of action in these stories is *just* about sufficient for them to remain interesting (News 530 2003, 28). Child-size humour – including hyperbole, slapstick and caricatures – furthermore adds to the books' appeal and facilitates identification,²⁹⁴ as does the fact that the readers' expectations are met, which creates a sense of safety in them (JBG 46 1987, 23-24).

To give some concrete examples, E. Vandeveld in *Jeugdboekengids* finds that the events related in *Mardie*, one of the quintessential works in the realistic genre, are very enthralling: "The text is filled with capricious whims and cordial characters, and consists of *real or plausible little occurrences*" (JBG 24 1979, 157; emphasis added).²⁹⁵ In fact, the contents are so gripping, that the book does not need illustrations in order to captivate its readers. Vandeveld is so convinced of its potential for success, that he advises librarians to "buy a spare copy at once, because the book will soon be read to pieces, buy three, because demand for it will be high" (JBG 24 1979, 157).²⁹⁶ Humour and realism are characteristics which make *Mardie* valuable to this critic. *Lekturgids*-reviewer Leo Roelants argues along similar lines when he recommends the detective stories featuring Bill Bergson: "Astrid Lindgren again grips all readers aged ten or above, with her narration that strikes as *real*, and her *true-to-life* representation of the attitude typical of children playing" (LG 23 1976, 109; emphasis added).²⁹⁷

(LzL 5 2002); (LzL 9 2010); (News 9 1965, n.p.); (News 10 1965, n.p.); (News 25 1971, n.p.); (News 36 1975, n.p.); (News 49 1980, n.p.); (News 483 2002, 28); (News 530 2003, 28).

²⁹² (JBG 32 1981, 30); (JBG 42 1985, n.p.); (JBG 46 1987, 23-24); (JBG 53 1988, 334); (JBG 55 1989, 331); (JBG 66 1991, 314); (JBG 69 1992, 238); (LG 23 1976, 109); (LG 48 1992, 583); (News 48 1980, n.p.).

²⁹³ "heel gewone huis- tuin-, en keukenavontuurtjes" (News 25 1971, n.p.).

²⁹⁴ (JBG 46 1987, 23-24), (JBG 47 1987, 27); (LG 49 1993, 437).

²⁹⁵ "De tekst zit vol luimige invallen, gulhartige personages, bestaat uit echte of echt-mogelijke voorvalletjes" (JBG 24 1979, 157).

²⁹⁶ "Bibliothecaris, koop meteen een reserve-exemplaar want het boek zal weldra stuk gelezen zijn, koop er drie want de navraag zal groot zijn" (JBG 24 1979, 157).

²⁹⁷ "Astrid Lindgren boeit weer alle lezers van 10 jaar af, met haar écht aandoend verhaal en haar rake weergave van de spelende-kinderen-mentaliteit" (LG 23 1976, 109).

What the critics seem to appreciate most is that Lindgren takes these small slices of life to another level. In this connection, Judith Eiselin remarks, “Astrid Lindgren managed to write about ordinary children living through ordinary adventures in such a way that it all of a sudden becomes very pleasant” (News 483 2002, 28).²⁹⁸ Indeed, her ability to “describe children’s day-to-day lives in a scintillating fashion” is seen as one of her major strengths (LG 34 1980, 237).²⁹⁹ The trivial becomes adventurous because it is treated in creative, unexpected ways. Hence, it sparks the protagonists’ imagination as well as the readers’ (LG 49 1993, 437).

In addition, the lifelike events are seen through children’s eyes and presented from their perspective, which makes it easier for the readers to identify with the stories in their entirety.³⁰⁰ Ria de Schepper in a review of *Lotta’s Bike* emphasises that the contents of the book tie in with pre-school children’s environment and that “[y]oung children easily identify with Lotta who, being the youngest of the bunch, braces herself and mostly tries to be the equal of the older children” (JBG 40 1983, 15).³⁰¹ Karin van Camp points out a discrepancy between critics’ and child readers’ to *Mardie*, and thus implies different interpretations of the childhood conception in different groups of readers. She writes, “Some critics have labelled the stories too soft”, an argument which she counters with assumptions about children’s responses to the book: “For the majority of children they nevertheless remain captivating because of the authenticity. The way in which the world is seen and discovered *through Mardie’s eyes*, is timeless and remains recognisable” (JBG 86 2002, 147; emphasis added).³⁰² To van Camp, relatability obviously is of primary importance.

This small group of Flemish and Dutch reviewers proves to value the realistic features of Astrid Lindgren’s works, because it invests them with recognisability and authenticity. In this particular respect, the mimetic outlook on literature, emphasising its referential function (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Bastiaansen-Harks 2005, 64-65), comes into play. As such, the reviewers’ position is aligned with the one held by famous Dutch children’s authors Theo Thijssen and Annie M.G. Schmidt. As Anne de Vries demonstrated (de Vries

²⁹⁸ “Astrid Lindgren kon schrijven over gewone kinderen met gewone avonturen, maar dan zo dat het ineens heel leuk wordt” (News 483 2002, 28).

²⁹⁹ “het alledaagse kinderleven op een sprankelende manier te beschrijven” (LG 34 1980, 237).

³⁰⁰ (JBG 40 1983, 15); (JBG 42 1985, n.p.); (LG 48 1992, 583); (JBG 86 2002, 147).

³⁰¹ “Jonge kinderen kunnen zich goed identificeren met Lotta, die zich als jongste schrap zet en zoveel mogelijk de gelijke van de ouderen wil zijn” (JBG 40 1983, 15).

³⁰² “Sommige critici hebben de verhalen als te soft bestempeld”; “Voor de meeste kinderen blijven ze echter boeiend omwille van de authenticiteit. De manier waarop door Madiekes ogen de wereld bekeken en ontdekt wordt, is tijdloos en blijft herkenbaar” (JBG 86 2002, 147).

1989, 71-72; 189), both of them were convinced that children's books above all else ought to be genuine, or, as Schmidt put it, "true and nowhere a lie".³⁰³

"The Land that Is Not" and the Magic-Realist Consolatory Script

*I long for the land that is not,
for all that is, I am weary of wanting.
(Södergran 2002, 156)³⁰⁴*

In the imagination of the majority of the Flemish and Dutch critics, there is an element which is of far greater prominence than the realistic dimension. It is an aspect which is situated at the opposite side of the spectrum in which the mimetic constitutes one extremity, namely the fantastic. In many of the cases in which fantasy and imagination are discussed in the studied epitexts these qualities are interrelated with Astrid Lindgren's refined psychological insight and a wish-fulfilling function of her works, as will be shown below. Firstly, though, I wish to point out that this matter in fact is entwined with the prominence of the possibility for the fulfilment of children's desire for power in many of Lindgren's works (discussed elaborately in section 3.1). Both disuccions are expressions of the perception of Lindgren as an author with strong empathetic abilities and a thorough understanding of children's psyche.

Upon the reissue of *Rasmus and the Tramp* in 1975, for example, a critic writing for Dutch daily *Leeuwarder Courant* draws attention to Astrid Lindgren's susceptibility to the multitude of possible emotional responses her stories might prompt in her child readers.³⁰⁵ The critic notes,

A child will feel intensely [Rasmus'] loneliness on his first night spent outside and it will enjoy the ever cheerful vagabond who takes care of Rasmus. The ending is precisely as a child at that age might wish it to be, but it far *surpasses* this because of the subtle approach to the child's emotions and desires, the humour, and the belief in honesty and love. (News 34 1975, n.p.; emphasis added)³⁰⁶

³⁰³ "waar en nergens gelogen". See <<http://www.annie-mg.com/default.asp?path=xy3mky3s>> [Accessed 27 November 2014].

³⁰⁴ "Jag längtar till landet som icke är, / ty allting som är, är jag trött att begära." (Södergran 2002, 156) English translation taken from <<http://zooney.wordpress.com/2013/01/06/sodergran-and-the-land-that-is-not/>> [Accessed 26 November 2014].

³⁰⁵ Compare (JBG 20 1975, 164), in which the critic remarks about *Brenda Brave*, "The young readers' emotions are targeted skilfully" [Er wordt met talent op de emoties van de lezertjes gemikt].

³⁰⁶ "Intens zal een kind [Rasmus'] eenzaamheid in de eerste nacht buiten, [sic] meebelevén en het zal genieten van de altijd vrolijke landloper die zich over Rasmus ontfermt. Het slot is helemaal zoals een kind zich op deze leeftijd zal wensen, zou kunnen zijn, maar door de subtiele benadering van kinderlijke gevoelens en wensen, de humor en het vertrouwen in eerlijkheid en liefde daar hoog boven uit rijst" (News 34 1975, n.p.).

What makes Lindgren a great writer, then, beside her praised compositional skills which take into account the child reader's expectations, is her ability to mix elements favoured by children such as humour and tension with an additional layer of psychological and moral meaning which the critics deem to be enriching for them.

Something which counts for many other of Lindgren's books as well is that the depiction of children's inner world is found to be a remarkable likeness, and that the characterisation is considered to be outstanding.³⁰⁷ Several comments throughout the corpus attest to the critics' appreciation for this feature of her books, which will work to enhance identification. Manifestations of Lindgren's sharp psychological insight range from the choice to tackle a taboo subject such as Scotty Lionheart's fear of dying,³⁰⁸ to consistently accurate portrayals of children's mentality, fantasies, and interests.³⁰⁹ For instance, the approach to the child characters' doings in *The Children on Troublemaker Street* is deemed to be virtuoso, and child readers will be able to empathise with the humorous elements in the book because they are "prompted by the clash between child and adult logic" (LG 17 1971, 280).³¹⁰ About protagonist Lotta, Fred de Swert remarks that she is a highly credible girl-next-door (JBG 18 1974, n.p.). Lindgren's depiction of Lotta, he claims, is "a comprehensive psychological portrait", which aptly captures "[t]he evasive, the egocentric, [and] self-identification", and therefore is frighteningly real (JBG 18 1974, n.p.).³¹¹ As regards *Brenda Brave*, Lindgren is praised for skilfully mimicking childlike trains of thought, the main components of which are "their assertiveness, their longing for security, their brave approach to situations that are dangerous beyond their awareness, [and] their pipe dreams" (LG 22 1975, 488).³¹² In addition, critics value the fact that her accurate depictions are not saccharine and go beyond nostalgia, which demonstrates that Lindgren is a highly skilled author (News 29 1974, n.p.). Indeed, the psychological depth of her writing is a factor which makes it rise above the mediocre crowd (News 58 1981, n.p.).

³⁰⁷ (IDIL 7 1960, n.p.); (IDIL 12 1965, n.p.); (JBG 24 1979, 157); (LG 1 1958, 188); (LG 2 1960, 183); (LG 5 1965, 52); (LG 17 1971, 280); (LG 22 1975, 488); (LG 46 1992, 203); (News 9 1965, n.p.); (News 29 1974, n.p.); (News 30 1974, n.p.); (News 58 1981, n.p.).

³⁰⁸ (News 30 1974, n.p.); (News 217 2004, 22).

³⁰⁹ (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (LG 1 1958, 188); (LG 17 1971, 280); (LG 22 1975, 488); (LG 46 1992, 203); (News 73 1992, n.p.).

³¹⁰ "die ontspringt aan de confrontatie van kinder- en volwassenenlogica" (LG 17 1971, 280).

³¹¹ "ten voete [sic] uit een psychologisch portret"; "Het evasieve, het egocentrische, zelfidentifikatie"; "zo echt dat het eigenlijk beklemmend overkomt" (JBG 18 1974, n.p.).

³¹² "hun geldingsdrang, in hun zucht naar geborgenheid, in hun gedurfde aanpak van situaties waarvan zij het gevaar niet opmerken, in hun wensdromen" (LG 22 1975, 488).

The accommodation of children's hopes and dreams is foregrounded,³¹³ and Lindgren is praised for aiming at her child readers' emotions (JBG 20 1975, 164), and for "flawlessly attempting to fathom the child's heart" (JBG 102 2007, 330).³¹⁴ In many cases in which difficult situations are depicted, children's own coping strategies are mirrored, as a result of which the child reader is affected on many different levels (En nu 33 2003, 213-214). One specific, noticeable manifestation of this susceptibility to young children's problems and fears, and in particular the ensuing hopes and wishes, is the recurrence of an utterly hopeful motif: the notion that comfort can be found in imagination and sometimes even in a secondary world.³¹⁵ This motif features most prominently in what we could call Lindgren's magic-realist stories. It can be found in the early novel *Mio, my Son* (published in Swedish in 1954), in short narratives such as "The Red Bird" and "In the Land of the Twilight" written midway through the century, and by extension in *The Brothers Lionheart*, first published in 1973. What these stories have in common is a similar basic plot, which is driven by the protagonist's longing to evade the dire circumstances in which he or she lives, causing him or her pain, sadness, or loss which is difficult to deal with. Characteristic for Lindgren's way of advancing the plot from that initial undesirable situation is that the main character is provided with an escape route to a dream world not seldom introduced by a magical character or imaginary friend of some sort. The protagonist finds comfort in this fantastic diversion, hence the narrative even offers readers the possibility to draw hope from it. As such, throughout Lindgren's body of work a standard plot line emerges, which can be seen as a literary equivalent to a cognitive "script".³¹⁶ Such a mental script, cognitive narratologist David Herman explains, is "a knowledge representation in terms of which an expected sequence of events is stored in the memory" (Herman 2002, 10). We use such scripts in our lives to structure and facilitate our everyday activities, but the notion can also be transposed to narratological theory, serving as tools to recognise recurrent story lines.

³¹³ (En nu 14 1982, 132); (En nu 24 1995, 29); (En nu 33 2003, 213); (JBG 17 1974, 9); (JBG 32 1981, 30); (JBG 52 1988, 302); (JBG 58 1990, 238); (JBG 80 2000, 64); (JBG 83 2001, 219).

³¹⁴ "Ze weet perfect de fantasie van een kind te vangen" (JBG 102 2007, 330).

³¹⁵ (JBG 16 1974, 3); (JBG 52 1988, 302); (JBG 58 1990, 238); (JBG 88 2003, 59); (JBG 102 2007, 330); (JBG 103 2010, 205); (LG 0 1956, 220); (LG 13 1971, 51); (LG 18 1972, 174); (LG 32 1980, 329); (LG 33 1980, 282); (News 20 1969, n.p.); (News 72 1992, n.p.); (News 84 1994, n.p.); (News 95 1997, n.p.).

³¹⁶ Studies drawing on this approach are a.o. Mallan, Kerry and Clare Bradford (eds), *Contemporary children's literature and film. Engaging with theory*. Houndmills/Basingstoke/Hampshire/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011; and Stephens, John & Sylvie Geerts, "Mishmash, Conceptual Blending and Adaptation in Contemporary Children's Literature Written in Dutch and English." In *Never-ending Stories. Adaptation, Canonisation and Ideology in Children's Literature*, by Sylvie Geerts & Sara Van den Bossche (eds), *Never-ending Stories. Adaptation, Canonisation and Ideology in Children's Literature*, 193-214. Ghent: Academia Press, 2014.

Where Astrid Lindgren's oeuvre is concerned, the wish-fulfilling "seeking comfort through fantasy"-plot can be identified as an overwhelmingly prominent script. "The Land that Is Not", the secondary world in "In the Land of the Twilight" and a clear allusion to Edith Södergran's eponymous poem (JBG 88 2003, 59),³¹⁷ is among the corpus critics considered to be the prime example of this script. Its plot is echoed in many of the short stories included in [*Sunnanäng*], which are likewise foregrounded as clear manifestations of this motif. In a *Lektuurgids* review, Leo Roelants argues that the strength of those fairy tales is the idea that the child protagonists in the goodness and beauty of the dream world can find compensation for material and moral poverty in their actual existence (LG 18 1972, 174). As Ria de Schepper in *Jeugdboekengids* points out, Lindgren's short stories centre around children's fantasies and fondest wishes, which are met precisely by means of these fantastic alternative realities (JBG 52 1988, 302).

By way of conclusion, let me rephrase Chris Bulcaen's comments on this narrative script in his review of the picture book edition of "In the Land of the Twilight" (JBG 102 2007, 330-331). Bulcaen is in awe of Lindgren's ability to capture children's imagination with a deceptively simple, escapist bed time story. It is its poised, understated quality which makes the narrative all the more effective, Bulcaen argues, "This peaceful, well-balanced narrative serves to comfort, but also prepares children for possible worse scenarios. Very subtly, Lindgren weaves references to death throughout the story" (JBG 102 2007, 330).³¹⁸ Moreover, Chris Bulcaen sees a correspondence between Lindgren's mild-hearted stories about death and ALMA-winner Kitty Crowther's [*Little Death's Visit*] [*La Visite de Petite Mort*] (2004). He characterises Crowther's picture book as "a remarkable fantasy of comfort", and presumes that Astrid Lindgren would approve of it (JBG 103 2010, 205).³¹⁹ The combination of consoling, magical yet down-to-earth, realist elements is indeed what makes this type of narrative valuable in the reviewers' opinion.

Astrid Lindgren's Noisy Village Childhood and the Equilibrium between Freedom and Security

Astrid Lindgren's capacity to be congenial to children's experiences and emotions is deemed to be remarkable. The studied epitexts reveal a possible explanation for why the author easily projects herself into their lives. The most common explication is that when

³¹⁷ The same poem is also referred to in *Mio, my Son*.

³¹⁸ "Dit rustige, uitgebalanceerde, lichtjes melancholische verhaal werkt als troost, maar bereidt het kind ook voor op mogelijk ergere zaken. Heel subtiel weeft Lindgren door het verhaal enkele verwijzingen naar de dood" (JBG 102 2007, 330).

³¹⁹ "een opmerkelijke troostfantasie, waarvan je vermoedt dat Astrid Lindgren, die ook zo'n zachtmoedige verhalen schreef over de dood, er zich wel zou kunnen in vinden." (JBG 103 2010, 205)

writing Lindgren drew on her own childhood as a source of inspiration,³²⁰ which proves to have been a goldmine (News 142 2002, 10). At several occasions reviewers refer to Lindgren's own description of these childhood years as having been spent in a perfect equilibrium between security and freedom.³²¹ She considered this playful yet secure state of being to be pivotal in the formation of her own character, as Vanessa Joosen indicates (News 274 2007, 40).³²² Against the backdrop of the relative freedom Lindgren enjoyed during her childhood, it is not difficult to understand how she came to design her writing in line with a similar world view. She strongly believed that the circumstances in which she grew up are how things should be for every child,³²³ and therefore foregrounded the safety a family can offer in her works.³²⁴ In her opinion, the ideal context for raising children is an atmosphere in which they are “[g]ranted the liberty and at the same time the safety to discover [themselves] and the world”, as Flemish children's book illustrator and author Gerda Dendooven phrases it (News 258 2007, 50).³²⁵ The fruitful combination of liberty and safety characteristic of Lindgren's largely mimetic books, written mainly between the mid-1940s and -60s, corresponds with the outlook on children's literature held and expressed by her Dutch counterpart Annie M.G. Schmidt in the same period (cf. supra).³²⁶ In retrospect, both authors are praised for making the groundbreaking choice to allow children to be themselves (News 176 2002, 12), which largely means misbehaving instead of being nice (News 400 1998, 13).

The values defining Astrid Lindgren's upbringing sure enough determined her writing career, seeing that Lindgren is one of those authors who feel that they can solely write about things they know or have lived through themselves, as Wilfried Eetezonne stresses

³²⁰ (En nu 20 1992, 118); (En nu 28 1999, 114); (En nu 39 2007); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (JBG 21 1976, 74); (JBG 74 1995, 92); (JBG 77 1997, 337); (JBG 81 2000, 291); (JBG 84 2002, 90); (JBG 89 2003, 202); (JBG 104 2010); (LzL 9 2010); (News 68 1992, n.p.); (News 72 1992, n.p.); (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 78 1993, n.p.); (News 85 1995, n.p.); (News 92 1997, 16); (News 94 1997, n.p.); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 258 2007, 50); (News 274 2007, 40); (News 393 1998, 3); (News 476 2002, 10); (News 479 2002, 1); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 484 2002, 55); (News 593 2005, 22).

³²¹ (IDIL 6 1959, n.p.); (En nu 39 2007, 355); (JBG 104 2010, 297); (LG 14 1971, 51-52); (LG 21 1975, 85); (LzL 9 2010, 40); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 274 2007, 40); (News 487 2002, 28); (News 650 2007, 24); (News 681 2007, 10-11).

³²² “According to Lindgren, the safety and liberty which [Astrid Lindgren's parents; svdb] allowed their children are essential to the person and writer she became” [De veiligheid en vrijheid die deze twee mensen hun kinderen gunden, zijn volgens Lindgren essentieel voor de persoon en schrijfster die ze geworden is] (News 274 2007, 40). On the crucial support given by her parents, see also (LG 26 1978, 480).

³²³ (JBG 63 1991, 113); (LG 21 1975, 85); (LG 26 1978, 480); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 481 2002, 6); (News 681 2007, 10-11).

³²⁴ (En nu 39 2007, 353); (JBG 63 1991); (JBG 78 2007, 396); (JBG 98 2007, 229); (JBG 104 2010, 297); (News 205 2003, 13).

³²⁵ “Geef een kind de vrijheid en tegelijk de veiligheid om zichzelf en de wereld te ontdekken” (News 258 2007, 50).

³²⁶ Compare (JBG 79 1999, 112).

in his obituary for *De Morgen* (News 138 2002, 15). Indeed, one could assume that to maintain a close connection to children could be an essential maxim in Lindgren's views about writing for children (LG 26 1978, 480).³²⁷ It has furthermore become generally accepted that Lindgren felt great affinity for her characters and that some of them closely resembled her, and that there is, in other words, much of the writer in her books.³²⁸ The most speaking likeness is that between Lindgren and Pippi Longstocking. Dutch writer Rita Verschuur remarks that the author and the character both unite in themselves some antipodal characteristics, such as gaiety, altruism, and boundless generosity on the one hand and a longing for peace and quiet on the other (News 520 2002, 13).

At times, the corpus contributors use the sense of freedom and security deriving from Lindgren's own upbringing to explain the idyllic, unspoiled quality of her depiction of these carefree, mildly adventurous children's lives.³²⁹ In fact, the fact that Lindgren goes back to happy, safe childhood memories and experiences and incorporates these in her works prompts the telling analogy of Lindgren's own early days as a "Noisy Village childhood".³³⁰ Furthermore, the critics find that her drawing on such memories renders many of her stories with an attractive, warm and "cosy" quality.³³¹ Other reviewers draw attention to the nostalgic feeling the stories are invested with as a result of their being rooted in positive childhood memories. They indicate that Lindgren repeatedly claimed that she wrote out of nostalgia for the child that she herself once was. Lindgren herself foregrounded Emil, in particular, as the child of her nostalgia (News 481 2002, 6).³³² Moreover, she is often quoted stating that she wrote for the child within her,³³³ and that

³²⁷ "Slotsom zou kunnen zijn: schrijfster b en of word je door dicht bij het kind te staan" (LG 26 1978, 480).

³²⁸ (News 69 1992, n.p.); (News 143 2002, 10); (News 164 2002, 7); (News 168 2002, n.p.); (News 169 2002, n.p.); (News 401 1998, 17).

³²⁹ (En nu 39 2007, 353); (JBG 89 2003, 202); (JBG 98 2007, 229); (JBG 104 2010, 297); (LzL 5 2002); (LzL 8 2007, 92); (News 205 2003, 13); (News 393 1998, 3); (News 484 2002, 55); (News 506 2002, 53); (News 542 2003, R9).

³³⁰ "Bolderburen-kindertijd" (JBG 77 1997, 337). See also (En nu 2 1974, 9); (LzL 9 2010, 39); (News 95 1997, n.p.).

³³¹ (IDIL 13 1965, n.p.); (IDIL 18 1966, n.p.); (IDIL 20 1966, n.p.); (JBG 36 1982, 95); (JBG 50 1988, 88); (JBG 64 1991, 171); (JBG 67 1991, 355).

³³² Maarten Moll furthermore points out that Emil is special to Astrid Lindgren because he embodies not so much her own as her father's childhood memories. With reference to Lindgren's biographer Margareta Str mstedt, Moll argues that this intimate relationship perhaps was even more important for her writing than her happy childhood, seeing that Str mstedt observes that many characters are "daddy's boys/girls" or that they are desperately seeking a father figure (News 481 2002, 6). This is, however, not a common interpretation among the Dutch-language reviewers.

³³³ E.g. "And so I write the way I myself would like the book to be - if I were a child. I write for the child within me." (Quotation from Astrid Lindgren taken from an interview with newspaper *Expressen* on 6 December 1970, published on the website <<http://www.astridlindgren.se/en/more-facts/quotes/child>> [Accessed 6 January 2015].)

she hoped that other children would like what she wrote as well.³³⁴ In this connection, Judith Eiselin remarks that she as an adult had a remarkable ability to imagine what she would have liked to read as a child, and that this was exactly what she ended up writing down (News 471 2002, 1). One could even argue, as did Rita Verschuur, that Lindgren remained eternally young (News 144 2002, 15). This, too, explains the strong sense of empathy and ability to bring psychological depth to her works, both trademarks of Lindgren's. As Leo Roelants puts it, Astrid Lindgren "understands the art of being a child among children" (LG 10 1969, 50).³³⁵

Pieter Steinz points out that Lindgren's body of work aptly negates the adage that an *unhappy* childhood is an author's goldmine (News 484 2002, 55).³³⁶ In the entire corpus, the abundant carefree atmosphere (in particular in the Noisy Village narratives) is criticised mildly only once (News 393 1998, 3). The negative comments are immediately rebutted with Lindgren's own counter-argument, showing the author wondering what could be so wrong about a wonderful childhood (News 393 1998, 3). Furthermore, I should add that in two cases the outspokenly positive view on Astrid Lindgren's youth is modified. *Trouw* critic Odile Jansen (News 480 2002, 11) and Rita Verschuur (News 681 2007, 10-11) point at a rather difficult period in the author's life, the gloominess of which offset the impression that her entire childhood was all roses. They mention how unhappy Lindgren was after she had gotten pregnant unexpectedly at the age of nineteen. In order to circumvent the scandal of choosing to raise a child on her own, she decided to leave her home town, leave her son in the care of a Danish foster family and went to live in Stockholm all by herself, in poverty and in solitude. Both Jansen and Verschuur highlight the contrasting effect of the trying first years in Stockholm compared with the happiness and freedom from care typifying her early childhood. They argue that the former period made the latter appear all the more idyllic. Furthermore, Jansen sees the pain and sorrow incorporated in many of Lindgren's narratives as exponents of this period in her life, and as elements which render her work more poetic and make it reach deeper. To her mind, the fact that these components counterbalance the idyllic and adventurous traits constitutes the core of Lindgren's greatness (News 480 2002, 11).

Overall, Astrid Lindgren's body of work exhibits both inner-directed and outer-directed traits (cf. supra).³³⁷ The perception of Lindgren as an eternally young person writing about and for the carefree child within herself corresponds with inner-directedness, whereas evidence discernible in her works of her keen eye for children's wishes and desires and her readiness to accommodate these point at outer-directedness.

³³⁴ (JBG 84 2002, 90); (JBG 85 2002, 91); (JBG 104 2010, 297); (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 95 1997, n.p.); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 393 1998, 3); (News 471 2002, 1).

³³⁵ "de kunst verstaat kind met de kinderen te zijn" (LG 10 1969, 50).

³³⁶ Compare (News 866 2012, n.p.); (News 788 2010, n.p.).

³³⁷ Compare also (News 393 1998, 3).

Reinbert Tabbert (1994) insists that he only considers the former type of writing to be desirable. Although Tabbert praises Lindgren's books for being outspokenly inner-directed in focus, the opposite trend in her works cannot be ignored. In effect, the outer-directed, wish-fulfilling element is deemed to be of great importance in different types of her books, including both the absurd, nonconformist, and antiauthoritarian narratives of Karlsson-on-the-Roof and Pippi Longstocking and the dreamlike, fairy-tale stories of Mio and the brothers Lionheart (cf. section 3.1). Seeing that outer-directedness proves to have played a predominant role in the Dutch-language reception of Lindgren's books, this case seems to refute Reinbert Tabbert's strong repudiation of it.

(7) Narrative Address and Crosswriting

Narrative address turns out to be quite prominent in the Dutch and Flemish gatekeepers' appraisal of Astrid Lindgren's works, a finding which is in keeping with the review of the theoretical literature on the subject presented in section 4.1. The argumentations presented in the previous three sections in fact culminate in considerations of narrative address (31 articles). The way in which this specific characteristic is approached by actors connected to journals as opposed to daily newspapers differs slightly, the two groups of gatekeepers will therefore be dealt with separately in what follows.

Some of the *journal* contributors refer to Lindgren's ability to involve her child readers in her narrations,³³⁸ a quality for which possible explanations are the fact that she wrote in a language which children understand (En nu 39 2007, 353), along with her ability to adopt a child's perspective,³³⁹ and to mimic children's multifaceted interests.³⁴⁰ In one journal article, Astrid Surmatz is quoted explaining that Lindgren seems to be able, in a sense, to make eye contact with her child readers and to address them at their own level (En nu 39 2007, 355). Others point to the incorporation of individual happy childhood memories as decisive in this matter. In any case, there seems to be some kind of agreement on the fact that Lindgren manages to effectively address young readers. In fact, a large number of the specific characteristics of her writing which were discussed above contribute to the successful narrative address in her books. In particular, the features of suspense, humour, identification, universality, and childhood image are found to be significant factors in this connection.

All in all, though, the emphasis in the journal articles is not so much on *dual* as on *single* address, as opposed to the stress placed on the former in the theoretical discourse. In two thirds of the articles in this specific segment of the corpus, Lindgren is referred to as an

³³⁸ (En nu 18 1986, 212); (JBG 100 2007, 330).

³³⁹ (JBG 61 1990, 353); (JBG 86 2002, 147).

³⁴⁰ (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (JBG 39 1982, 170).

author with an excellent eye for the child readers' needs and preferences, and it is stressed that she put forward children as her favoured addressees herself (cf. section 3.1). However, five of the reviewers do take into account the adult mediators. Those critics draw attention to the diversified readership of Lindgren's works, encompassing adults and children alike.³⁴¹ Furthermore, they suggest that children and adults interpret literature differently (JBG 74 1995, 92), or point out that many of her stories contain "a deeper layer, by means of which they succeed to appeal to adults as well" (En nu 39 2007, 355).³⁴² These are exceptions, though, which leads to the conclusion that, despite the theoretical focus on this factor, dual address does not seem to be decisive in the journal contributors' evaluation of Astrid Lindgren's oeuvre.

In the *newspaper* articles, too, Lindgren's appeal to her young readers is frequently mentioned as a vital component of her success: she is appreciated for addressing them in a direct fashion, without being either patronising or corny.³⁴³ *The Children on Troublemaker Street*, for instance, is found to be "[a] cosy book, devoid of all pretention, in which children will easily recognise themselves" (News 48 1980, n.p.; emphasis added).³⁴⁴ Here, too, narrative address is coupled with Lindgren's respect for children and her intention to write solely for them.³⁴⁵ The author is shown to commend children's imaginative powers and to look upon them as readers who can create miracles, her preferred kind of readership (News 471 2002, 1).³⁴⁶ It should be noted that Helene Ehriander (2012) argues that this view of Lindgren's foregrounds children's role as co-creators of literary works. Ehriander elaborates Lindgren's conception of child readers as possessing the enviable capacity to perform wonders while they are reading (Ehriander 2012, 100). With reference to Aidan Chambers' influential work *Booktalk*,³⁴⁷ she explains that their share in reading therefore is seen as filling the telling gaps first identified by Wolfgang Iser (Ehriander 2012, 100-101).

The critics also find Lindgren to have had a good nose for what children appreciate in a book in general. In *Rasmus and the Tramp*, for example, the combination of adventure and tension is identified as crucial. It is considered to be "[a] gem in which children of nine years and above will find *anything they could possibly wish for*. [...] because it contains

³⁴¹ (IDIL 3 1958, n.p.); (LG 15 1971, 118); (LzL 6 2004, 118).

³⁴² "Tegelijkertijd hebben al die boeken een laag die dieper gaat, waardoor ze ook volwassenen nog aanspreken." (En nu 39 2007, 355)

³⁴³ (News 530 2003, 28); (News 471 2002, 1).

³⁴⁴ "Een gezellig boek, zonder pretentie, waarin kinderen zich gemakkelijk terugvinden" (News 48 1980, n.p.).

³⁴⁵ (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 393 1998, 3); (News 471 2002, 1).

³⁴⁶ In an interview with [*The School Library*] [*Skolbiblioteket*] (1958: 3), Astrid Lindgren stated, "I want to write for a readership that can create miracles. Children create miracles when they read. That's why children need books". See <<http://www.astridlindgren.se/en/more-facts/quotes/child>> [Accessed 6 January 2015].

³⁴⁷ Chambers, Aidan, *Booktalk. Occasional Writing on Literature & Children*. London: Bodley Head, 1985.

a wonderful adventure involving crooks, in which the careful measurement of the quantities of suspense, fear and relief stands out” (News 34 1975, n.p.; emphasis added).³⁴⁸ Ed Franck in a more recent newspaper article likewise applauds Lindgren for her sense of her audience’s expectations and finds that *Rasmus and the Tramp* strikes home entirely: “An orphan boy longing for warmth, a lonely vagabond with an abundance of love to give... that is all it takes for young readers to capitulate. Lindgren knew that more than anybody else” (News 218 2004, 11).³⁴⁹ However, Franck is also critical of Lindgren’s use of truisms and commonplace story elements. He writes,

The story offers an idyllic trip in which emotions and adventure are combined by means of the necessary clichés and in a rather obvious fashion. According to contemporary standards, the book is lacking in subtlety, but the young readers will undoubtedly fall into the homey trap that Lindgren laid with her deft pen. (News 218 2004, 11)³⁵⁰

This portrayal of Astrid Lindgren as a shrewd author misleading her readers is an exception, though. On the whole, Lindgren’s narratives are found to illustrate that she “understands children’s inner world more than anybody else” (News 70 1992, n.p.),³⁵¹ an observation which neatly summarises the overall evaluation of this strong side of hers in the newspaper articles.

In addition to the attention paid to the way in which child readers are addressed by Lindgren, a small number of newspaper journalists (eight in all) devote attention to the kind of dual address aimed at adult and child readers simultaneously.³⁵² The concept of

³⁴⁸ “Een juweel van een kinderboek waarin kinderen vanaf 9 jaar alles kunnen vinden wat ze maar wensen. [...] want er komt een pracht avontuur met boeven in voor, waarin vooral de zorgvuldige dosering van spanning, angst en opluchting opvalt” (News 34 1975, n.p.).

³⁴⁹ “Een weesjongetje dat naar warmte verlangt, een eenzame landloper die liefde te geef heeft... meer heb je niet nodig om jonge lezers voor de bijl te laten gaan. Dat wist Lindgren als geen ander” (News 218 2004, 11).

³⁵⁰ “Het verhaal serveert een idyllische tocht waarin gevoelens en avontuur met de nodige clichés en op een nogal doorzichtige wijze worden gecombineerd. Volgens hedendaagse normen mist het boek subtiliteit, maar de jonge lezers zullen met open ogen in de knusse val trappen die Lindgren met vaardige pen voor hen heeft opgezet” (News 218 2004, 11).

³⁵¹ “als geen ander de binnenwereld van kinderen begrijpt” (News 70 1992, n.p.). Another narrative which exemplifies how Lindgren sides with children and takes into account their particular wants and needs is picture book *Tomte Tummetot*. As one reviewer puts it, “the book [provides] the little ones on a verbal level with the peaceful feeling that Tummetot is watching over them and on a visual level it amply invites them to fantasise” [het boek [geeft] de kleintjes in woord het vredige gevoel, dat Tummetot over hen waakt en in beeld nodigt het volop uit tot fantaseren] (News 55 1980, n.p.). A similar evaluation is expressed by D. Mariën-De Leenheer in a review of the book for *Lektuurgids*: “An atmosphere of peace and quiet is what this wonderful picturebook emanates” [Een sfeer van rust en kalmte straalt dit prachtige prentenboek uit] (LG 35 1981, 376).

³⁵² (News 5 1959, n.p.); (News 17 1967, n.p.); (News 18 1967, n.p.); (News 59 1981, n.p.); (News 148 2002, 10); (News 246 2006, n.p.); (News 247 2006, 150); (News 248 2006, 150).

“crosswriting”, does not appear to be deemed applicable, yet it is acknowledged that Lindgren equally shows consideration for the grown-ups’ needs, which differ from the children’s. In reaction to her death, Flemish children’s book author Wally de Doncker indicates that he is impressed with her sensitivity and ability to involve both layers of her audience in her writing. He states, “I love Lindgren because of how she appealed to children’s feelings and charmed adults” (News 148 2002, 10).³⁵³ I should add that it is a quality which critic Koen Driessens ascribes to Astrid Lindgren and Roald Dahl alike.³⁵⁴

This dual appeal of her writing seems to rely partly on the use of (elements of) the fantasy genre, which are shown to affect child and adult readers differently. In an article on *Emil Gets into Mischief*, the critic discusses Lindgren’s clever use of the setting as a means for inducing different responses in her readers: “The story [...] is set in the sphere of reality. But the author places it in an ‘entourage’ of a remote past, so that much of it remains within the sphere of fantasy for children and consequently acceptable for adults” (News 18 1967, n.p.).³⁵⁵ The historical references in the Emil-stories are seen as satisfactory for an adult audience mostly (News 17 1967, n.p.). The response to fantastical elements is viewed by some reviewers as a crucial factor which sets apart child and adult readers. It is for instance argued that adults’ interpretations become overcomplicated when fantasy is involved:

Astrid Lindgren writes fantasy stories. Such stories are very much loved by young readers. Less so by adults, because they try to see the reality which surrounds us through the fictitious components of the story. They search for the functional in the fictitious. Sometimes, they are making matters more difficult for themselves than they are. (News 59 1981, n.p.)³⁵⁶

One could deduce from this comment that a proclivity for mimetic narratives is a distinguishing characteristic of adult readers, who may not be willing to suspend their disbelief. In contrast, young readers are believed to suspend it more readily and to go along with fantastic stories more easily.

³⁵³ “Ik hou van Lindgren om de manier waarop ze de gevoelens van kinderen aansprak en volwassenen kon bekoren” (News 148 2002, 10).

³⁵⁴ (News 246 2006, n.p.); (News 247 2006, 150); (News 248 2006, 150); (News 368 2012, 7).

³⁵⁵ “Het verhaal ligt [...] in de werkelijkheidssfeer. Maar de schrijfster plaatst het geheel in een entourage, die ver verleden tijd is, zodat veel ervan voor kinderen toch in de fantasiesfeer blijft en daarmee voor volwassenen acceptabel” (News 18 1967, n.p.).

³⁵⁶ “Astrid Lindgren schrijft fantasieverhalen. Zulke verhalen zijn bij jonge lezers erg geliefd. Bij volwassenen minder, want zij proberen door het verzonnene van het verhaal heen de ons omringende werkelijkheid te zien. Zij speuren in het verzonnene naar het functionele. Soms maken zij het zich daarbij moeilijker dan nodig is” (News 59 1981, n.p.).

Further elements which may please grown-up addressees are recognisable aspects of child psychology, such as the idea that the character of Karlsson might be a figment of Smidge's imagination. This realisation enhances the dual character of the story, Vanessa Joosen maintains: "The nice thing about [it] is that one can consider Karlsson from a child's outlook, as an exciting hero with supernatural powers, or from the perspective of Smidge's parents" (News 368 2012, 7).³⁵⁷ The latter look upon Karlsson as an imaginary friend. In Joosen's opinion, the multi-interpretability is an advantage seeing that it "renders the story with a stratification which can appeal to divergent ages" (News 368 2012, 7).³⁵⁸ In addition, bits of humour which may be aimed too high for children could have the same effect: "The humour [...], to be sure, has a somewhat melancholic undertone which is attuned to the adult rather than to a child's openmindedness" (News 5 1959, n.p.).³⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the reviewer finds, "the child gets what it wants all the same and might even vaguely enjoy the tacit atmosphere created by this duality" (News 5 1959, n.p.).³⁶⁰

With hindsight, it is striking that a remark of this kind, which is somewhat derisive with respect to child readers, is made in connection with Astrid Lindgren's writing. It is unexpected as it cuts across her stance with regard to a form of single address in which the child reader is overlooked, which she is ardently opposed to – as some of the newspaper journalists aptly note. Presumably, in 1959 this preference of Lindgren's was not yet as widely known as it is now. A first clear reference is made to it upon the publication of the semiautobiographical collection of essays *Samuel August in Sevedstorp and Hanna in Hult*, which includes – among other things – an article of Lindgren's published in English as "A Small Chat with a Future Children's Book Author" (Lindgren 1978). A journalist reports that Astrid Lindgren in this particular piece shares some basic rules for writing for children. With regard to wording, Lindgren underlines that one should not write for five-year-olds with words which are understandable for ten-year-olds at best (News 42 1978, n.p.). To the critic, this sounds like a "reasonable" advice which would appear "superfluous", but apparently this seemingly simple rule is transgressed on a daily basis (News 42 1978, n.p.).³⁶¹ In addition, the journalist mentions that Lindgren

³⁵⁷ "Het mooie aan dit verhaal is dat je Karlsson kan bekijken met de kinderblik, als een spannende held met bovennatuurlijke krachten, of vanuit het perspectief van Eriks ouders" (News 368 2012, 7).

³⁵⁸ "krijgt het verhaal een gelaagdheid die verschillende leeftijden kan aanspreken" (News 368 2012, 7).

³⁵⁹ "De humor [...] heeft weliswaar een wat melancholieke ondertoon die eerder op de volwassene dan op de onbevangenheid van een kind is afgestemd" (News 5 1959, n.p.).

³⁶⁰ "maar dat neemt niet weg dat het kind rijkelijk aan zijn trekken komt en zelfs vaag meegeniet van de onuitgesproken atmosfeer, welke die tweetonigheid schept" (News 5 1959, n.p.).

³⁶¹ "Een redelijk advies en naar het schijnt overbodig, maar het gebeurt dagelijks" (News 42 1978, n.p.).

believes that children's books "should be pleasant to read for none other than children" (News 42 1978, n.p.).³⁶²

Later on, Lindgren is reported to deplore that authors' language use all too often is beyond the grasp of the readers (News 63 1987, n.p.), and to reject the use of jokes aimed at adults exclusively.³⁶³ She strongly believed that winks to grown-up readers which are not intelligible for child readers were to be avoided, and showed a partiality for the opposite kind of humour, such as slapstick, which children love and adults generally disapprove of.³⁶⁴ According to Rita Verschuur, Lindgren got criticised for this type of jests (News 520 2002, 13), but this is not substantiated by the analysis of the corpus materials. On a single occasion, Judith Eiselin does comment on Lindgren's attitude in this matter, which she considers to be too rigid (News 496 2002, 28). In her opinion, there is nothing wrong with the occasional adult-directed joke in children's books (News 496 2002, 28). Lindgren's stance is supported explicitly by children's book author and later ALMA winner Guus Kuijer. In his book [*The Disdained Child*]³⁶⁵ he writes, "She is right, one shouldn't wink at [adults], one should simply look them straight in the eye" (News 461 2001, 23).³⁶⁶

Just how central the notion of Lindgren's ability to address children directly was becoming to the mind of the Dutch-language critics becomes apparent in a fairly critical review of *The Brothers Lionheart* by Jan Paul Bresser (News 31 1974, n.p.). Compared with her previous novels, Bresser finds this work to be "deliberately different, more literary, on a more intellectual level" (News 31 1974, n.p.).³⁶⁷ However, he experiences this divergence as fairly negative because of a connection he makes with single, child-directed address: "one strongly senses that she has *abandoned her dialogue with children* and that she is using the figure of Scotty as an *adult* reporter of a great deal of misery" (News 31 1974, n.p.; emphasis added).³⁶⁸ His final verdict is that *The Brothers Lionheart* is a disputable precisely due to the fact that the child readers are not sufficiently taken into account. As mentioned before (cf. section 3.2), he simply finds the novel to be too cruel, blunt and pessimistic, and believes that it will affect children negatively: "Adults read children's books differently than children, may be the counter-argument. And: children will miss the problems which parents recognise immediately. Or: children do not experience the

³⁶² "plezierig te lezen moet[en] zijn, alleen maar door kinderen" (News 42 1978, n.p.).

³⁶³ (News 471 2002, 1); (News 496 2002, 28); (News 520 2002, 13).

³⁶⁴ (News 520 2002, 13); (News 665 2007, 11).

³⁶⁵ Kuijer, Guus, *Het geminachte kind*. Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1980.

³⁶⁶ "Ze heeft gelijk, je moet niet naar ze knipogen, je moet ze gewoon recht aankijken" (News 461 2001, 23).

³⁶⁷ "bewust anders, meer literair, op een intellectueler niveau" (News 31 1974, n.p.).

³⁶⁸ "overvalt je sterk het gevoel dat ze haar dialoog met kinderen heeft losgelaten en de figuur van Kruimel gebruikt als een volwassen verslaggever van een hele hoop ellende" (News 31 1974, n.p.).

leap from one (under)world into another as suicide. Personally, I doubt that” (News 31 1974, n.p.).³⁶⁹ Ultimately, what Bresser fears is that children might end up getting hurt by reading the book: “Children might overlook all of it, but they could *just as well* be left with unanswered questions. They could – caught in a Pippi-Longstocking-syndrome – interpret the adventures as ‘innocent’ today but be left to cope with them tomorrow” (News 31 1974, n.p.; emphasis in original).³⁷⁰ As it turns out, Astrid Lindgren’s keen eye for her young readers’ needs is not merely used as an incentive for appraisal but on a single occasion even for criticism. The latter example shows that Lindgren came to be associated with a narrative style unequivocally addressed to child readers to such an extent that the rare event of her deviating from her usual path aroused criticism.

(8) Norms and Values

In chapter three, Astrid Lindgren’s ideological standpoint as regards children’s social position specifically was shown to strongly influence the processes of canonisation observable in the corpus material. As was explained before (cf. section 3.2), canonisation and ideology are inextricably entwined. It is the position of a literary work with respect to the ideology prevalent among the canonising agents which is decisive where its canonisation is concerned. That position can either affirm or undermine the predominant belief system, and both stances are potentially efficient in terms of canonisation, resulting in top-down or bottom-up canonisation respectively. It is clear that the majority of Astrid Lindgren’s works is supported by the canonising gatekeepers because they approve of the ideological purport of those works with respect to child images. Hence, the top-down paradigm predominates.

In addition, Lindgren’s opinion on social matters in a broader respect is also taken into account. Even here, a top-down type of canonisation seems to prevail. According to the corpus contributors, commendable convictions at the core of Lindgren’s societal attitude are criticism against a bourgeois view of society,³⁷¹ and a stance against social injustice,³⁷² the latter of which is implied in her showing solidarity with the weak and taking their side. Lindgren’s moral convictions are discussed in the articles as well. The author

³⁶⁹ “Volwassenen lezen een kinderboek anders dan kinderen, kan de tegenspraak zijn. En: kinderen lezen over de problemen heen die ouders onmiddellijk herkennen. Of: kinderen ervaren het springen van het ene (doden)rijk naar het andere niet als zelfmoord. Persoonlijk heb ik daar mijn twijfels over” (News 31 1974, n.p.).

³⁷⁰ “Kinderen kunnen er allemaal overheen lezen, maar ze kunnen óók met onbeantwoorde vragen blijven zitten. Ze kunnen – gevangen in een Pippe-Langkous-syndroom [sic] – de avonturen vandaag ‘onschuldig’ opnemen, maar ze morgen moeten verwerken” (News 31 1974, n.p.; emphasis in original).

³⁷¹ (LzL 6 2004, 119); (LzL 7 2007, 167); (LzL 9 2010, 37).

³⁷² (JBG 86 2002, 147); (LzL 9 2010, 38).

displays soundness of judgment and a down-to-earth attitude, which is found to render her books authentic (LG 4 1965, 48).³⁷³ An optimistic and life-affirming air are also deemed to be characteristically Lindgrenesque.³⁷⁴ Furthermore, important values, represented in the Mardie-books, are freedom, truth, justice, and charity (JBG 86 2002, 147), whereas *The Brothers Lionheart* advocates courage and solidarity (News 747 2008, 18). *Mio, my Son*, then again, is considered to be particularly valuable as it depicts the universally recognisable maturation of a child as well as embodying a sense of “knowing oneself to be called to fulfil a task in one’s life” (IDIL 1 1957, n.p.).³⁷⁵ Other ideological components of Lindgren’s oeuvre which are valued because of their affirmative nature are the message that violence is pointless (News 59 1981, n.p.), and the insight provided into the meaning of life.³⁷⁶

Denominational arguments are barely visible in the corpus material. Unsurprisingly, the four instances I did discover all date back to the 1950s, when the Flemish and Dutch societies were considerably less secularised than nowadays, and Dutch public life in particular was compartmentalised along denominational lines (cf. section 3.2). A first example is a recommendation made by Leo Roelants in *Lektuurgids*, championing the final of the three Noisy Village-books as suitable reading material for children in their early teens of protestant upbringing specifically (LG 14 1971, 51-52). As was shown before, *Mio, my Son* does not live up to the expectations the Roman-Catholic *Rafaël Catalogue*-critic holds as regards religious purport (Raf 2 1956, n.p.) (cf. section 3.2). Bert de Bois in his 1952 review of *Pippi Longstocking* merely notes that religious leanings are absent in the book, but dismisses this argument as irrelevant for its evaluation (BG 1 1952, 316) (cf. section 3.2). Lastly, the strongest objection founded in denominational reasons can be found in *IDIL-Gids*, one of the journals published by the Catholic Information Service Concerning Reading. Unlike Bert de Bois, this unnamed critic *does* take offence at the lack of religious undertone in the first Noisy Village-book. The reviewer states, “It is a pity that their life passes entirely non-religiously. As a result, Christmas is not given its due. Pedagogically and religiously speaking, the novel is not up to scratch; due to these lacunae it cannot be recommended *warmly*” (IDIL 2 1958, n.p., emphasis added).³⁷⁷ But recommended it is nonetheless.

³⁷³ Compare the emphasis placed on authenticity by canonical Dutch authors Annie M.G. Schmidt and Theo Thijssen (de Vries 1989, 71-72; 189) (cf. section 3.2).

³⁷⁴ (IDIL 23 1969, n.p.); (LG 4 1965, 48).

³⁷⁵ “het zich geroepen weten tot het vervullen van een taak in dit leven” (IDIL 1 1957, n.p.).

³⁷⁶ (News 60 1982, n.p.); (News 437 2000, 2).

³⁷⁷ “Jammer is het dat hun leventje volstrekt a-religieus verloopt. Kerstmis krijgt hierdoor niet de plaats die het toekomt. Pedagogisch en religieus dient iets aangevuld te worden; de gesignaleerde leemten weerhouden ons van een hartelijke aanbeveling” (IDIL 2 1958, 177-178).

An example situated near the bottom-up extremity on the scale of canonisation processes is Herman Kakebeeke's evaluation of the stories in the compilation [*Winter Tales*]³⁷⁸ in *Jeugdboekengids* (JBG 50 1988, n.p.). Kakebeeke sees the tales as warm, sensitive, and nostalgic, and regards them as a safe haven in modern times (JBG 50 1988, 88). Writing in 1988, he observes,

No shocking adventures take place, rather, small everyday events demand the reader's attention. And the way in which people, young and old, treat each other. In such a manner [...] the stories provide the refuge which is so sought after in this day and age. (JBG 50 1988, 88)³⁷⁹

Apparently, to Kakebeeke's mind, the pace of contemporary society was not desirable. Astrid Lindgren's narratives were appealing to him because of their sense of nostalgia and tranquility, which he interpreted as going against the social grain.

Occasionally, the reviewers turn to the author's personal moral norm system by way of accounting for the universality and generalisability of her works. Some point at Lindgren's humanistic set of values as a factor in her worldwide success,³⁸⁰ others link it to her optimism.³⁸¹ This sanguine outlook on life is found to manifest itself in the fact that good eventually overcomes evil in her stories.³⁸² As Kirsten Waterstraat points out, the battle of good against evil in Lindgren's oeuvre is invariably an existential one (LzL 9 2010, 39). Furthermore, Astrid Lindgren's treatment of that very struggle is shown to have evolved in the course of her career.³⁸³ Whereas the benevolent and vicious characters were portrayed quite outspokenly in early works such as *Mio, my Son*, and Lindgren got criticised for the black-and-white characterisation in *The Brothers Lionheart*, the opposition is deemed much less dualistic in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*. According to Waterstraat, this is due to the fact that the boundary between the two opposing forces is less clearly defined in the latter (LzL 9 2010, 39). Karin van Camp, for her part, states that this evolution is clearly discernible (JBG 83 2001, 219). In *Ronia*, she finds,

³⁷⁸ *Winterverhalen*.

³⁷⁹ "Er gebeuren geen schokkende avonturen, nee, het zijn eerder de kleine alledaagse gebeurtenissen die de aandacht van de lezer vragen. En de manier waarop mensen, jong en oud, met elkaar omgaan. [...] [D]e verhalen [bieden] de in deze tijd zo nodige rustpunten." (JBG 50 1988, 88)

³⁸⁰ (JBG 105 2012, 122); (LzL 7 2007, 165).

³⁸¹ (LzL 6 2004, 122); (LG 4 1965, 48).

³⁸² (JBG 44 1986, 48); (JBG 77 1997, 340); (JBG 79 1999, 112); (JBG 83 2001, 219); (JBG 93 2003, 332); (LzL 9 2010, 39). Myles McDowell argues that such a schematic world view, in terms of Good versus Evil, and a firm belief in the supremacy of Good, is "essentially childlike": "From a child's point of view not only is such a view safe and reassuring, it is also optimistic. Good will triumph, and not because it has public support and sympathy (that being almost one of the characteristics of what we call good), but because it *must*. Evil will be punished, again a benign power reigns." (2006, 57-58; emphasis in original)

³⁸³ (JBG 79 1999, 112); (JBG 83 2001, 219); (LzL 9 2010, 39).

Good and Bad are not portrayed as dualistic and separate[.] After having met Birk, Ronia soon realises that she can no longer divide the world into good Mattis-robbers and bad Borka-robbers. Ronia and her father as well as Birk and his family are shown to possess both good and less good qualities. (JBG 79 1999, 112)³⁸⁴

Later on, she adds, “Good and Bad turn out to be no longer separable. Both of them are a part of every one of us and happiness lies in the reconciliation of the two” (JBG 83 2001, 219).³⁸⁵ Perhaps as a result of this nuanced depiction of positive and negative qualities, the narrative about Ronia does not come across as moralising.³⁸⁶

(9) Critical Notes and Dissenting Voices

By now, it may have become clear that the Dutch and Flemish critics hardly ever find fault with Astrid Lindgren’s writing. An extremely small number of reviewers has difficulties with some of the ideological tendencies in her works, and critical notes as regards the form and style of the works are equally rare. In the entire corpus, a mere eighteen instances criticism against any of her works could be identified. This amounts to 1.5 % of the total number of articles. There are some dissenting voices, but they are very few.

It is striking that quite a few of Lindgren’s shorter stories published as picture books do not find favour with the reviewers. *Brenda Brave Helps Grandmother* is discarded by E. Vandeveldde as “neat [...], but nothing more than that” (JBG 31 1980, 110).³⁸⁷ Truusje Vrooland-Löb finds *The Dragon with Red Eyes* “rather insipid” and “hardly captivating” (En nu 17 1986, 209).³⁸⁸ That same book is also criticised by Jef Davidse for a lack of opportunities for emotional involvement on the part of the reader (LG 41 1986, 470). Moreover, it does not seem to contain a clear message of any kind, which leaves the critic unsatisfied (LG 41 1986, 470). *A Calf for Christmas* is not well-received either, equally based on arguments pertaining to the depiction of feelings. Jan Van Coillie finds that the protagonist’s “emotions [...] rarely come across powerfully enough” (JBG 57 1990, 206).³⁸⁹ Usually Lindgren’s ideological leanings are appreciated, and it is precisely in this respect

³⁸⁴ “Het Goede en het Kwade worden [...] niet als dualistisch en gescheiden voorgesteld. Nadat Ronja Birk leert kennen, beseft ze al heel gauw dat ze de wereld niet langer kan indelen in de goede Mattis-rovers en de slechte Borka-rovers. Ronja en haar vader, maar ook Birk en zijn familie worden van hun goede en minder goede kanten getoond.” (JBG 79 1999, 112)

³⁸⁵ “Goed en Kwaad [blijken] niet meer te scheiden. De twee zitten in ieder mens, en het geluk ligt in de verzoening ervan” (JBG 83 2001, 219).

³⁸⁶ (News 405 1998, 9); (News 669 2007, 61).

³⁸⁷ “net [...], meer niet.” (JBG 31 1980, 110)

³⁸⁸ “nogal zoutelo[os]” and “[w]einig boeiend” (En nu 17 1986, 209).

³⁸⁹ “emoties [...] komen in deze korte tekst vaak niet krachtig genoeg over” (JBG 57 1990, 206).

that this work is deemed to fall short: “The view on society portrayed by Lindgren is static and emotionally biased” (JBG 57 1990, 206).³⁹⁰ Finally, Van Coillie judges that *A Calf for Christmas* “hardly can be called special” (JBG 57 1990, 206).³⁹¹ The author’s choice to write about gnomes in *Simon Small Moves in* is also questioned (JBG 30 1980, 110), as is the entire concept of *Assar Bubbla*:

Admirers of the Pippi Longstocking-books will recognise the typically absurd situations [...] in this story but will probably feel equally disappointed as me. The speed is gone, the story comes across as fairly artificial, the jokes are standard and predictable, the argumentations are elaborate at times. [...] A light story, inflated into a book. (JBG 51 1988, 236)³⁹²

The Children on Troublemaker Street is felt to be laboured (LG 28 1979, 443). So, too, is the second of the three Karlsson-books, which is perceived as less spontaneous than the first due to the increased focus on Karlsson’s tendency to tease (LG 11 1969, 50).³⁹³ Other critical comments pertain to the superficiality of some stories, such as *Emil’s Little Sister*, which Ria de Schepper perceives as uncomplicated and living on the success of previous Emil-stories (JBG 62 1991, 31-32). One critic for *Jeugdboekengids* is not particularly fond of the way the storyline develops in *Bill Bergson and the White Rose Rescue*. In R. Baccarne’s view, the events related are exaggerated and implausible, narratologically as well as psychologically speaking (JBG 22 1977, 31). This is remarkable, seeing that psychological insight usually is considered to be one of Astrid Lindgren’s fortes (cf. section “Image of Childhood”). Further – scattered – negative evaluations are concerned with a blunt narrative style in *Brenda Brave* (JBG 20 1975, 164), and a lack of suspense in the final chapters of *Seacrow Island* (News 530 2003, 28). Criticism aimed at the Pippi Longstocking-comic books, [*Pippi Is Always the Strongest*]³⁹⁴ and [*Pippi Always Knows What to Do*],³⁹⁵ is perhaps the harshest:

These editions [...] clearly lay bare the weakness of the comic books: nothing of the original atmosphere remains. In all its conciseness, the text [...] is unable to captivate or relate something extra. [...] All in all, these are two minor works

³⁹⁰ “Het maatschappijbeeld dat Lindgren schildert, is statisch en wordt gekleurd door emotionaliteit” (JBG 57 1990, 206).

³⁹¹ “Erg bijzonder is dit [...] niet te noemen” (JBG 57 1990, 206).

³⁹² “Liefhebbers van de Pippi Langkous-boeken zullen de typisch ongerijmde situaties [...] in dit verhaaltje herkennen maar wellicht hetzelfde teleurgestelde gevoel hebben dat ik had. De vaart is eruit, het verhaaltje doet nogal geconstrueerd aan, de grapjes zijn obligaat en voorspelbaar, de redeneringen zijn soms wat omstandig. [...] Een niemendalletje, opgeblazen tot een boek” (JBG 51 1988, 236).

³⁹³ See also (LG 12 1970, 178).

³⁹⁴ *Pippi is altijd de sterkste*.

³⁹⁵ *Pippi weet altijd raad*.

ensuing from a tempestuous Pippi-hype, hence slightly redundant. Because the original books have so much more to offer. (JBG 10 1972, 96)³⁹⁶

Mostly, though, criticism is expressed in a more toned down fashion. For example, Carolien Zilverberg does not find all of the narratives included in the collection with [Astrid Lindgren's *Collected Stories*] equally convincing. In her opinion, the book “contains quite a lot of uninteresting material, stories which you will forget as soon as you have finished them” (News 74 1992, n.p.).³⁹⁷ However, she is willing to forgive Astrid Lindgren, whose writing she generally values greatly, this minor lapse. Because, as she argues, “Obviously, a bow long bent at last waxes weak” (News 74 1992, n.p.).³⁹⁸ Carolien Zilverberg is not the only Dutch-speaking reviewer to hold Lindgren in such high esteem that she dare not utter scathing criticism. In a few other cases, too, weaknesses are covered with the cloak of charity. *Lektuurgids* critic Marc Vingerhoedt, for instance, seems to be prepared to overlook the simplicity of the plot line of *The Day Adam Got Mad* because the book “radiates a quaint kind of warmth”, as he puts it (LG 47 1992, 491).³⁹⁹ In a similar vein, *Kati in Italy* is considered to be superficial yet innocent and airy (JBG 5 1966, 37). A general remark by Fred de Swert that Lindgren tends to rely on a happy ending all too easily (JBG 18 1974, n.p.), actually serves to laud her writing. It is De Swert's fear that a satisfactory ending to stories centring around desolation and abandonment will veil the tragedy of the narrative. Although he has to admit that this might as well be a clever strategy of Lindgren's to invoke what he calls life's “corrective impact”, viz. its tendency to punish and reward at the same time (JBG 18 1974, n.p.).⁴⁰⁰ A similar kind of reconciliation of praise and criticism can be identified in the following review of *The Children on Troublemaker Street* by Mieke de Bruijne:

In all probability, when it first came out, this book was a highlight in pre-schoolers and beginning readers: for once, adults were seen through young children's eyes. Nowadays, we have authors such as Miep Diekman, Dolf Verroen, and Rita Törnqvist all writing equally aptly for this age group. (LG 28 1979, 443)⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁶ “Deze uitgaven [...] leggen duidelijk de zwakte van de strips bloot: van de oorspronkelijke sfeer blijft niets over. De tekst [...] vermag in zijn beknoptheid niet te boeien of iets meer te vertellen. [...] Al met al twee werkjes gegroeid uit een onstuimige Pippi-rage, derhalve een beetje overbodig. Want de oorspronkelijke boekjes brengen zoveel meer” (JBG 10 1972, 96).

³⁹⁷ “nogal wat oninteressant materiaal, verhalen die je vergeten bent zodra je ze uit hebt” (News 74 1992, n.p.).

³⁹⁸ “Natuurlijk kan de boog niet altijd gespannen zijn” (News 74 1992, n.p.).

³⁹⁹ “straalt een ouderwetse warmte uit” (LG 47 1992, 491).

⁴⁰⁰ “korrigerende impact” (JBG 18 1974, n.p.).

⁴⁰¹ “Waarschijnlijk was dit boek, toen het voor het eerst verscheen, een hoogtepunt in de lectuur voor kleuters en eerste lezertjes: de volwassenen werden eens door de ogen van jonge kinderen bekeken. Nu kennen wij

This is in fact one of the rare instances in which a comparison between Astrid Lindgren and other authors turns out to the former's disadvantage.

A striking remark in this connection can be found in a review on [*Astrid Lindgren. Her Life in Pictures*] (2007). Its authors, Francien Braaksma and Margreet de Groot, comment on this absence of criticism precisely. They note, "A [...] minus [...] with this book is that it is lacking in criticism against Astrid Lindgren of any kind. Because of that, it resembles a hagiography, the description of a saint's life..." (En nu 38 2007, 342)⁴⁰² One can easily draw a parallel with the overall attitude of the Dutch-speaking critics. As was established in the previous chapter already, these critics seem to have put Astrid Lindgren on a rather firm pedestal. As a result, her status has become so sacrosanct that one even could state that the reception of Astrid Lindgren in Flanders and The Netherlands has come to border on hagiography and amounts to the making of a myth.

4.3 Conclusion: Astrid Lindgren's Canonical Works as Touchstones which Touch Readers

Just as in the theoretical accounts on synchronic features, as may have become clear from the overview above, it is hard to separate pragmatic and objective criteria in the reception of Astrid Lindgren's books in Flanders and The Netherlands. The reader-oriented and work-oriented types of discourse grade into one another, although pragmatic criteria are more clearly in the ascendancy over objective ones than is the case in canon research. In this concluding section the main findings will be connected with various theoretical perspectives on children's literature in general. For instance, the fact that humour, suspense, and adventure, all of which are reader-oriented factors, are foregrounded as decisive factors in Lindgren's success implies that the critics' primary focus lies with the child readers.

In addition, the emphasis put on psychological depth, identification, and wish fulfilment highlights the critics' concern with the way in which readers may respond to the books. Hence, one of the principal issues informing the Dutch and Flemish

echter o.a. een Miep Diekman, een Dolf Verroen, een Rita Törnqvist die voor deze leeftijdscategorie ook raak uit de hoek komen." (LG 28 1979, 443)

⁴⁰² "Als [...] minpuntje valt er over dit boek nog te zeggen dat elk snippertje kritiek op Astrid Lindgren ontbreekt. Daardoor lijkt het nog het meest op een hagiografie, de beschrijving van het leven van een heilige..." (En nu 38 2007, 342)

gatekeepers' evaluation of Lindgren's works appears to have been whether or not they approve of the subject positions these works offer their readers.⁴⁰³ The reviewers seem to be concerned to a great degree with the interpretive possibilities the books open up for their young audience. Literary quality, by contrast, does not seem to be of particularly great importance.⁴⁰⁴ In addition, the critics' preoccupation with identification proves that scholars who are in favour of coupling aesthetic arguments with pragmatic ones in the evaluation of children's literature advocate a sound approach. As was explained in section 4.1, academics such as Per Dahl (2002), Ann Haugland (1994), Helene Høyrup (2008), and Reinbert Tabbert (1994), stress the importance of a connection made with readers' daily lives [Lebenspraxis] in terms of success. In effect, when selecting, critiquing, and canonising children's books, gatekeepers make this connection *on behalf of* the young readers. They appreciate works which they believe will be able to affect the audience on this level.

Moreover, the majority of the topics the Dutch and Flemish critics deem characteristic of Astrid Lindgren's ideological standpoint are in fact similar or related to the themes which are believed to make her work universal. Using an umbrella term, the themes can be labelled as "archetypes" (LzL 9 2010, 39).⁴⁰⁵ As it turns out, it is exactly this kind of subject matter which is strongly appreciated by the reviewers, most of whom assess the topics dealt with in Astrid Lindgren's oeuvre roughly along the same lines. They emphasise the prevalence of general, relatable topics and humanistic values such as independence, optimism, hope, and solidarity.⁴⁰⁶ In the critics' opinion, those principles are not contextually contingent but rather surpass the restricted "here and now" the stories were written in. The moral principles informing the writing, rather than actual textual elements, are preponderant in the canonisation of these narratives. Hence, what

⁴⁰³ Cf. (Stephens 1992, 68).

⁴⁰⁴ Therefore, the Dutch-language canonising agents can be classified as *child people* rather than *book people*, to use Peter Hollindale's terms. Hollindale (1988) argues that gatekeepers of children's literature can roughly be categorised as either child or book people, a distinction which is based on different views on the function of children's literature. The way Hollindale sees it, "the child people have become associated not only with a prime concern with the child reader rather than the literary artefact but with the propagation of a 'progressive' ideology expressed through social values" (Hollindale 1988, 4). See also (Ehriander 2012, 96).

⁴⁰⁵ "oer-thema's" (LzL 9 2010, 39).

⁴⁰⁶ In Jean Webb's view, these values are central in the field of children's literature: "I believe that optimism and hope are key factors in writing for children, whether or no the actual ending is happy in itself." (Webb 2006, 80) This statement ensued from her observation that these values proved important in the Touchstones-canon list compiled by Perry Nodelman a.o.: "The criteria which stand out for me in Nodelman's list are 'optimistic and with happy endings,' with the emphasis being on 'optimism'." (Webb 2006, 80) Similarly, Anne de Vries in his study *What Are Good Children's Books Thought to Be?* showed that humanistic morals (such as tolerance) became prevalent among Dutch critics of children's literature in the 1940s already, and have remained significant ever since (de Vries 1989, 174).

proves to be decisive is whether the gatekeepers can align themselves with the moral values, world view, and ideological positions shimmering through in the texts. In this respect, it is Astrid Lindgren's humanistic and philanthropic⁴⁰⁷ principles which seem to have appealed to the critics the most.

What the corpus contributors seem to have aimed at, then, is laying bare an individual pattern of norms and values underlying Astrid Lindgren's writing, which could serve as a common denominator allowing the critics to judge the central themes in her works and to explain their success. Lindgren's set of norms, however, proves to be not only highly subjective and individual but at the same time mainstream to some extent, and therefore very relatable. Indeed, it is not as unique as it may first appear but aligns with the embedding of contemporary children's literature in what Ruth Bottigheimer describes as "a centuries-long tradition of moralizing ardour on the one hand and magic escapism on the other, which ultimately rests on an acceptance of prevailing social orders shared by authors and readers" (Bottigheimer 2006, 123-124). This dual characterisation fits the Dutch-language critics' interpretation and positive evaluation of the ideology informing Astrid Lindgren's writing exceedingly well. By foregrounding those of Lindgren's ideological convictions which tie in with their own world view, the reviewers downplay the Swedishness of her works, to a certain extent, and present them as more universal.⁴⁰⁸

As such, the Dutch and Flemish gatekeepers' assessment seems to be in keeping with the preponderance of what John Stephens and Robyn McCallum term the "Western metaethic", which they define as "an overarching cultural and moral perspective, or assumed bundle of values" (Stephens and McCallum 1998, x). Stephens and McCallum hold that every story in some way corresponds to this metaethic, which draws upon traditional stories from Western culture, such as the Bible and ancient Greek or Nordic myths. The gist of the matter is that most of the members in a modern, Western society experience these values as universal. Central to this system of norms are humanistic principles such as altruism and individual agency, "a form of subjectivity where [...] the possibility [...] of resistance to ideological pressure is allowed for" (Stephens and McCallum 1998, 20). It is along such lines that Astrid Lindgren's works are assessed by the critics. In highlighting her ability to offer her readers comfort or independence, freedom, and hopefulness (embodied by many of her characters), they seem to be gauging Lindgren's stories against this exact metaethic – either consciously or unconsciously.

In "The 'Real' and the 'Dutch' Astrid Lindgren" (2010),⁴⁰⁹ for example, Kirsten Waterstraat does so in a very overt manner. She concludes, "In her stories Astrid Lindgren

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. (Andersen 2014).

⁴⁰⁸ The case of the German reception of *Pippi Longstocking* studied by Astrid Surmatz likewise shows that geographical and cultural distance bring about a shift in the perception of the author (Surmatz 2005, 3).

⁴⁰⁹ "De 'echte' en de 'Hollandse' Astrid Lindgren" (LzL 9 2010).

evokes vanished and mythological worlds, which is why her work is experienced as ageless and universal” (LzL 9 2010, 43).⁴¹⁰ Furthermore, the fact that universal themes which are also associated with actual ancient myths are drawn upon to justify the creation of Lindgren’s legend is hardly a coincidence. Indeed, in poststructural and postmodern approaches, a myth is described as “a narrative which is considered socially important, and is told in such a way as to allow the entire social collective to share a sense of this importance” (Csapo, cited in (Geerts 2014, 21)). This description could just as easily be used for canonical texts. In effect, Hans-Heino Ewers argues that children’s books are not canonised until they are “mythologised” (that is, attributed the same status as myths) by society (cited in (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 184)). The references to mythical, universal subject matter in discourse on Astrid Lindgren serve multiple purposes. Firstly, they highlight the similarities between myths and canonised works of literature. Secondly, they draw attention to the religious context in which the term canon originated. Lastly, they underline the impact of the Western metaethic, that is to say, of the implicit, tacit moral touchstones which determine how authors are appraised and valued in our Western culture.

These findings regarding the synchronic dimension of canonical works suggest that canonisation processes in the field of children’s literature cannot be divorced from the particular communicative situation in it, and more specifically from the extent to which the dual audience of young readers and adult gatekeepers is taken into account. The contextual circumstances governing the field inevitably affect textual features of children’s books, and both textual and contextual factors have proven to impact the evaluation and canonisation of the books. The “rapport”, or, connection, between the work and its adult *as well as* child readers cannot be excluded from canon research. Both adult canonising agents’ preferences as well as their child image and their expectations as to what children will favour play a role in processes of canonisation and should therefore be factored in. As a result, a one-sided, exclusively text-oriented take on canonical works of children’s literature is not entirely viable and satisfactory.

In effect, these observations confirm my conviction that an approach founded on postmodern reception theory and cultural studies is indeed an efficient and meaningful means to study canonical texts *within the field of children’s literature*. As stated in the first chapter, this stance implies an outlook on processes of canonisation as processes of *communication* first and foremost. This vantage point makes it easy to see that the textual components do not solely exist as such but also – and perhaps most importantly – in relation to the reader. The text-immanent features are the elements of a work which impact the reader, as a result of which it acquires meaning for that reader. A canonical

⁴¹⁰ “Astrid Lindgren roept in haar verhalen verdwenen en mythologische werelden op, en daardoor wordt haar werk als tijdloos en universeel ervaren” (LzL 9 2010, 43).

work cannot exist in a vacuum, without the connection with the reader, most notably the reader with canonising authority. It is precisely this connection which could be valued much more, and much more explicitly, in the theoretical discourse. In this connection, a desirable topic for further research seems to be the interface between textual and contextual elements – or, if you will, objective and pragmatic factors – characteristic of canonical works.⁴¹¹ The bottom line is, then, that “[t]here is no such thing as great art *per se*, only art that *works for you*.”⁴¹² Therefore, I am inclined to agree with Anne Lundin, who notes, ““Touchstones that touch us’ might be a better description of the canon” (Lundin 2004, 148). Astrid Lindgren’s works can thus be seen as touchstones which touch their readers, young and old, with or without canonising authority alike.

⁴¹¹ Examples of existing studies in which canonicity is linked explicitly with a transgression of the boundaries between the work and its readers are (Tabbert 1980); (Tabbert 1994); (Lexé 2003); and (Büsser 2011).

⁴¹² This slogan was taken from the exhibition “Art is Therapy” at the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (25 April – 7 September 2014) curated by British philosophers Alain de Botton and John Armstrong. Emphasis was added. See < <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/art-is-therapy> > [Accessed 25 August 2014].

Chapter 5

Never-ending Stories: The Diachronic Dimension of Canonical Works

5.1 Canonisation and the Book Market: A Question of Culture and Commerce

The discussion of synchronic, essentialist qualities of canonical works presented in the previous chapter revealed that such features cannot be dissociated from the diachronic, or, functionalist, dimension of those works. In order to recapitulate, I bring to mind again the definition of the two types of properties advanced by Torben Weinreich which were put forward as the backbone of this entire study. As reported in section 1.4, Weinreich writes,

The *essence* criterion is a.o. universality, general applicability, complexity, and ambiguous polyphony, in other words linked with *quality*. The *functionality* criterion means that the works should have *survived* in the sense that they are unremittingly being read, studied in research and continually inspire new authors. (Weinreich 2004, 17; emphasis added)¹

Individual qualities of the synchronic and diachronic paradigms prove to be difficult to separate (cf. section 1.4). The fact that canonical works are experienced as universal, generally applicable is a consequence of their being complex, polyphonous, and hence, multi-interpretable. In turn, universality may result in their continuously being read, studied, and used for inspiration, or, in other words, in their survival. Given these

¹ “Væsenskriteriet er bl.a. universalitet, almengyldighed, kompleksitet og mangetydig flerstemmighed, altså knyttet til kvalitet. Funktionskriteriet betyder, at værkerne skal have overlevet, sådan at de stadig læses, stadig gøres til genstand for forskning og stadig inspirerer nye forfattere” (Weinreich 2004, 17).

complex interrelations, considering the two sets of criteria as entirely separate would not be adequate. Therefore, I would like to propose an alternative approach in order to resolve the difficulties their interweavement poses. The need to reconsider the synchronic/diachronic-taxonomy is prompted both by ideas put forward by for instance Ann Haugland and Barbara Herrnstein-Smith, presented in section 1.4, and by my own analysis of the corpus of epitexts compiled within the framework of this study, with the results of my exploration of Astrid Lindgren's Dutch-language reception informing my ideas on the matter.

The properties discernible in the work itself which the synchronic paradigm centres on play a significant role in the introduction of a literary work. My point is that features such as originality, intertextuality, and exemplarity should be seen not just as characteristic of the work as such, but also, and more importantly, as signals of its potential for canonicity. Canonising agents highlight these qualities because the latter more or less have the ability to predict whether or not a work will be able to catch on, seeing that they facilitate the establishment of a connection with the reader. From this viewpoint, diachronic features, pertaining to the way in which the work functions, reflect the fact that it is realising or has realised its canonical potential. Indications are the work's serving as reading material, subject matter for research, and/or a source of inspiration for ensuing generations of writers. These signs of "capitalisation", if you will, are significant because they demonstrate that the work is being embedded in the field. If a work succeeds in properly grounding itself in large parts of the field, this will show in what I have termed extra-textual phenomena related to the work. In effect, I believe that the qualities classified within the three dimensions of canonical works – the synchronic, the diachronic, and the extra-textual – can be seen as cumulative, with the latter adding layers onto the former. I wish to highlight that, to me, canonical potential as such does not mean much, it needs to be redeemed as well. To my mind, true evidence that a work is worthy of canonical status can be found in its functioning, which works to convert the potential into actual canonicity.

This stance of mine is aligned with an important argument put forward by Klaus Doderer. He, too, stresses the import of diachronic, functional factors, "which are beyond the literary-aesthetic scope", but which "can be a part of the genesis of a classic of children's literature" (Doderer 1969, 12).² In Doderer's view,

the ratification of those works among children's books which were once acknowledged as 'classical' comes about by means of plebiscite, as it were – and not in an elitist-academical fashion: that is, its popularity, its print numbers, and its

² "die außerhalb des Literarisch-Ästhetischen liegen"; "zur Entstehungsgeschichte eines Jugendliteratur-Klassikers gehören können" (Doderer 1969, 12).

high degree of universality make them classics, after their having withstood the circumstances and the pressure of the literary premiere[.] (Doderer 1969, 12)³

What he is suggesting, is that canonicity is initiated by highbrow instances, focussed on synchronic qualities, but that support by means of broadly based processes of a diachronic nature actually confirms their status, a point which I fully endorse.

The present chapter, then, describes the diachronic indications of canonical potential being capitalised, both from a theoretical and a practical perspective, with the latter serving to corroborate my stance. Subsequently, the far-reaching extra-textual dimension will be dealt with at length the second half of this chapter. Before expounding the theory behind this functional perspective, I should point out how this chapter differs from the previous. Firstly, Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer shows that the diachronic approach in effect is the most common one when she states that “in the majority of reference works and handbooks, those works count as classics which have been popular and widespread and are still being read today” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 178).⁴ Strikingly, though, arguments of a diachronic, functionalist kind are rarely made explicit in canon research and canon formation within children’s literature. More so than synchronic, essentialist criteria, diachronic factors are oblique and remain tacit. Indeed, the way in which the typical points of view are substantiated mirrors the rationale underpinning the two types of approaches. The synchronically oriented paradigm reflects a normative perspective on canonicity. Seeing that it is aiming to justify why literary works deserve the status of legitimate, qualitative art, its discourse is of a prescriptive kind, dictating what features the works ought to display in order to become canonised. The diachronic outlook, by contrast, is overwhelmingly descriptive. As its main goal is to record how the work actually functions within the field, the discourse deployed within this paradigm is bound to strictly defined labels and categories to a far lesser extent and hence more flexible. As a result, the theory pertaining to functional elements is less standardised and more heterogeneous than is the case in synchronically oriented argumentations, which are fairly homogeneous. For these reasons, my description of the diachronic leg of canon theory is much more succinct than the account presented in the previous chapter.

³ “die Sanktionierung der einmal als ‘klassisch’ anerkannten Werke unter den Kinder- und Jugendbüchern erfolgt auf einem gleichsam plebiszitären – nicht aber einem elitär-akademistischen – Wege: d.h. ihre Beliebtheit, ihre Auflagenhöhe, ihr hoher Grad, allgemeingültig zu sein, machen sie zu Klassikern, nachdem sie einmal die Umstände und Belastungen der literarischen Premiere überstanden haben” (Doderer 1969, 12).

⁴ “in der Mehrzahl der in Lexika und Handbüchern anzutreffenden Definitionen [gelten] diejenigen Werken als Klassiker, welche lange beliebt und weit verbreitet waren und auch heute noch gelesen werden” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 178). Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer herself prefers to adopt a synchronic perspective, though (cf. section 1.4).

A second complication results from the tension between culture and commerce, or, between criteria of value imposed from above and the dynamics of a work positioning itself in a literary field. A book may become embedded in the field through means which are not generally valued highly but which, in keeping with its descriptive nature, should be a natural part of the diachronic type of approach to canonisation. This paradigm, due to its connection with the contextual, functional aspects of a work's reception, may entail a transgression of the essentialist level of individual works, meaning that overarching factors are brought into play. One takes into account the evolution of an author's entire career for instance, or all of the ways in which their works can be seen to function in the field under scrutiny. In fact, it is characterised by a focus on processes of canonisation and their evolution over time. Thus, the diachronic, longitudinal paradigm is much more comprehensive in its scope. Questions of particular interest are *how* a work reaches its audience (instead of *why* it touches it) and *how far* its influence stretches. These issues relate to the distribution of the works and touch upon the role of the book market in processes of canonisation. As reading practices have become increasingly fluid, transgressing the boundaries of the traditionally preponderant medium of the book,⁵ and ever more inclusive, with growing reader involvement, it seems perfectly logical to involve commerciality and popularity in the argumentation. Hence, arguments of a diachronic kind ought to be seen gaining in importance. Yet, having carried out my review of canon research, I had to conclude that, apparently, it is not self-evident to discuss commercialism in connection with canonicity.

Indeed, in children's literary theory, as in general literary theory, a dichotomy once arose between aesthetic, literary value, associated with the synchronic paradigm, on the one hand and commercial value, connected with the diachronic dimension, on the other. In an entirely synchronically-oriented mindset, a book which is treated as a commodity consequently cannot be considered a full-blown literary work. A case in point is Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer's ruling out of long-term effect and popularity as basic constituents of canonicity (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 178) (cf. section 1.4). Emer O'Sullivan, for her part, can be seen to question the validity of the commercial sphere in children's literature.⁶ She discusses the role of three different functional contexts within which children's books can appear, namely in didactics, literary theory, and the book market (O'Sullivan 2000b). In her opinion, the notion of canonicity is coupled with the first two spheres only, and not with the third. Only in the first and second fields can one

⁵ Compare the following remark made by Lana A. Whited (2002, 12): "Culture and commerce are strange bedfellows. The credo of 'art for art's sake' is as distant as any I can image from the modern media conglomerate".

⁶ The following theoretical works of hers are relevant here: (O'Sullivan 2000a); (O'Sullivan 2000b); (O'Sullivan 2005).

discern attempts to establish a canon of meaningful works, according to principles of educational value and literary historical value respectively.⁷ The significant works in the third segment of the literary field, the market, are classics whose transmission is based on popularity and sentiment merely, and not on historical significance (O'Sullivan 2000b, 19). On these grounds, she argues, they do not deserve the label of canonical:

With such titles – books that have sold over a long period rather than being a selection of authors and works regarded as exemplary by a community – the primary agencies of selection and certainly transmission are the publishing houses.⁸ [...]

The actual stock of *classics* of children's literature and a possible *canon or canons* of children's books, the need for which has already been expressed in children's literature studies and teaching, are clearly separate entities. (O'Sullivan 2005, 148; emphasis added)

The implication of O'Sullivan's comments is that criteria of a synchronic and diachronic kind should be isolated from one another. However, as was demonstrated elaborately in section 1.4, the two are often intermingled. Moreover, such a stance fails to acknowledge the book market as a significant provider and gauge of value. In an attempt to begin to remedy this lacuna, and supported by the findings concerning my epitextual corpus material, I will tie the notion of processes of canonisation in with theories of popular literature and the book market. In the present and following sections, I will argue in favour of a rationale which takes into account popularity and commercial phenomena, but first I will endeavour to trace the cause for the apparent reluctance to discuss these features on the part of children's literature scholars.

Beverly Lyon Clark in *Kiddie Lit. The Cultural Construction of Children's Literature in America* meticulously maps out the crucial evolution in the last few decades of the nineteenth century in the United States in which popularity and quality became all the more dissociated from one another (cf. section 2.1). Besides discussing the example of Frances Hodgson Burnett, Clark also refers to the reception of Frank L. Baum, author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), as an interesting case in point attesting to an increasing divergence between commercialism and aestheticism. Clark describes the spirit of that age as one in which “prestige was increasingly divorced from the overt pursuit of profit” (Clark 2003, 139), and only literature created out of an *art pour l'art* impetus deserved to be taken seriously (Clark 2003, 137). Baum, on the other hand, was believed to be driven by a financial motive, and reviled for practicing art for *money's* sake (Clark 2003, 137).

⁷ Indeed, the way she sees it, “schools and universities, with their need to impart exemplary values, have been and still are the main agencies in canon formation” (O'Sullivan 2005, 131).

⁸ With respect to the publisher's role, Joke Linders (1994, 151) remarks, “A publisher only issues those books they expect to be successful” [Een uitgever geeft alleen die boeken uit waarvan hij succes verwacht].

The developments in the United States, rendered by Clark and corroborated by Anne Lundin (2004), are similar to those in Europe observed by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (2003) and Helene Høystrup (2008) (cf. section 2.1). In sum, their effect was that the phenomenon of children's literature slowly became tarnished, despite the fact that it had acquired a considerably respectable reputation earlier. The reason was twofold, ensuing from an inordinate amount of emphasis placed on its pedagogical side on the one hand,⁹ and an association with commercial purposes on the other, as Heinrich Kaulen also shows. In his view, publishers' treatment of children's books as short-lived commodities impedes canon transfer and maintenance, as it results in the books' limited shelf life in shops and libraries, for instance (Kaulen 2007, 111).¹⁰

Seeing that the commercial aspect related to the diachronic dimension may connote inferiority, some scholars can be seen to avoid it. A strategy of an evasive kind seems to underlie many studies, such as Kümmerling-Meibauer's (2003) and O'Sullivan's (2005). Moreover, Peter Hunt's (1995) case study looking into the divergent evaluation of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* compared to Enid Blyton's *Five Go Down to the Sea* illustrates the prevalence of critical acclaim based on perceived aesthetic worth over popular support. Reinbert Tabbert (in collaboration with Kristin Wardetzky) advances a definition of successful children's books as "books that are known to be highly appreciated by a large, statistically verifiable number of children, and, possibly, by many critics as well" (Tabbert and Wardetzky 1995, 2; emphasis added). The choice of the adverb "possibly" signals modality and indicates that Tabbert and Wardetzky do not see popularity and reviewer approbation as naturally compatible. Beverly Lyon Clark does not judge the situation as hopeless but instead looks upon the chasm between popularity and critical esteem in children's literature as less deep than that in general literary theory (Clark 2003, 166).¹¹

In this connection, a somewhat puzzling comment on the disproportion is made by Lana A. Whited in her introduction to the collection of essays suggestively titled *The Ivory*

⁹ Cf. section 1.1, and in particular (Shavit 1986, 35); (Surmatz 2005, 25).

¹⁰ A further factor hampering the development of children's literature as a whole, Kaulen argues, is the lack of archives, museums, and databases systematically recording the entire stream of publications in the field (Kaulen 2007, 111). Cf. (Ewers 2007a, 97).

¹¹ By quoting Shakespeare scholar Anthony Holden, Clark shows how differently the aura of commercialism is treated in the fields of adult and children's literature. Holden, she reports, makes mention of "an interesting paradox[:] the more popular (or bestselling) an adult book, [...] the less likely it is to be considered literature, while the popularity of a children's book sees big literary claims being made on its behalf" (Clark 2003, 163). Holden suggests that popularity and critical esteem are seen as opposed with respect to literature for adults, but not so much as regards children's literature (Clark 2003, 166). (Compare (Whited 2002, 12): "Books that become classics may inspire film versions, but they do not usually engender hordes of plastic tie-in merchandise or miniature 'character collectibles' distributed by fast food restaurants".) I myself do not agree with such claims. I do believe that the reality of the book market in general literature eventually will make the situation shift towards a more balanced outlook on popularity versus quality.

Tower and Harry Potter (2002). She maintains that the fact that commercially successful usually are not awarded significant literary prizes substantiates the idea that that popularity and aesthetic quality are incompatible (Whited 2002, 7). She stresses that she does not believe so herself, but the following remark of hers does betray a slightly derisive attitude towards the former property: “Of course, enduring literary value cannot be assigned by referendum, but occasionally, the general reading public does recognize a book of quality” (Whited 2002, 7). Her point is that works that sell abundantly usually are not worth serious attention, a given which casts a shadow on the critical reception of J.K. Rowling’s oeuvre (Whited 2002, 12). So, she wishes to argue in favour of the literary merit of the hugely profitable Harry Potter-books, but at the same time undercuts her own argument by failing to acknowledge the impact of that very book market.

In fact, to my mind, the perception of the reality of the book market as a predicament is unproductive. If one conversely embraces the idea that the chasm between culture and commerce is diminishing,¹² and chooses to reevaluate commodification and distribution as constructive components in processes of canonisation, then there really is no need to circumvent such issues. Taking up the point I made at the onset of my inquiry (cf. section 1.4), I strongly believe that a much more fruitful approach is to look upon commerce not as discreditable or obstructive but as beneficial, facilitating a canonical work’s dissemination, necessary in order for it to leave its mark in a literary field.

As such, I appreciate the fact that Anne Lundin proves to value the connection with the book market positively, seeing that she deplores that popularity is treated all too casually by the contributors to the ChLA *Touchstones*-volume and pleads with scholars to quit imposing “the great judgment from on high” on children’s books (Lundin 2004, 148). A similar concern underpins the discourse employed by Julia Briggs, Dennis Butts, and M.O. Grenby, who compiled the volume *Popular Children's Literature in Britain* (2008). In his introduction, Grenby explains that the book came about as a way of counterbalancing the predominance in the (Anglo-Saxon) canon of children’s literature of works which are deemed significant because of their quality and innovative nature (Grenby 2008, 13). Grenby writes, “In a deliberate attempt to interrogate the ‘Great Tradition’, the criterion of popularity alone has been used to determine the contents of this collection”,¹³ and suggests that there may be little overlap between the books chosen accordingly and those commonly discussed in works of literary history (Grenby 2008, 13). As such, the editors present popularity and canonicity as separate issues, and show that they seek to overcome this discrepancy. (Nonetheless, their argumentation suffers from the same

¹² See for instance (Persson 1998), which provides an in-depth discussion of the destabilisation of traditional, class-related hierarchies of value.

¹³ Grenby notes that he and the other editors “define popular literature as that which has been well-liked or commercially successful, or both” (Grenby 2008, 2).

paradox as Peter Hunt's, namely that to address the issue at the same time means maintaining the imbalance to a certain extent.)

In recognising literary works as commodities and abandoning the immobilising culture/commerce-rift, I simultaneously foreground the ambivalent nature of canonised stories (cf. section 1.4). As I expounded in "Never-ending Stories", co-written with Sylvie Geerts (2014), I see as a pivotal feature of a canonical book the fact that it reconciles culture and commerce.¹⁴ Kenneth Kidd is of the same opinion and highlights our perception of canonical works as simultaneously exalted and recognisable (Kidd 2011, 54).¹⁵ My conception of canonicity, then, is aligned with ideas put forward by Deborah Stevenson (2009), and Ann Haugland (1994). Within general literary theory, comparable argumentations are pursued by Barbara Herrnstein Smith (1984), Carey Kaplan and Ellen Cronan Rose (1990),¹⁶ and Magnus Persson (1998), to name just a few.

This deconstruction of the antithesis between culture and commerce characteristic of cultural studies in fact illustrates the historical contingency of the separation of high and low culture and its guiding principles (such as literary quality).¹⁷ Moreover, it is an essential premise in Claire Squires' study *Marketing Literature. The Making of Contemporary Writing in Britain* (2007). She summarises the culture/commerce-gap as being underpinned by an understanding of books as different and an outlook on books as exactly the same as other commodities respectively (Squires 2007, 49). More importantly, she points out that the literary field nowadays is a conglomerate of different forms of cultural capital which coexist (Squires 2007, 49). As a result, the creation and attribution of literary value has become more complicated, with more types of canonising agents wielding influence (Squires 2007, 49). This complex system encompasses players in the commercial, popular leg of the field, whose role should be valued positively. In the next section, I will illustrate how they contributed to Astrid Lindgren's works becoming never-ending stories.

¹⁴ "a canonical text embodies a certain duality. On the one hand, it epitomises the Romantic ideal of a unique and innovative piece of art, a quality which grants it esteem and creates an artistic standard for the following generations to live up to. On the other hand, it is by no means hampered by the boundaries of these dominant circles and succeeds in making a broader cultural impact, appealing to the common reader" (Geerts and Van den Bossche 2014, 10).

¹⁵ Kidd furthermore comments, "[The Classic] tends, in short, toward seemingly contradictory things: time and temporality, exceptionality and the commonplace, the remote and the familiar, the organic and the manufactured" (Kidd 2011, 54).

¹⁶ Kaplan and Cronan Rose (1990, 14) see as a crucial dynamic underlying canon (re)formation "the oscillation between the needs and desires of the common reader and the ideological interests of a cultural/academic elite".

¹⁷ See for instance (Persson 1998) and (Öhman 2002, 16-21).

5.2 The Road to Never-endingness: Diachronic Features

A pioneer to have adopted a diachronic outlook was Zohar Shavit, who studied status symbols, or in her words, “the means by which society attributed a high status to literary systems and their writers” (Shavit 1986, 34-35). The account rendered in section 2.1 of Shavit’s views on canonisation processes complemented by those of scholars following in her footsteps, such as Peter Hunt (1995), Beverly Lyon Clark (2003), and Deborah Stevenson (1997), could easily fit into this section as well. Keeping in mind that diachronic features pertain to the way in which the canonical work functions helps to explain why, within this paradigm, canonised books are perceived chiefly as works having found “continuous dissemination” (Seibert 2007, 105).¹⁸ Indeed, from the diachronic viewpoint, the works which count as canonical are those which, in Klaus Doderer’s terms, “have obtained a high sociological efficiency due to their ‘tenacious’ transfer and continued appreciation” (Doderer 1969, 7).¹⁹ In this section, I will list the main characteristics foregrounded within this scarcely discussed paradigm. These include availability, popularity, and longevity, which, as signs of proliferation, constitute the bricks with which the way to endlessness is paved, so to speak. Literary historiography and awards, then again, provide proof of the capitalisation of the work’s canonical potential. The former, in particular, is a type of confirmation which is only within reach for the “globetrotters” among authors, whose “much-travelled” works in effect have been dispersed widely.

Availability

Hans-Heino Ewers reasons, “A canon must, in order to be accepted as such, to a certain extent also be a lively canon, a reading canon, a canon of works and authors that are still being read”, as well as championed by supporting groups [Trägergruppe] (Ewers 2007a, 97).²⁰ A crucial premise within the diachronical paradigm, then, is that the works are at the readers’ disposal. Obviously, this is a prerequisite for their incessant dissemination, which otherwise would not even be possible to attain. Their being available is an essential starting point, and this is where the distribution circuit – or, the book market – comes into the picture. In assuring that literary works reach their prospective readers, agents

¹⁸ “anhaltende Verbreitung” (Seibert 2007, 105).

¹⁹ “die durch ihre ‘zähe’ Tradierung und langanhaltende Wertschätzung eine hohe soziologische Effizienz erzielt haben” (Doderer 1969, 7). Compare section 1.3.

²⁰ “Ein Kanon muss, um als ein solcher gelten zu können, in gewissem Ausmaß stets auch ein lebendiger, ein Lesekanon, ein Kanon noch gelesener Werke und Autoren sein” (Ewers 2007a, 97).

operating in the book market – in their capacity of publisher, librarian, or book seller – have a central role to play. It is their contribution which assures the realisation of canonical potential inherent in a work of literature. Through their mediation the work *can* become an object of reception, and, subsequently, embedded in a particular literary context. Moreover, the argumentation applies reversely as well: as the works become entrenched in the field, their continued availability becomes a sign of their canonicity. They need to be accessible to become important, and as they grow important, the need to keep them available increases correspondingly. As Deborah Stevenson aptly expresses it, “Ultimately, they are classics because they are still here, just as much as they are still here because they are classics” (Stevenson 2009, 115).²¹

M.O. Grenby values obtainability as highly as certain synchronic qualities. He writes, “the availability of a book is just as important a factor in its popularity as its literary merits or its appeal for children” (Grenby 2008, 5). Research which showed that the fact that nineteenth-century authors whose works were available in school and home libraries, and “hence easily get-at-able”, had better odds of breaking through (Grenby 2008, 5).²² Joke Linders pursues a comparable line of reasoning and states, “A people that esteems its culture will make sure that children become familiar with the stories their parents grew up with, and that classics remain *accessible*” (quoted in (van Ginkel 1994, 149; emphasis added)).²³ In fact, Linders emphasises obtainability abundantly, because, as she puts it, “A book which is not here, cannot be classic” (Linders 1994, 151).²⁴ Hence, her definition of a canonical work presupposes accessibility, equally paying attention to the role transformations can play in this respect. In her view, works belonging to the canon “[are] still available and [are being] sold. By means of new editions, publishers try their best to keep bringing these titles to the public’s attention. They give them other, prettier, uglier, cheaper, more readable, visible or audible looks” (Linders 1994, 151).²⁵ In addition, availability was one of requirements to have guided the compilation of *Beyond Babar*, as can be derived from Sandra Beckett’s statement that “[i]n their own countries, these books have become modern classics and are regularly reissued in new editions” (Beckett 2006, viii).

²¹ Cf. section 1.4.

²² Grenby (2008, 5) cites from the following article: Salmon, Edward G. “What Girls Read.” *Nineteenth Century* 20 1886: 515-529.

²³ “Een volk dat haar cultuur hoog heeft, zorgt ervoor dat kinderen vertrouwd raken met de verhalen waarmee hun ouders zijn opgegroeid en dat klassiekers toegankelijk blijven” (quoted in (van Ginkel 1994, 149)). See also section 1.4.

²⁴ “Een boek dat er niet is, kan niet klassiek zijn” (Linders 1994, 151).

²⁵ “[zijn] nog altijd beschikbaar en [worden] verkocht. Uitgevers doen hun best deze titels via nieuwe uitgaven steeds weer onder de aandacht van het publiek te brengen. Zij steken ze in andere, mooiere, lelijker, goedkopere, leesbaarder, zicht- of hoorbare jasjes” (Linders 1994, 151). Cf. section 5.1.

Arguably, the availability of Astrid Lindgren works in the Flemish-Dutch literary field is actually reflected in the practice of literary criticism itself. This applies especially to the professional journals, in which reviewing a newly issued book is the most common reason for writing about Lindgren. The steady flow of reviews throughout the studied period (1952-2012) attests to the continuous availability of her works.²⁶ What is more, the diachronic feature of accessibility is taken into consideration in the reviews themselves. The Dutch-language critics who deal with this issue seem to agree that Astrid Lindgren's works easily live up to the requirement of being at the disposal of potential readers. In a piece honouring the author's centenary, for example, *Leesgoed* editor and critic Karin Kustermans substantiates her statement that "this grande dame of children's literature lives on in times of Harry Potter, *chicklit*, and new media" by means of the following remark: "All over the world, her books are still being reprinted, sold, read, new translations in new languages are still being issued" (En nu 39 2007, 343; emphasis in original).²⁷ As such, Kustermans' observation reflects several possible ways of interpreting availability, which I will elucidate below.

To begin with, the value of translation as a means of making a work available is touched upon several times. From the onset, in the earliest articles dating back to the 1960s and 1970s, critics note that Astrid Lindgren's work has been translated into over 20 languages already.²⁸ Eventually, the sheer number of languages her body of work is translated into – with figures quoted ranging from 50 to 90 and everything in between –²⁹ apparently comes to count as an indication of her importance about as solid as sales numbers. So, Pippi Longstocking's being counted "among the most translated and best sold children's

²⁶ Over the entire 61-year-period under scrutiny, only three years show no "epitextual activity", if you will. No reviews were printed in the selected journals and newspapers in 1953, 1954, and 1963. In sum, relevant epitexts were published in 58 of the studied 61 years, which meant that coverage amounts to 95%.

²⁷ "deze grande dame van de jeugdliteratuur verder leeft in tijden van Harry Potter, *chicklit* en nieuwe media"; "Haar boeken worden nog steeds over de hele wereld herdrukt, gekocht, gelezen, er verschijnen nog steeds nieuwe vertalingen in nieuwe talen" (En nu 39 2007, 343).

²⁸ (JBG 8 1969, 100); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.).

²⁹ The number of languages into which Astrid Lindgren's books have been translated (or an estimate of that number) is mentioned in the following articles: (En nu 38 2007, 341); (JBG 8 1969, 100); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (JBG 32 1981, 30); (JBG 58 1990, 238); (JBG 65 1991, 262); (JBG 74 1995, 92); (JBG 75 1996, 11); (JBG 79 1999, 112); (JBG 80 2000, 64); (JBG 82 2000); (JBG 83 2001, 219); (JBG 86 2002, 147); (JBG 88 2003, 58); (JBG 89 2003, 202); (JBG 91 2003, 239); (JBG 92 2003, 246); (JBG 93 2003, 332); (JBG 95 2005, 105); (JBG 97 2005, 339); (JBG 98 2007, 229); (JBG 100 2007, 330); (JBG 102 2007, 330); (LG 43 1986, 476); (LzL 2 1995, 165); (LzL 6 2004, 118); (News 43 1978, n.p.); (News 62 1986, n.p.); (News 63 1987, n.p.); (News 64 1988, n.p.); (News 68 1992, n.p.); (News 76 1993, n.p.); (News 78 1993, n.p.); (News 90, 1997, n.p.); (News 91 1997, n.p.); (News 92 1997, 16); (News 93 1997, n.p.); (News 94 1997, n.p.); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 140 2002, 1); (News 141 2002, 1); (News 146 2002, 7); (News 156 2002, n.p.); (News 159 2002, 36); (News 206 2003, 13); (News 213 2004, 12); (News 243 2006, 32); (News 370 2012, 8); (News 471 2002, 1); (News 473 2002, 2); (News 474 2002, n.p.); (News 475 2002, n.p.); (News 479 2002, 1); (News 484 2002, 55); (News 518 2002, 3); (News 681 2007, 10-11).

books of the second half of the twentieth century” should be seen as a major token of awe on reviewer Karin van Camp’s part (LzL 2 1995, 165).³⁰ Moreover, the fact that Kirsten Waterstraat mentions that her body of work has been translated almost entirely reflects a large degree of reverence for Astrid Lindgren (LzL 9 2010, 31-32).

In addition, the fact that availability can be secured by means of the works’ being reprinted and kept in circulation is taken into account in several of the corpus contributions.³¹ This type of argument occurred in journal articles for the most part. Seeing that this type of publication serves to keep a finger on the pulse of children’s book publishing, this of course makes sense. For example, a 1965 review of *Happy Times in Noisy Village* states that it “is reprinted due to its being a big success” (News 14 1965, n.p.).³² In 1958, the reissue of *Pippi Longstocking* is announced in the *IDIL*-guide as follows: “A second edition was published of the popular book *Pippi Longstocking*, by Astrid Lindgren, and rightly so” (IDIL 3 1958, n.p.).³³ In a piece on the film version of the Pippi Longstocking-books in *Jeugdboekengids* in 1969, the anonymous critic points out that the numerous reissues of the books in Holland bear testament to Pippi’s large popularity (JBG 8 1969, 100). In 1979, *Lektuurgids* critic Mieke de Bruijne remarks, “A 14th printing speaks volumes” (LG 30 1979, 443).³⁴ Likewise, E. Vandevelde in *Jeugdboekengids* states that the fact that twelve editions of *Pippi Longstocking Goes on Board* have been issued thus far speaks for itself. Vandevelde adds, “Hence, that children *have a taste for* this mad tale, does not require any more proof” (JBG 25 1979, 157; emphasis added).³⁵ The reviewer’s having opted for a metaphor related to eating suggests, as it were, that the Pippi Longstocking-cycle is like food for the children, and a kind that they are really fond of at that. Indeed, the Pippi-books are perceived as possessing an “irresistible charm” which explains the incessant reprinting (News 48 1980, n.p.).³⁶ A reviewer for *De Standaard* observes, “That

³⁰ “tot de meest vertaalde en -verkochte kinderboeken van het tweede deel van de twintigste eeuw.” (LzL 2 1995, 165) Compare (JBG 77 1997, 337);

³¹ (IDIL 3 1958, n.p.); (IDIL 11 1965, 101); (JBG 8 1969, 100); (JBG 25 1979, 157); (JBG 58 1990, 238); (JBG 65 1991, 262); (JBG 74 1995, 92); (JBG 75 1996, 11); (JBG 79 1999, 112); (JBG 80 2000, 64); (JBG 82 2000, 336); (JBG 83 2001, 219); (JBG 86 2002, 147); (JBG 88 2003, 58); (JBG 89 2003, 202); (JBG 91 2003, 239); (JBG 92 2003, 246); (JBG 93 2003, 332); (JBG 95 2005, 105); (JBG 97 2005, 339); (JBG 100 2007, 330); (JBG 101 2007, 231); (JBG 102 2007, 330); (JBG 104 2010, 297); (LG 5 1965, 52); (LG 9 1969, 49); (LG 15 1971, 118); (LG 24 1976, 343); (LG 25 1976, 343); (LG 27 1979, 140); (LG 31 1979, 443); (LzL 6 2004, 118); (News 17 1967, n.p.); (News 38 1976, n.p.); (News 94 1997, n.p.); (News 206 2003, 13); (News 213 2004, 12); (News 514 2002, 29).

³² “wegens groot succes eveneens in herdruk is verschenen” (News 14 1965, n.p.).

³³ “Van het populaire boek Pippi Langkous, door Astrid Lindgren, verscheen een 2e druk, en terecht” (IDIL 3 1958, n.p.). Compare (IDIL 11 1965, 101).

³⁴ “Een 14e druk spreekt boekdelen” (LG 30 1979, 443).

³⁵ “Dat kinderen deze dolle geschiedenis *lusten*, moet dus niet meer bewezen worden” (JBG 25 1979, 157; emphasis added).

³⁶ “onweerstaanbare charme” (News 48 1980, n.p.).

they keep exerting a great deal of attraction is proved by the fact that the Dutch translation of the first Pippi-book has reached its fourteenth edition” (News 48 1980, n.p.).³⁷

The second impression of *Rasmus and the Tramp* also caught the gatekeepers’ attention. In *Trouw*, a critic warmly recommends the disarming story and notes, “Ploegsma [...] gave this book, that was rewarded with the Hans Christian Andersen Award, a colourful facelift. [...] Also counting in this book’s favour is that a second edition was reached in our country” (News 7 1964, n.p.).³⁸ That the publication of a reprint is seen as a token of importance just as significant as a major accolade is particularly meaningful in the context of canonisation. *Lektuurgids* reviewer Leo Roelants finds the reissue to be deserved and describes *Rasmus and the Tramp* as “[a] book which has already acquired worldwide fame and therefore more than earned its second printing in Dutch” (LG 5 1965, 52).³⁹ A similar degree of respect shows in his announcement that “we are delighted to point out a fully revised new edition of this fairy tale, that was awarded an exceptional children’s literature prize in Germany” (LG 8 1968, 130).⁴⁰ Several years later, an awestruck Roelants exclaims, “It has got to its 5th edition: none too many for such a hit!” (LG 27 1979, 140)⁴¹

What is to be observed in all of these examples, then, is not only the linking of success and obtainability (being kept in print), but also a shift in discourse. The quotes from the 1950s and -60s reviews indicate that the critics at that point feel the need to justify the publication of new editions. At first, the critics draw on their authority to champion the works. Then, in the late 1960s, as the books prove to be winning ground, the reviewers argue that they hence have earned the right to be reprinted. A decade later, by the mid-to-late 1970s, this type of argument has become superfluous. The achieved right has become a firm prerogative, if you will. This change of tone mirrors a transition from one stage to another in the processes of canonisation involving Astrid Lindgren’s works. It reflects the proverbial emancipation of these works, which are no longer dependent on the gatekeepers’ support but prove to have become more or less self-reliant (the Pippi Longstocking-cycle more so than other titles).

³⁷ “Dat die veel aantrekkingskracht blijven uitoefenen, blijkt uit het feit dat van de Nederlandse vertaling van het eerste Pippi-boek de veertiende druk voorligt” (News 48 1980, n.p.).

³⁸ “Ploegsma [...] stak dit boek, dat bekroond werd met de Hans Christian Andersen-prijs, in een fleurig gewaad. Rita Verschuur vertaalde het met zorg uit het Zweeds. Het pleit eveneens voor dit boek, dat in ons land een tweede druk werd bereikt” (News 7 1964, n.p.).

³⁹ “Een boek dat reeds wereldfaam verwierf en dus zijn tweede druk in het Nederlands royaal verdiende” (LG 5 1965, 52).

⁴⁰ “[het] verheugt ons [...] een herdruk van dit in Duitsland met een bijzondere jeugdboekenprijs onderscheiden sprookjesverhaal in een geheel hernieuwde uitgave te kunnen signaleren” (LG 8 1968, 130).

⁴¹ “Het is nu aan zijn 5de druk toe: niets te veel voor zo’n treffer!” (LG 27 1979, 140)

What is more, a few critics highlight the canonising impact of reprintings. With respect to the reissue of the Karlsson-omnibus, Leo Roelants concludes, “These stories [...] will be able to last another couple of years!” (LG 24 1976, 343)⁴² Similarly, he is convinced that a reprint of [*Nils Karlsson-Pyssling*] “again will offer new or renewed enjoyment for thousands of children.” (LG 25 1976, 343).⁴³ Upon the publication of picture book [*Celebrations at Vilekulla Cottage*] in 2010, Marit Trioen comments on the downpour of reissues publishing house Ploegsma set in motion (JBG 104 2010, 297). She is convinced that the book will allow “yet another new generation of children to fraternise with Lindgren’s timeless rascals” (JBG 104 2010, 297).⁴⁴ This goes to show that new editions are considered to be vital to keeping a work alive.

In this connection, some critics deem the role of publishing company Ploegsma, the main publisher of Astrid Lindgren’s works in Dutch, to be fairly large. Even to this very day, time and again, Ploegsma issues new editions on the Dutch and Flemish book market, which almost invariably get the critics’ attention. As it turns out, several reviewers explicitly mention Ploegsma and its publishing policy in their notices.⁴⁵ As Astrid Lindgren turns eighty-five in 1992, Carolien Zilverberg calls attention to Ploegsma’s tendency to launch publicity stunts honouring such festive occasions, such as the month of celebrations in 1987 and the special edition, [*Astrid Lindgren’s Collected Stories*], issued at the time of writing (News 74 1992, n.p.). As mentioned before, the policy is also pointed out in a 1971 review of [*Nils Karlsson-Pyssling*] in *NRC Handelsblad*: “Dutch youths from the ages of seven to twelve have every right to be grateful to publishing house Ploegsma for introducing works by Swedish author Astrid Lindgren time and again. Because Astrid Lindgren understands her business like few others” (News 24 1971, n.p.).⁴⁶

In the majority of the cases, the reviewer simply observes that the work under scrutiny is a republication and leaves it at that. In some contributions, however, attention is paid to the possible effect of such new editions, and hence, the impact of Ploegsma of the canonisation of Lindgren’s works. In an article on picture book [*Pippi’s Birthday*],⁴⁷ Karin van Camp points out that Ploegsma has issued stories about Pippi Longstocking in

⁴² “Deze verhalen [...] kunnen weer voor een paar jaar mee!” (LG 24 1976, 343)

⁴³ “weer voor duizenden kinderen nieuw of hernieuwd genot kunnen brengen” (LG 25 1976, 343).

⁴⁴ “weer een nieuwe generatie kinderen verbroederen met Lindgrens belhamels-van-alle-tijden” (JBG 104 2010, 297).

⁴⁵ See in particular (LzL 4 2000), which is devoted entirely to the policy pursued by Ploegsma.

⁴⁶ “De Nederlandssprekende jeugd van ongeveer zeven tot ongeveer twaalf jaar heeft alle reden om uitgeverij Ploegsma erkentelijk te zijn voor het keer op keer in ons land introduceren van werk van de Zweedse schrijfster Astrid Lindgren. Want Astrid Lindgren beheerst het vak als weinig anderen” (News 24 1971, n.p.). Compare section 2.4.

⁴⁷ *Pippi is jarig*.

different forms (JBG 95 2005, 105),⁴⁸ thus making them readily available to their readership. In 1995, shortly after Astrid Lindgren announced that she was forced to give up writing due to deteriorating eyesight, Van Camp notes that, consequently, for publishers, the only resolution is to go back to Lindgren's older work. She remarks,

For over thirteen years, 87-year-old Astrid Lindgren has not written any new books and hardly any new stories for picture books. There is not much left for the publishers to do but to reissue new versions of books which had been published earlier – or parts of those. (JBG 73 1995, 16)⁴⁹

Against that backdrop, van Camp argues that the choice to publish *The Runaway Sleigh Ride*, a chapter from *Mardie*, as a picture book is understandable but nevertheless debatable. She fails to see how the story can make sense on its own, stripped of its original context, and is therefore somewhat critical of the idea of republication (JBG 73 1995, 16). Furthermore, the decision to issue [*The Fairy Tales*] appears somewhat random to her. She remarks, “At first sight, it isn't immediately clear why yet another collection was needed” (JBG 76 1997, 17).⁵⁰ In one other rare case, a reviewer proves to be unsatisfied with the choice to issue a reprint of a book of Lindgren's. The second edition of [*Nils Karlsson-Pyssling*] is received fairly negatively, despite its being awarded the Nils Holgersson Prize (News 38 1976, n.p.). “Is this book really such a highlight”, the critic wonders, and goes on to add, “We don't think so, in spite of Lindgren's fame” (News 38 1976, n.p.).⁵¹ What bothers the reviewer is the introduction of fantastic elements in a work that is not presented as a fairy tale (News 38 1976, n.p.). In any case, what is relevant here, is that the critic does not approve of it and hence does not deem it worthy of a reissue.

In 1997, Ploegsma took an important step in solidifying its advocacy of Astrid Lindgren's oeuvre by setting out to republish selected works as one single series, the so-called “Astrid Lindgren Bibliotheek” [Astrid Lindgren Library]. The chosen books were released subsequently with a coherent design and layout, and with a clearly visible logo and number on the cover and spine. As such, the relationship between the separate books was marked by their peritext.⁵² Thirteen of Lindgren's works were issued in the series between 1997 and 2005, in the following order: *Lotta on Troublemaker Street*, *Ronia, the*

⁴⁸ “De verhalen rond Pippi Langkous werden de laatste jaren door Ploegsma al in verschillende uitgaven gepubliceerd” (JBG 95 2005, 105).

⁴⁹ “De 87-jarige Astrid Lindgren schrijft al meer dan 13 jaar geen nieuwe jeugdboeken meer en amper nog nieuwe verhalen voor prentenboeken. Er blijft de uitgeverijen dan ook niets anders over dan haar reeds verschenen boeken, of delen ervan, in een nieuwe vorm heruit te geven” (JBG 73 1995, 16).

⁵⁰ “Op het eerste gezicht is het niet meteen duidelijk waarom er nood was aan nog een bundel” (JBG 76 1997, 17).

⁵¹ “Of dit boek nu zo'n uitschieter is?”; “Wij vinden van niet, Astrid Lindgren's [sic] roem ten spijt” (News 38 1976, n.p.).

⁵² Cf. (Grenby 2008, 17).

Robber's Daughter, *Emil, Karlsson on the Roof*, *The Brothers Lionheart*, *The Noisy Village Children*, *Mio, my Son*, *Mardie*, *Rasmus and the Tramp*, *Pippi Longstocking*, *Seacrow Island*, *Bill Bergson*, and *Rasmus, Pontus and Toker*.⁵³

Flemish author and critic Ed Franck finds the “Library” lovely (News 218 2004, 11), and exciting (News 205 2003, 13). The reprints make him realise that one simply cannot tire of Lindgren’s books (News 226 2005, 12). Hence, he experiences Lindgren’s writing as imperishable (News 205 2003, 13). Dutch critic Judith Eiselin claims to be delighted by Ploegsma’s continuous efforts to make Astrid Lindgren’s books available again, but is not very pleased with the execution (News 530 2003, 28). Not only does she dislike the colour scheme and the prominent position and size of the logo and the numbers on the covers and spines of the books. Moreover, she is disgruntled with the choice to reillustrate the works. Eiselin asserts, “The Swedish illustrators were substituted for Dutch ones, who mar Lindgren’s works” (News 530 2003, 28).⁵⁴

When discussing one of the “Library” volumes, Karin van Camp adopts a meta-perspective: she notes that she feels that the books collected in the “Library” are the *best* of Astrid Lindgren’s works (JBG 77 1997, 337). In such a view, the collection can be seen as a canon of Lindgren’s works in itself. In her review of the omnibus comprising the three books on Master Detective Bill Bergson, some of Lindgren’s lesser known stories, Van Camp in fact draws attention to the canonising potential of the “Astrid Lindgren Library”. She is of the opinion that the Bill Bergson-books have been overlooked wrongly and expresses the hope that their inclusion in the collection will breathe new life into them (JBG 94 2004, 92). In effect, seen from this angle, the “Library” collection may be perceived as a sort of alternative to the type of classic series that is frequently issued on the initiative of publishing houses.⁵⁵ It is difficult to say whether the “Library” achieved its desired effect entirely, although the republications did manage to bring the titles to the reviewers’ attention and hence keep the buzz alive.

In short, with 92 examples, availability indeed comes across as quite an important consideration in the journal contributors’ assessment of Astrid Lindgren’s works. Publishing house Ploegsma is recognised as having had a hand in this to a certain extent.

⁵³ The reviews that appeared covered *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* (News 265 2007, 27), *Emil* (JBG 81 2000, 291); (JBG 100 2007, 230); (News 201 2003, 19); (News 213 2004, 12), *Karlsson on the Roof* (JBG 80 2000, 63-64), *Mardie* (JBG 86 2002, 147); (News 164 2002, 7), *Seacrow Island* (JBG 89 2003, 202); (News 193 2003, n.p.), *Mio, My Son* (JBG 83 2001, 219-220), *Rasmus* (News 217 2004, 22), and *Bill Bergson* (JBG 94 2004, 92). The concept of the series is discussed in (News 198 2003, 18); (News 201 2003, 19); (News 530 2003, 28).

⁵⁴ “De Zweedse illustratoren werden vervangen door Nederlandse, die aan het werk van Lindgren afbreuk doen” (News 530 2003, 28).

⁵⁵ See for instance (Lannoy 1993, 217).

The publisher's influence was felt in their actively marketing Lindgren's books, as well as in their publishing the "Library" and several picture books.

Popularity

Availability may very well be an indispensable component of a canonical work's dissemination, but it is not adequate in itself. In order for its wider spread to be initiated, as it were, the work has to catch on. A second essential pillar of canonicity, then, is popularity, which is a reflection of the work's "receptional" grounding, its becoming anchored in a certain field.⁵⁶ Here, I wish to reiterate the conclusion I drew in section 2.5 regarding the necessity to bring together sources from all subdomains in the literary field. In absolute terms, the proportion between academic and professional and popular epitexts (285 versus 891) indicates that to exclude the popular sources altogether would mean to miss out on a considerable amount of coverage. More importantly, more detailed figures with respect to the composition of material from the popular sphere support my choice not to restrict this inquiry into canonisation to instances of literary criticism in the strictest sense. Allow me to illustrate this claim: among the popular epitexts, a mere 9.6 % are reviews of regular editions and adaptations, whereas 24.7 % deal with consumables and derivatives and 32.2 % pertain to the author herself. Confining the newspaper material to the *textually* oriented epitexts, viz. the reviews of printed works (85 in total), and leaving out articles addressing *contextual* issues (the remaining 806 texts) would in effect decimate the corpus. It would undoubtedly make for a less comprehensive and much more one-sided picture of the reception and canonisation of Astrid Lindgren's works in Flanders and the Netherlands.

This section gathers utterances pertaining to the success of Astrid Lindgren's works, in the sense of their selling well. Lindgren's commercial value, if you will, is named in 121 cases. One of the earliest references to her success in the book market crops up in 1959, some seven years into her career in Flanders and The Netherlands. At that point, a critic reviewing *Karlsson on the Roof* observes, "the author of this book has several 'best-sellers' to her name already", as a result of which she "doesn't really need this publicity" (News 3 1959, n.p.).⁵⁷ In 1975, Leo Roelants notes, "Astrid Lindgren has been one of the most read

⁵⁶ Additional information indicating the availability and popularity of the books would be data from public libraries concerning lending habits or actual sales numbers (e.g. provided by publishing houses or book stores). See e.g. (En nu 12 1979, 199) "Library Top Ten" [Toptien der bibliotheken]. Such endeavours fall outside the scope of the present study but would provide excellent material for an inquiry focussed on distributional circuits within the literary field.

⁵⁷ "de schrijfster van dit boek heeft al verscheidene 'best-sellers' op haar naam staan"; "heeft deze publiciteit dus niet nodig" (News 3 1959, n.p.).

authors in children’s literature for years now” (LG 21 1975, 85).⁵⁸ That comment, too, attests to her lucrateness, and again shows that her fame started peaking in the early 1970s (cf. section 2.4). By 1978, the total quantity of copies of her works sold is estimated to amount to 25 million (News 43 1978, n.p.). Reportedly, sales numbers keep increasing,⁵⁹ and well into the twenty-first century, Astrid Lindgren’s books are found to still sell well among a large audience (LzL 6 2004, 118).⁶⁰ By now, the sales figures for her entire body of work are reported to amount to somewhere in between 120 and 130 million copies sold.⁶¹ Based on these figures, the critics deem it fair to state that Lindgren counts as “Sweden’s most read [...] author” (En nu 38, 2007, 342),⁶² or even as the most widely read children’s author in the world.⁶³

Based on the type of epitextual material I chose to work with, I cannot derive sound conclusions as to what the exact sales figures of Lindgren’s oeuvre in the Dutch language area are. I can, however, distil from the corpus indications of its fame in general, that is, signs of the books’ being well-known and widely read. It seems adequate, then, at this point, to look into the relationship between Astrid Lindgren’s individual works. Which of her titles is the most popular, in the sense of well-known? Although I have not been referring to a canon as a tangible artefact of conscious canon formation in principle,⁶⁴ I find it meaningful to look for indications of what makes up the canon of Astrid Lindgren’s books, and even on a larger scale, what a more or less fixed canon of children’s literary works and authors could look like. In doing so, I am complying with Torben Weinreich’s suggestion that one should be aware of the existence of a concealed canon (Weinreich 2004, 21).⁶⁵ In Weinreich’s rationale, the notion of a hidden canon applies to well-known

⁵⁸ “Astrid Lindgren is een van de international meest gelezen auteurs voor de jeugd en dat reeds sedert jaren” (LG 21 1975, 85).

⁵⁹ E.g. “tens of millions of copies of her books have been sold” [er zijn tientallen miljoenen exemplaren van haar boeken verkocht] (News 68 1992, n.p.) (cf. (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 90 1997, n.p.); (News 91 1997, n.p.); (News 92 1997, 16)); “more than ten million copies sold” [meer dan 10 miljoen verkocht] (News 94 1997, n.p.); “The total number of copies printed is circa 80 million” [De totale oplage van haar boeken bedraagt circa 80 miljoen exemplaren] (News 159 2002, 36); “80 million copies” [80 miljoen exemplaren] (News 518 2002, 3).

⁶⁰ “Haar werk vindt nog steeds gretig aftrek bij een groot publiek” (LzL 6 2004, 118). Cf. (News 386 1998, 29); (News 387 1998, 19).

⁶¹ (En nu 36 2007, 332); (En nu 38, 2007, 341); (News 134 2002, n.p.); (News 135 2002, n.p.); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 141 2002, 1); (News 146 2002, 7); (News 156 2002, n.p.); (News 473 2002, 2); (News 474 2002, n.p.); (News 479 2002, 1); (News 493 2002, 17); (News 681 2007, 10-11). The highest amount mentioned in the corpus is 145 million (News 278 2007, 99).

⁶² “de meest gelezen [...] schrijver van het land” (En nu 38, 2007, 342). Compare (JBG 78 1998, 396).

⁶³ (JBG 77 1997, 337); (News 68 1992, n.p.); (News 243 2006, 32).

⁶⁴ Rather, I subscribe to John Guillory’s description of a canon as “an *imaginary* totality of works” (Guillory 1993, 30; emphasis added).

⁶⁵ Cf. section 1.3.

and well-read books which are not recorded in an open, public canon list (Weinreich 2004, 21). In my view, my epitextual material can serve to disclose the hidden canon of Astrid Lindgren's works in the Dutch-language field of children's literature, both *internally* and *externally* speaking (that is, within her own oeuvre, and, with respect to other writers and books).

I consider as a gauge of familiarity the amount of corpus articles in which a given book is mentioned. The number of mentions is the sum of the number of articles devoted to that particular book and the number of times it is referred to in other epitexts. Listing these amounts demonstrates what the internal canon of Lindgren's works could be like:

Table 10 Internal Canon: Astrid Lindgren's Most Frequently Mentioned Books (Top Ten)⁶⁶

Pippi Longstocking	417
<i>The Brothers Lionheart</i>	135
<i>Ronia, the Robber's Daughter</i>	125
Karlsson	97
Emil	88
Noisy Village	65
Troublemaker Street	44
Rasmus	43
Mardie	33
<i>Mio, my Son</i>	31

It is crystal clear that *Pippi Longstocking* outweighs all of Lindgren's other works, in terms of both sales numbers and admiration. The number of times the Pippi-books is mentioned (417) is over three times as high as the amount of instances for the second and third popular works, *The Brothers Lionheart* (135) and *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* (125). Her primacy is corroborated by several of the article contributors, some of whom stress that she is the most popular brainchild of Lindgren's.⁶⁷ The author is found to owe her own renown to the character: a commonly held conviction is that she became world-famous precisely thanks to the Pippi-books (39 instances),⁶⁸ and that she will be remembered for

⁶⁶ Astrid Lindgren wrote many series about the same character(s). In this overview, these books are treated as a single entity. Only the main character's name or the specific setting is mentioned (without italics). Individual titles, by contrast, are italicised. A complete list of all of the title mentions is included in the Appendix.

⁶⁷ (News 16 1967, n.p.); (News 62 1986, n.p.); (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 102 1998, 12); (News 117 2000, 10); (News 137 2002, 38); (News 372 2012, 17); (News 386 1998, 29); (News 474 2002, n.p.); (News 476 2002, 10); (News 483 2002, 28); (News 758 2009, 31); (News 760 2009, 24).

⁶⁸ (JBG 37 1982, 28); (News 32 1974, n.p.); (News 95 1997, n.p.); (News 141 2002, 1); (News 158 2002, 2); (News 170 2002, n.p.); (News 171 2002, n.p.); (News 172 2002, 23); (News 222 2004, 99); (News 305 2009, 71); (News 308 2010, 31); (News 472 2002, 1); (News 473 2002, 2); (News 488 2002, 11); (News 489 2002, 12); (News 490 2002, 6); (News 512 2002, 6); (News 543 2003, 16); (News 605 2006, 27); (News 621 2006, 25).

them mainly.⁶⁹ Astrid Lindgren and Pippi Longstocking are identified with one another, as is illustrated by the author's frequently being referred to as "the Pippi author" (14 examples),⁷⁰ or even with the epithets "Pippi's mother" (39),⁷¹ or "Astrid 'Pippi Longstocking' Lindgren" (4).⁷² Such references are prevalent in popular sources mainly and were particularly common on the occasion of her decease. At that time, Herman Eetgerinck in *De Telegraaf* commented, "Whomever thinks of the recently departed children's book writer Astrid Lindgren thinks of Pippi Longstocking and automatically becomes happy" (News 475 2002, n.p.).⁷³ Leo Roelant's telling claim, made in 1975, that "[f]or many people, her name initially brings to mind Pippi Longstocking" (LG 21 1975, 85),⁷⁴ demonstrates that the Pippi-figure came to serve as a benchmark. Likewise, that status of a standard becomes evident that Lindgren's centenary is announced as "Pippi Longstocking day".⁷⁵ Flemish dual readership author Bart Moeyaert, for his part, stresses that Lindgren was *more* than just the mother of Pippi Longstocking and that she was an influential public figure in her homeland Sweden (cf. *infra*).⁷⁶

As far as *Pippi Longstocking's* overall popularity goes, the book is referred to as a "bestseller" as early as in 1969 (JBG 8 1969, 100). The non-specified reviewer states, "If a hit parade of children's books existed Pippi Longstocking would figure at the top of that list in many countries" (JBG 8 1969, 100).⁷⁷ However, this critic continues to point out that the books are not quite well-known enough in Flanders (JBG 8 1969, 100). Nevertheless, a mere three years later Pippi has acquired a relatively high level of fame, as can be derived from the introduction to an anonymous piece in the same journal, which reads as follows:

⁶⁹ (News 93 1997, n.p.); (News 276 2007, 65); (News 377 1998, 31); (News 481 2002, 6).

⁷⁰ (JBG 21 1976, 74); (News 78 1993, n.p.); (News 80 1994, n.p.); (News 81 1994, n.p.); (News 82 1994, n.p.); (News 160 2002, n.p.); (News 330 2011, 20); (News 357 2012, 7); (News 359 2012, 17); (News 362 2012, 11); (News 477 2002, 1); (News 529 2002, 24); (News 541b 2003, 6); (News 794 2010, n.p.).

⁷¹ (En nu 36 2007, 332-335); (JBG 77 1997, 337); (News 37 1976, n.p.); (News 70 1992, n.p.); (News 80 1994, n.p.); (News 81 1994, n.p.); (News 93 1997, n.p.); (News 122 2001, 2); (News 134 2002, n.p.); (News 135 2002, n.p.); (News 136 2002, 32); (News 137 2002, 38); (News 140 2002, 1); (News 142 2002, 10); (News 146 2002, 7); (News 149 2002, 38); (News 150 2002, 38); (News 154 2002, 2); (News 159 2002, 36); (News 181 2002, 11); (News 182 2002, 26); (News 252 2007, 20); (News 255 2007, 115); (News 257 2007, 27); (News 274 2007, 40); (News 312 2010, 32); (News 328 2011, 28); (News 329 2011, 21); (News 331 2011, 33); (News 339 2011, 39); (News 358 2012, 3); (News 478 2002, 1); (News 479 2002, 1); (News 527 2002, 14-22); (News 533 2003, 21); (News 657 2007, 8); (News 680 2007, 12); (News 770 2009, 28); (News 823 2011, 2).

⁷² (News 257 2007, 27); (News 463 2001, 11); (News 424 1999, n.p.); (News 745 2008, 24).

⁷³ "Wie denkt aan de zojuist overleden kinderboekenschrijfster Astrid Lindgren, denkt aan Pippi Langkous en wordt vanzelf vrolijk" (News 475 2002, n.p.).

⁷⁴ "Roept bij velen haar naam in eerste instantie Pippi Langkous voor de geest" (LG 21 1975, 85).

⁷⁵ (News 683 2007, 3); (News 684 2007, 2).

⁷⁶ (News 143 2002, 10); (News 144 2002, 15).

⁷⁷ "Als er een hitlijst zou bestaan van kinderboeken dan zou Pipi [sic] Langkous in heel wat landen bovenaan die lijst prijken" (JBG 8 1969, 100).

“By now, everybody knows that Pippi Longstocking is pretty much the strongest girl in the world” (JBG 10 1972, 96).⁷⁸ An argumentation along the same lines can be discerned in a 1973 article signed by Fred de Swert, who states that the core components of the plot of the Pippi Longstocking-books gradually have become known to readers (JBG 13 1973, 44). *Lektuurgids* reviewer Leo Roelants puts it more strongly and claims that Pippi’s renown is universal (LG 16 1971, 240) Similarly, E. Vandeveldde affirmatively answers the question “Do you know Pippi Longstocking?”, as it can be found in the title of the eponymous picture book. Vandeveldde asserts, “Indeed, we know Pippi Longstocking” (JBG 26 1980, 63).⁷⁹ Popularity (in the sense of familiarity) hence proves to be used as an argument in the confirming stage of the books’ canonisation.

By 1995, 40 years after the book first appeared in Dutch, it is claimed to “undoubtedly be among the [...] best sold children’s books of the second half of the twentieth century” (LzL 2 1995, 165).⁸⁰ In addition, in epitexts dating from the 1990s and 2000s, several of the reviewers convey the popularity of the Pippi Longstocking-books in more general terms. For instance, they are labelled as classics,⁸¹ or are said to have been enormously prosperous (JBG 56 1990, 19). Astrid Lindgren is found to have scored a bullseye,⁸² with an unforgettable work (News 239 2005, 99), which became a worldwide hit (News 262 2007, 30). The protagonist herself is perceived as world-famous,⁸³ iconic (News 86 1995, n.p.), and perhaps even the most famous girl in the world (News 689 2007, 22). She is counted among the most renowned characters in world literature (News 141 2002, 1).⁸⁴ The following comment summarises the unparalleled status of the Pippi-figure: “Whenever Sweden and reading are mentioned, one undoubtedly thinks of Pippi Longstocking

⁷⁸ “Dat Pippi Langkous zowat het sterkste meisje ter wereld is weet nu wel iedereen” (JBG 10 1972, 96). Compare (LG 30 1979, 443): “the freckled girl in the red braids that is gradually winning world renown” [het zo langzaam wereldberoemde sproetig [sic] meisje met de rode vlechten].

⁷⁹ “Pippi Langkous kennen we inderdaad” (JBG 26 1980, 63).

⁸⁰ “Pippi Langkous behoort ongetwijfeld tot de meest [...] verkochte kinderboeken van het tweede deel van de twintigste eeuw” (LzL 2 1995, 165).

⁸¹ (JBG 77 1997, 337); (News 130 2001, 29); (News 403 1998, 7); (News 404 1998, 12).

⁸² (News 121 2000, 46); (News 156 2002, n.p.).

⁸³ (News 101 1998, 8); (News 102 1998, 12); (News 112 1999, 11); (News 149 2002, 38); (News 150 2002, 38); (News 225 2005, 36); (News 230 2005, 17); (News 231 2005, 23); (News 253 2007, n.p.); (News 760 2009, 24).

⁸⁴ Compare (News 431 1999, n.p.), in which the owner of an antiquarian book shops comments “a first edition of *Pippi Longstocking* is world literature. That is interesting even to universities in America. That interest is universal” [een eerste druk van *Pippi Langkous* [...] [is] wereldliteratuur. ‘Daar zijn ook universiteiten in Amerika in geïnteresseerd. Die belangstelling is universeel].

immediately. Over the years, the self-willed character [...] has stolen many a child's heart all over the world" (News 795 2010, 33).⁸⁵

As for her other works, tokens of appreciation are considerably less common. The scattered indications pertain to the stories about Karlsson, for instance, the popularity of which reviewer Marita de Sterck deems "well-deserved" due to the narratives' "original touch" (JBG 32 1981, 30).⁸⁶ Also in De Sterck's view, *Mio, my Son* has earned the status of a modern classic.⁸⁷ The status of classic is also applied to *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*,⁸⁸ and to *Rasmus and the Tramp* (News 366 2012, 3). The same goes for *The Brothers Lionheart*,⁸⁹ a magical book (News 787 2010, 92), which is said to have brought to tears millions of children over the past few years (News 701 2007, 99). The Noisy Village-trilogy (News 224 2005, 11), *The Children on Troublemaker Street* (LG 17 1971, 280), *Mardie* (LG 20 1974, 320-321), and the Emil-books (News 224 2005, 11), too, are explicitly named as highlights in Astrid Lindgren's body of work. *Seacrow Island*, then again, is found to be lesser known.⁹⁰ With respect to the Emil-figure, two critics point out that this was the author's favourite character, seeing that to her, he embodied nostalgia.⁹¹ Lindgren's oeuvre as a whole is said to have obtained "irrepressible popularity" (JBG 98 2007, 229).⁹² Maarten Moll in *Het Parool* observes, "Lindgren wrote about seventy books, almost all of which became classics. Who hasn't grown up with any of her heroes? [...] [They] still appeal to our imagination" (News 481 2002, 6).⁹³ Seeing that her body of work comprises several canonised titles, it is considered a must in its entirety.⁹⁴ Overall, though, these instances do not corroborate the popularity of these other works as substantiated by the number of times the titles are mentioned in the corpus articles.

In sum, the ubiquity in the corpus material of references to Lindgren's success signals the popular support for her oeuvre. This type of proof complements the approval she gained among professional gatekeepers of children's literature (viz. her works' being reviewed incessantly). Pjotr van Lenteren in a piece in high-quality newspaper *De*

⁸⁵ "Wie Zweden en lezen zegt zal ongetwijfeld meteen aan Pippi Langkous moeten denken. Het eigenzinnige meisje [...] stal door de jaren heen over de hele wereld menig kinderhart" (News 795 2010, 33). Compare (News 758 2009, 31); "The red-haired girl [...] won all hearts" [Het roodharige meisje [...] veroverde alle harten].

⁸⁶ "een verdiende populariteit", "een originele tint" (JBG 32 1981, 30).

⁸⁷ (JBG 58 1990, 238); (JBG 72 1994, 78).

⁸⁸ (News 143 2002, 10); (News 194 2003, n.p.); (News 224 2005, 11); (News 758 2009, 31).

⁸⁹ (News 194 2003, n.p.); (News 741 2008, 17); (News 747 2008, 18); (News 845 2012, n.p.).

⁹⁰ (News 193 2003, n.p.); (News 194 2003, n.p.); (News 530 2003, 28).

⁹¹ (News 471 2002, 1); (News 481 2002, 6).

⁹² "ontembare populariteit" (JBG 98 2007, 229).

⁹³ "Lindgren schreef ongeveer zeventig boeken, en het werden bijna allemaal klassiekers. Wie is niet groot geworden met een van haar helden? [...] [Ze] spreken nog steeds tot de verbeelding" (News 481 2002, 6).

⁹⁴ (News 63 1987, n.p.); (News 147 2002, 10); (News 204 2003, 15); (News 471 2002, 1).

Volkskrant lamenting the poor general level literature produced for children can be seen to look upon Astrid Lindgren as an author meeting both professional and popular requirements. He states, “The most important authors from the 1960s and -70s, Roald Dahl, Paul Biegel, Annie M.G. Schmidt, and Astrid Lindgren, proved that quality and popularity can go together” (News 766 2009, n.p.).⁹⁵ Combined, these insights demonstrate that the case study at hand counters the perception of success and critical endorsement as mutually exclusive prevalent in children’s literature research. Hence, in my view, canonicity *without* popularity is as good as an empty shell. A work which is only respected in academic, critical, and professional circles, without that acclaim being backed up by popularity is not *truly* canonical.⁹⁶ I see canonicity, then, as an interplay of acknowledgement obtained through highbrow as well as lowbrow channels of canonisation, in the ivory tower as well as in the marketplace.

Longevity

A third pivotal functionalist characteristic is longevity, which refers to the fact that the book is not just a bestseller at a given point in time but in fact becomes a longseller. A long lifespan is an immediate result of unremitting transition, which in turn demonstrates the work’s popularity. As Heidi Lexe puts it in her study *Pippi, Pan and Potter*, canonical works have proven to be “time resistant” and have acquired “timeless legitimacy” (Lexe 2003, 11).⁹⁷ Likewise, Elena Paruolo in her introduction to *Brave New Worlds* points out that “one quality of a classic should be its resistance to the passage of time” (Paruolo 2011, 10).⁹⁸ In the same way, Charles Frey and John Griffith in their preface to *The Literary Heritage of Childhood. An Appraisal of Children’s Classics in the Western Tradition* refer to the canonical texts under scrutiny as “*enduring* works read to and by successive generations of children” (Frey and Griffith 1987, vii; emphasis added). Obviously, adult

⁹⁵ “De belangrijkste jeugdauteurs van de jaren zestig en zeventig van de vorige eeuw, Roald Dahl, Paul Biegel, Annie M.G. Schmidt en Astrid Lindgren, hebben bewezen hoe kwaliteit en populariteit samen kunnen gaan” (News 766 2009, n.p.).

⁹⁶ Compare the following point made by Joke Linders (1994, 151): “A publisher only issues those books they expect to be successful. This success may well be identified by the ladies and gentlemen practicing literary criticism and by journalists who praise the work or its producer to the skies or to the graveyard, it only becomes real if the public follows these acclamations and in effect purchases the books in question. [...] No classics without sales numbers” [Een uitgever geeft alleen die boeken uit waarvan hij succes verwacht. Dat succes mag benoemd worden door de dames en heren recensenten en door journalisten die het werk of de maker ervan de hemel dan wel het graf in prijzen, maar het is pas reëel als het publiek de acclamaties ook volgt en de bewuste boeken ook koopt. [...] Zonder verkoopcijfers geen klassiekers].

⁹⁷ “Zeitresistent”; “Zeitloser Gültigkeit” (Lexe 2003, 11).

⁹⁸ Paruolo (2011, 10) refers to ideas put forward by Italo Calvino.

gatekeepers' sentimental motivations for passing on certain beloved works can be seen as a factor in this transmission (cf. section 3.2). Sandra van Ginkel in her exploration of the meaning of the notion "classic" also hints at longlivedness. She defines a classic children's book as "a story which has been read and appreciated by a large group of people (children as well as adults) for many years already" (van Ginkel 1994, 148).⁹⁹ The criteria of selection Maria Nikolajeva and Sandra Beckett applied in their anthology *Beyond Babar* (2006) involves longlivedness as well. In effect, they postulate these properties as crucial in terms of canonicity. They write, "The *lasting success* of these novels attests to their excellence. Many years after their publication, they are still *bestsellers* in their own countries, and often in many other countries as well, indicating that they are indeed true classics" (Beckett 2006, xi; emphasis added).

The fact that the works have a long lifespan is mentioned in 42 articles. When the third edition of *Rasmus* is issued in 1971, for example, Leo Roelants remarks, "After twelve years, it hasn't lost any of its value and [...] remains a superb book" (LG 15 1971, 118).¹⁰⁰ Reviewing a reissue of *The Children on Troublemaker Street*, Marc Vingerhoedt finds that it hardly has lost any of its lustre. He states, "the stories were written over thirty years ago, but they keep exuding a great deal of warmth", although he admits that some passages strike him as slightly dated (LG 46 1992, 202-203).¹⁰¹ Some of the critics also discuss the works' lasting potential. The fairy tale *Mirabelle* is a case in point: Karin van Camp considers it to be a story "which one can cherish all of one's life" (JBG 92 2003, 246).¹⁰² The narrations in *Bill Bergson Master Detective* strike her as still being fresh as well (JBG 94 2004, 92)¹⁰³ On picture book *Lotta's Bike*,¹⁰⁴ she writes that its "theme is so timeless that it will provide suitable material for reading aloud *for generations of children to come*" (JBG 91 2003, 239; emphasis added).¹⁰⁵ Marit Trioen, too, is convinced that the authenticity and timelessness of some of Lindgren's works (viz. [*Celebrations at Vilekulla Cottage*])¹⁰⁶ will allow them to tap into a new generation of readers (JBG 104 2010, 297). That, of course, is the essence of canonicity.

⁹⁹ "een verhaal dat al vele jaren door een grote groep mensen (kinderen zowel als volwassenen) wordt gelezen en gewaardeerd" (van Ginkel 1994, 148).

¹⁰⁰ "Na twaalf jaar heeft het niets aan waarde ingeboet en blijft het [...] een prachtboek" (LG 15 1971, 118).

¹⁰¹ "verhalen zijn ruim dertig jaar geleden geschreven, maar blijven een grote warmte uitstralen, hoewel sommige passages een beetje oubollig aandoen" (LG 46 1992, 202-203).

¹⁰² "Een boek dat je een leven lang kan koesteren" (JBG 92 2003, 246).

¹⁰³ "Bij het herlezen van deze verhalen valt op hoe fris ze nog overkomen" (JBG 94 2004, 92).

¹⁰⁴ *Lotta kan al fietsen*.

¹⁰⁵ "de thematiek van *Lotta kan al fietsen* is zo tijdloos dat het vast nog aan enkele generaties kinderen kan voorgelezen worden" (JBG 91 2003, 239; emphasis added). Cf. section 4.2.

¹⁰⁶ *Feest in Villa Kakelbont*.

The corpus contributors find Pippi Longstocking in particular to unremittingly exert appeal on its readers.¹⁰⁷ Michiel Leezenberg sees the Pippi-books as a timeless classic of world literature, because it “is being read with appreciation and recognition by ever new generations” (News 732 2008, 4-5).¹⁰⁸ Flemish illustrator Pieter Gaudesaboos admires the character for having survived for several generations (News 316 2010, 2), and Dorien Pels argues that her longlivedness shows in that “time and again, there has been a new generation of children wanting to sleep with their feet on their pillow, just like Pippi Longstocking, no matter what” (News 432 2000, 3).¹⁰⁹ Indeed, at the turn of the twenty-first century, critics point out that Pippi is alive and kicking (News 100 1998, 15). Despite her being created in 1945 and having been around for numerous decades, she does not show signs of wear.¹¹⁰ The stories have retained their power of expression (News 96 1998, n.p.), and their themes are still relevant (News 97 1998, n.p.). Hence, Pippi is believed to be indestructible (News 481 2002, 6) and immortal (News 394 1998, 4). At the time of Lindgren’s death, actress Mieke Laureys states, rather bluntly, “The writer may be dead, but Pippi Longstocking never dies” (News 137 2002, 38).¹¹¹ She is still beloved,¹¹² and the fact that she is here to stay is found to be exceptional, given the “fastly varying” nature of the “universe of children’s heroes” (News 503 2002, 15).¹¹³ Significantly, general literary critic Pieter Steinz links the Pippi-figure’s lasting success with the motif of the eternal child already discussed in section 3.1. He zooms in on the chililug pills, which represent Pippi’s longing to escape adulthood, and highlights their role as a symbol for longevity imbedded in the narrative itself. As mentioned before, Steinz notes,

Cynics might say that there is no such thing as a magic pill, and that this type of naive children will get short shrift from Father Time. But the cynics are wrong. Tommy, Annika and Pippi are the ultimate examples of three characters that *haven’t aged a bit* during the past 65 years.

I’ll gladly have one of those pills. (News 788 2010, n.p.; emphasis added)¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ (En nu 37 2007, 339); (News 371 2012, 41); (News 373 2012, 25); (News 602 2006, 63).

¹⁰⁸ “door steeds nieuwe generaties met waardering en herkenning wordt gelezen” (News 732 2008, 4-5).

¹⁰⁹ “steeds weer was er een nieuwe generatie kinderen die net als Pippi Langkous per se met hun voeten op hun hoofdkussen willen gaan slapen” (News 432 2000, 3).

¹¹⁰ (News 121 2000, 46); (News 97 1998, n.p.); (News 386 1998, 29); (News 514 2002, 29).

¹¹¹ “De schrijfster is wel dood, maar Pippi Langkous sterft nooit” (News 137 2002, 38).

¹¹² (News 72 1992, n.p.); (News 316 2010, 2); (News 404 1998, 12); (News 409 1998, 25); (News 576 2004, 11); (News 786 2010, n.p.); (News 866 2012, n.p.).

¹¹³ “het snel wisselende universum van kinderhelden” (News 503 2002, 15). Compare (News 723 2008, 12).

¹¹⁴ “Cynici zullen zeggen dat zo’n wonderpilletje niet bestaat, en dat Vadertje Tijd korte metten maakt met dit soort naïeve kinderen. Maar de cynici hebben ongelijk. Als er drie personages al 65 jaar lang *geen spat ouder zijn geworden*, dan zijn het Tommy, Anneke en Pippi. Geef mij zo’n pilletje” (News 788 2010, n.p.; emphasis added).

Seen from this angle, the pills not only signify a specific image of childhood but also the timelessness and immortality of the Pippi-stories.

Several reviewers furthermore predict that the appeal will continue to endure. In 1990, the editors of *Jeugdboekengids* claim that the Pippi Longstocking-stories “have what it takes to be a *lasting* success” (JBG 56 1990, 19; emphasis added).¹¹⁵ At the first book’s fiftieth anniversary in 1995, Karin van Camp contends that it is hard to believe that Pippi has been around for half a century already as the character appears so lively (LzL 2 1995, 165). Hinting at the book’s vitality and broad impact (cf. *infra*), she goes on to state, “One assumes that it will withstand the ravages of time and become a classic à la *Alice in Wonderland* or *Winnie the Pooh*” (LzL 2 1995, 167).¹¹⁶

In fact, this counts not just for Pippi Longstocking, but for pretty much all of her titles. When the author turns 90, Hanneke de Klerck remarks, “Lindgren may be old but the fictional children she created remain young” (News 95 1997, n.p.).¹¹⁷ In conjunction with the 2007 centenary, Martine Kamsma argues similarly that Lindgren’s age cannot be told from her books, which are still being consumed eagerly (News 649 2007, 99) (cf. section 2.4. Bregje Boonstra foretells that most of her numerous children’s books will easily outlive their maker (News 73 1992, n.p.). Likewise, Marit Trioen observes that the author’s success overall has proven to be continuous and that her body of work remains indomitably popular (JBG 98 2007, 229). Seeing that she has attracted consecutive generations of readers,¹¹⁸ and that her works have “withstood a wide range of whims of literary fashion with flying colours”,¹¹⁹ without “becoming archaic”, Trioen judges that Lindgren has what it takes to “effortlessly stand the test of time” (JBG 98 2007, 230).¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ “[De Pippi Langkous-verhalen] hebben ook alles in zich om een *blijvend* succes te zijn” (JBG 56 1990, 19; emphasis added).

¹¹⁶ “Men neemt dan ook aan dat het werk de tand des tijds zal doorstaan en een klassieker à la *Alice in Wonderland* of *Winnie de Poeh* zal worden” (LzL 2 1995, 167).

¹¹⁷ “Lindgren is oud, maar de kinderen die ze in haar boeken schiep, blijven jong” (News 95 1997, n.p.).

¹¹⁸ Compare (News 70 1992, n.p.): “having made happy with her stories three generations already” [al drie generaties gelukkig heeft gemaakt met verhalen].

¹¹⁹ Compare (News 477 2002, 1): “Pippi, Karlsson, Emil, the brothers Lionheart – Jonathan and Scotty – and Ronia the robber’s daughter, they aren’t bothered by generations and trends” [Pippi, Karlsson, Michiel, de gebroeders Leeuwenhart – Jonatan en Kruimel – en Ronja de roversdochter: ze trekken zich niks aan van generaties en van modes].

¹²⁰ “zo reeds 60 jaar de meest uiteenlopende literaire modegrillen met glans doorstaat”; “gedateerd raakt”; “de tand des tijds moeiteloos doorstaat” (JBG 98 2007, 230).

The Figure of the Author

As the examples in the final paragraph of the previous section already indicates, one can discern in many of the corpus articles tokens of the reviewer's great appreciation for the author *in general* – tokens which are not connected to a specific characteristic of her writing or any of her works in particular and which attest to the author's overall fame. 64 of such tokens were identified in the corpus, which brings the total of instances of popularity to 172.

For instance, in the journal articles, Astrid Lindgren is deemed to be a major author (LG 4 1965, 48), who is famed and beloved among young readers (LG 37 1981, 472), as well as renowned and respected among critics (LG 40 1986, 291). She is hailed as a great master (JBG 94 2004, 92), as “one of the most important, colourful and influential authors of modern children's literature” (En nu 35 2007, 331),¹²¹ or as “one of the most famous children's books authors in Europe, or perhaps even the whole world” (LzL 9 2010, 39),¹²² whose works “belong to the most important and most read children's literature” (JBG 78 2007, 396).¹²³ She is portrayed as being “honoured and worshiped all over the world” (En nu 38, 2007, 342).¹²⁴ One reviewer, who clearly admires the author, writes, “Those who are great needn't boast” (JBG 23 1979, 1).¹²⁵ Lindgren's acclaim among journal contributors reached a (preliminary) high point in 2007, at the centenary of her birth, when she was called everything from a great master of children's literature (JBG 94 2004, 92)¹²⁶, a children's book titan, queen or empress,¹²⁷ “[her] country's real queen” (LzL 7 2007, 166),¹²⁸ “national property” (LzL 7 2007, 171),¹²⁹ to “a living myth” (LzL 7 2007, 171),¹³⁰ or a “monument”.¹³¹ She is, in any case, highly esteemed by the professional and academic players in the field of children's literature.

¹²¹ “een van de belangrijkste, kleurrijkste en invloedrijkste auteurs van de moderne jeugdliteratuur” (En nu 35 2007, 331).

¹²² “een van de bekendste jeugdboekenschrijfsters van Europa, misschien wel van de hele wereld” (LzL 9 2010, 39).

¹²³ “tot de belangrijkste en meest gelezen jeugdliteratuur behoort” (JBG 78 2007, 396).

¹²⁴ “Ze wordt in de hele wereld gehuldigd en aanbeden” (En nu 38, 2007, 342).

¹²⁵ “Wie groot is moet niet groot-doen” (JBG 23 1979, 1).

¹²⁶ “grootmeesteres” (JBG 94 2004, 92).

¹²⁷ “Lindgren behoort tot de reuzen der jeugdliteratuur” (JBG 98 2007, 229); “keizerin van de kinderliteratuur” (LzL 9 2010, 33); “koning[in] van de jeugdliteratuur” (LzL 9 2010, 34).

¹²⁸ “de echte koningin' van [haar] land” (LzL 7 2007, 166).

¹²⁹ “nationaal bezit” (LzL 7 2007, 171).

¹³⁰ “een levende mythe” (LzL 7 2007, 171).

¹³¹ (En nu 44 2011, 35); (JBG 99 2007, 230); (LzL 7 2007, 171); (LzL 9 2010, 32).

The authors of epitexts published in popular sources are even more profuse in superlatives. They see her as the most famous children's author in the entire world.¹³² *Trouw* critic Bas Maliepaard states, "With her books on figures such as Pippi Longstocking, the brothers Lionheart, and Karlsson on the roof, she left an indelible impression throughout the world" (News 681 2007, 10-11).¹³³ Willem Ellenbroek in *De Volkskrant* puts it like this: "She has become the universal grandmother and story teller who was heard all over the world" (News 68 1992, n.p.).¹³⁴ Others simply describe her as a great author,¹³⁵ or, in fact, as the greatest ever (News 771 2009, 18). Furthermore, she is characterised as legendary,¹³⁶ unforgettable (News 487 2002, 28), and majestic (News 653 2007, 28), and declared the queen of the children's book by some.¹³⁷ In short, she is perceived as a woman of consequence,¹³⁸ children's literature's eminence (News 278 2007, 99), and ultimate grand lady.¹³⁹

In the daily newspapers, reverence for the author's distinguished status became most visible at the time of her decease. *De Tijd* journalist Bert Lauwers commends Lindgren's impressive list of achievements in general terms (News 138 2002, 15). The beginning of Marcel van Nieuwenborgh's obituary in *De Standaard* reads as a fairy tale:

Once upon a time there was a children's book writer who wrote *extremely* beautiful stories and lived on for a *very* long time and made many children very happy. Her name was Astrid Lindgren, but she was known to the world as Pippi Longstocking's 'mother'. (News 142 2002, 10; emphasis in original)¹⁴⁰

In *Het Belang van Limburg*, Koen Driessens tellingly summarises her life as "94 years of bright ideas, which in half a century's time produced the top in children's books" (News

¹³² (News 68 1992, n.p.); (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 104 1998, 39); (News 128 2001, 46); (News 136 2002, 32); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 141 2002, 1); (News 169 2002, n.p.); (News 191 2003, 12); (News 212 2004, 18); (News 261 2007, n.p.); (News 308 2010, 31); (News 311 2009, 13); (News 324 2011, 39); (News 397 1998, 33); (News 471 2002, 1); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 481 2002, 6); (News 483 2002, 28); (News 491 2002, 11); (News 613 2006, 33); (News 615 2006, 9); (News 653 2007, 28); (News 679 2007, 2); (News 681 2007, 10-11); (News 737 2008, 8); (News 756 2009, 18-19); (News 809 2010, n.p.).

¹³³ "Ze heeft wereldwijd een onuitwisbare indruk achtergelaten met haar boeken over figuren als Pippi Langkous, de gebroeders Leeuwenhart, Karlsson van het dak" (News 681 2007, 10-11).

¹³⁴ "Ze is de universele grootmoeder en verhalenvertelster geworden die over de hele wereld werd gehoord" (News 68 1992, n.p.).

¹³⁵ (News 810 2010, 96); (News 814 2010, 9); (News 844 2012, 20).

¹³⁶ (News 117 2000, 10); (News 252 2007, 20).

¹³⁷ (News 66 1991, n.p.); (News 70 1992, n.p.); (News 388 1998, 7); (News 483 2002, 28).

¹³⁸ (News 756 2009, 18-19); (News 766 2009, n.p.).

¹³⁹ (News 554 2004, 13); (News 274 2007, 40).

¹⁴⁰ "Er was eens een schrijfster van kinderboeken die héél mooie verhalen schreef en daarna nog héél lang leefde en vele kinderen gelukkig maakte. Ze heette Astrid Lindgren, maar de hele wereld kende haar beter als de 'moeder' van Pippi Langkous" (News 142 2002, 10; emphasis in original).

137 2002, 38),¹⁴¹ implying that her works set the bar for others. Judith Eiselin in *NRC Handelsblad* illustrates her prominence as follows: “Ask any passer-by in Stockholm what the lucky dog who has Karlsson living on the roof is called, or what type of cookies Pippi usually bakes, and there’s a good chance that you will get the right answer” (News 471 2002, 1).¹⁴²

For the most part, Lindgren’s worldwide fame is underscored, but some journalists also point out her significance within Swedish literature and culture.¹⁴³ In her capacity of national heroin (News 305 2009, 71), or national monument (News 681 2007, 10-11), she is even found to be Hans Christian Andersen’s Swedish counterpart (News 119 2000, 3). Bas Maliepaard remarks, “She counted as a second Swedish queen, albeit a mischievous one” (News 681 2007, 10-11).¹⁴⁴ A striking indication of how Lindgren is consecrated in the Dutch language area is the following anecdote cited by renowned Dutch critic Bregje Boonstra (News 73 1992, n.p.). She recounts a Bible saleswoman’s visit to a Swedish school. She is reported to have presented a copy of the Bible to a group of children, recommending it as “[t]he best book in the world”, and asking the pupils if they could guess who might have written it (News 73 1992, n.p.). A little boy answered that he was not entirely sure of it but believed that it must have been Astrid Lindgren (News 73 1992, n.p.).¹⁴⁵ Significantly, Boonstra comments, “It is not inconceivable that Our Lord overlooked this mistake with justifiable pride” (News 73 1992, n.p.).¹⁴⁶ It does not become clear whether this conversation actually occurred, but the fact that Boonstra brings up this example, and her final remark in particular, shows that she holds Lindgren in great admiration.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ “94 jaar invallen, die op een halve eeuw tijd de top aan kinderboeken hebben opgeleverd” (News 137 2002, 38).

¹⁴² “Vraag in Stockholm aan een willekeurige voorbijganger hoe de geluksvogel heet die Karlsson op het dak heeft wonen, of wat voor koekjes Pippi altijd bakt, en de kans is groot dat je het goede antwoord krijgt” (News 471 2002, 1).

¹⁴³ (News 63 1987, n.p.); (News 92 1997, 16); (News 104 1998, 39); (News 141 2002, 1); (News 156 2002, n.p.); (News 305 2009, 71).

¹⁴⁴ “Ze gold als een tweede Zweedse koningin, maar dan één met kwajongensstreken” (News 681 2007, 10-11).

¹⁴⁵ “Dit is het beste boek van de wereld” (News 73 1992, n.p.).

¹⁴⁶ “Het is niet ondenkbaar dat Onze Lieve Heer deze vergissing met gepaste trots door de vingers heeft gezien” (News 73 1992, n.p.).

¹⁴⁷ Finally, the corpus articles also contain references to Astrid Lindgren’s social commitment. This does not have any immediate impact on her canonisation in Flanders and The Netherlands, but it shows that the reviewers are aware that Lindgren, in Sweden, was a voice to be reckoned with. Indeed, in her homeland she did “enjoy the status of [a] serious [member] of society”, whose “views on societal issues are warmly welcomed and even encouraged” (Shavit 1986, 37), and thus fulfilled Zohar Shavit’s canonical requirement of social standing (cf. section 2.1). The following articles (29 in total) make mention of this phenomenon: (JBG 77 1997, 340); (News 37 1976, n.p.); (News 63 1987, n.p.); (News 64 1988, n.p.); (News 68 1992, n.p.); (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 92 1997, 16); (News 94 1997, n.p.); (News 122 2001, 2); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 142 2002, 10); (News 143

The Proof of the Pudding: Prizing

As the saying goes, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. By analogy, literary awards form a validation of a work's quality. The phenomenon can in fact be seen to bridge the gap between synchronic and diachronic factors in canonisation processes. In itself an utterly highbrow channel of canonisation, it is a contextual confirmation of a work's synchronic potential for canonicity.

Literary Prizes: Awarded

Only twenty out of the corpus articles are dedicated to a literary prize Lindgren was awarded. In effect, she only received three awards in the Dutch-language literary field is very modest: she won a Silver-Slate Pencil [Zilveren Griffel] for *Lotta on Troublemaker Street* in 1973, for *The Brothers Lionheart* in 1975,¹⁴⁸ and for *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* in 1983.¹⁴⁹ The prize, granted by CPNB, Collective Promotion for the Dutch Book, was first awarded in 1971, when Lindgren's active writing career was well on its way and the number of books she published diminished. If Lindgren's canonicity in the Dutch-language field of children's literature were dependent on literary awards solely, she most certainly would not have made it. Moreover, the subject of prizes Lindgren received in general is addressed in 79 corpus articles. One could tentatively argue that it – surprisingly – does not play a very large role in the corpus contributors' opinion on and representation of Astrid Lindgren and her books.

In some cases, contributors simply state that Astrid Lindgren is an award-winning author, without any further clarification.¹⁵⁰ Leo Roelants, for instance, states, "It is impossible to keep track of the number of prizes and accolades which have fallen to Lindgren's share over the years, both nationally and internationally speaking" (LG 21 1975, 85).¹⁵¹ Specific international children's literary awards mentioned are the Nils Holgersson Plaque awarded in 1950 for [*Nils-Karlsson Pysling*] (a collection of short

2002, 10); (News 144 2002, 15); (News 147 2002, 10); (News 152 2002, 16); (News 168 2002, n.p.); (News 275 2007, 41); (News 374 2012, 21); (News 471 2002, 1); (News 473 2002, 2); (News 474 2002, n.p.); (News 476 2002, 10); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 483 2002, 28); (News 485 2002, 17); (News 520 2002, 13); (News 657 2007, 8); (News 681 2007, 10-11); (News 833 2011, 21).

¹⁴⁸ (En nu 3 1975, 5); (En nu 6 1975, 5-6).

¹⁴⁹ (En nu 15 1983, 157); (En nu 16 1983, 165); (News 655 2007, 21).

¹⁵⁰ (En nu 3 1975, 9); (News 7 1964, n.p.); (News 136 2002, 32); (News 156 2002, n.p.).

¹⁵¹ "De prijzen en onderscheidingen, die Astrid Lindgren sedert lange jaren zijn te beurt gevallen op nationaal en international vlak zijn bijna niet meer te tellen..." (LG 21 1975, 85). Cf. (News 94 1997, n.p.).

stories),¹⁵² the 1958 H. C. Andersen Medal for *Rasmus and the Tramp*,¹⁵³ the Swedish Government Scholarship for authors of high literary merit,¹⁵⁴ the German Youth Book Prize Special Award for *Mio, my Son* (1956) (JBG 18 1974, n.p.), and the Lewis Carroll Award.¹⁵⁵

Up until the early 1980s, the amount of attention being paid to Astrid Lindgren's decorations is hardly overwhelming. An exception is a review of Silver-Slate Pencil [Zilveren Griffel] award-winning *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* by Bregje Boonstra, in which she seizes the opportunity of the award being granted to pay homage to Lindgren's writing. She does not agree with the judges' choice to award Anton Quintana's [*The Baboon King*]¹⁵⁶ the first prize, the Golden-Slate Pencil [Gouden Griffel], and believes Astrid Lindgren to be a far better writer: "Once again [it] becomes clear how absurd the distinction between gold [for national authors; svdb] and silver [for international authors] is, as – compared with the glow of Lindgren's pen – Quintana's slate-pencil soon fades to tin" (En nu 16 1983, 165).¹⁵⁷ Clearly, in Boonstra's opinion, *Ronia* is superior to [*The Baboon King*].

In the later phases of Lindgren's reception in Flanders and the Netherlands, however, awards are mentioned particularly often in pieces of a retrospective nature. Although literary prizes do not seem to have influenced the canonisation of Astrid Lindgren's works in the Dutch language area to a particularly large extent, ultimately, they are in effect recognised as expressions of the author's canonicity. For example, Lieke van Duin upon the author's 85th birthday proclaims her to be "the most-laurelled children's book writer in the world" (News 69 1992, n.p.).¹⁵⁸ Lindgren was also celebrated in *Leesidee Jeugdliteratuur* in 1997, when she turned 90. At that point in her career, it is argued, she "has grown into the most translated and most honoured children's book author" (JBG 77 1997, 337).¹⁵⁹ In the retrospective articles published after her decease and in conjunction with the centenary of her birth, references to prizes seem to have become more self-evident than before. As mentioned before, when commemorating 100 years of Astrid

¹⁵² (JBG 15 1974, 3); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (LG 13 1971, 51); (News 22 1970, n.p.).

¹⁵³ (En nu 5 1975, 22); (En nu 30 2002, 30); (En nu 44 2011, 34-35); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (LG 5 1965, 52); (LG 27 1979, 140); (News 8 1965, n.p.); (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 140 2002, 1); (News 146 2002, 7); (News 259 2007, 63); (News 471 2002, 1); (News 479 2002, 1); (News 481 2002, 6); (News 498 2002, 9). This award is referred to as the "Small Nobel Prize" [Kleine Nobelprijs] (News 259 2007, 63).

¹⁵⁴ (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (News 16 1967, n.p.); (News 29 1974, n.p.).

¹⁵⁵ (News 138 2002, 15); (News 142 2002, 10).

¹⁵⁶ *De bavianenkoning*.

¹⁵⁷ "[Er] wordt weer eens pijnlijk duidelijk hoe absurd het onderscheid tussen goud en zilver is, want in de glans van Lindgrens schrijverschap verschiet Quintana's griffel snel tot blik" (En nu 16 1983, 165).

¹⁵⁸ "de meest gelauwerde kinderboekenschrijfster ter wereld" (News 69 1992, n.p.).

¹⁵⁹ "[uitgegroeid] tot de meest vertaalde en bekroonde kinderboekenschrijfster" (JBG 77 1997, 337).

Lindgren, critics emphasise that Lindgren is “honoured and worshiped all over the world”, and the fact that she during her lifetime was “showered with gold medals and prizes (the Andersen-prize in 1958!)” can be seen as an expression of that adoration (En nu 38 2007, 342).¹⁶⁰

Also in 2007, one of the interviewees sharing memories of Astrid Lindgren stresses that she feels that it is a pity that Lindgren did not get the Nobel Prize for Literature, but that she fortunately at least was awarded the Hans Christian Andersen Medal (En nu 39 2007, 356).¹⁶¹ *Stichting Lezen Vlaanderen*’s former president Majo de Saedeleer equally deplors it, because she “cannot see what other children’s author will ever be able to attain her level in order to gain that kind of recognition” (News 137 2002, 38).¹⁶² Dutch critic and former member of the Slate-Pencil Award jury Barber van de Pol thinks that Lindgren’s self-evidently should have won the Nobel and considers it “utterly careless of her fellow countrymen to not have taken care of that” (News 535 2003, 25).¹⁶³ Flemish critic Wilfried Eetezonne finds that Lindgren suffered from what he calls a “Hugo Claus-syndrome”, which means that Lindgren just like Claus, one of the most famous and acclaimed Flemish writers ever, often was tipped as Nobel laureate, but never actually won the prize (News 138 2002, 15). As I wrote elsewhere, “Given the unequalled status which Hugo Claus had acquired by the end of his career, the comparison shows that Flemish literary professionals attribute great value to Lindgren’s authorship and that she is a largely canonized writer” (Van den Bossche 2011c, 55).

The mention of the Nobel Prize (twelve instances in all)¹⁶⁴ furthermore touches upon the debate on literary prizes for children’s versus adult writers, which is tackled by Lindgren’s translator Rita Verschuur as well. In 2007, within the framework of the annual Annie M.G. Schmidt-lecture,¹⁶⁵ she compares Astrid Lindgren’s career to Annie M.G. Schmidt’s and claims that both authors developed a versatile oeuvre, which bore fruit, such as the Hans Christian Andersen Medal awarded to Lindgren in 1958 and to Schmidt in 1988. More importantly, Verschuur claims that Astrid Lindgren even was

¹⁶⁰ “Ze wordt in de hele wereld gehuldigd en aanbeden”; “overladen met gouden penningen en prijzen (in 1958 de Andersenprijs!)” (En nu 38, 2007, 342).

¹⁶¹ “Jammer dat ze niet de Nobelprijs voor de literatuur heeft gekregen[...] [...] Gelukkig wél de Hans Christian Andersenprijs” (En nu 39 2007, 356).

¹⁶² “zie[t] niet in welke jeugdacteur nu nog ooit haar niveau zal bereiken om die erkenning te krijgen” (News 137 2002, 38).

¹⁶³ “erg slordig dat haar landgenoten daar niet voor hebben gezorgd” (News 535 2003, 25).

¹⁶⁴ (En nu 44 2011, 35); (News 62 1986, n.p.); (News 63 1987, n.p.); (News 101 1998, 7); (News 137 2002, 38); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 142 2002, 10); (News 425 1999, 11); (News 462 2001, 11); (News 463 2001, 11); (News 519 2002, 5); (News 535 2003, 25).

¹⁶⁵ This speech was published in *Literatuur zonder leeftijd* (LzL 7 2007, 158-175).

allowed into the realm of adult literature [in the late 1970s]. She was invited to take a seat on the elitist literary society ‘The Nine’ and accepted that invitation, and she received the Swedish Academy’s Grand Gold Medal, often referred to as the small Nobel Prize. (LzL 7 2007, 170)¹⁶⁶

Subsequently, a “rain of honours” showered on Lindgren, including a doctoral dissertation, eventually leading to her “ascending to the highest peaks of the Parnassus” in Sweden (LzL 7 2007, 170).¹⁶⁷ However, the utmost epitome of literary standing – the actual Nobel Prize – appeared to be out of her reach. Moreover, Verschuur points out that “Astrid Lindgren used to be in a stew each October when the monster of the Nobel Prize started to draw nearer” (LzL 7 2007, 171).¹⁶⁸ Lindgren was upset about the Nobel Prize because every year the debate flared up about whether or not she should be awarded it, whereas she herself had no interest in getting it at all.

Membership of “The Nine” [De Nio], the awarding of the Academy’s Grand Gold Medal as well as the German Booksellers’ Peace Prize,¹⁶⁹ the UNESCO International Book Award,¹⁷⁰ granted by UNESCO’s International Book Committee to “people or institutions having achieved something exceptional in the book sphere” (En nu 21 1993, 256),¹⁷¹ are all tokens of respect from the literary world outside of children’s literature (cf. Coda). Nevertheless, the fact that Lindgren may have breached a seemingly impenetrable wall between the two literary fields does not seem to have been of great importance to the majority of the journal contributors.

Literary Prizes: Commemorative

Quite a unique phenomenon in the field of children’s literature is the ALMA – short for Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award – founded by the Swedish government in 2002. A literary prize commemorating the oeuvre of one single author is not a particularly

¹⁶⁶ “toegelaten in de wereld van de volwassen literatuur. Ze kreeg en aanvaardde het verzoek om zitting te nemen in het elitaire literaire gezelschap ‘De negen’ en ze ontving de medaille van de Zweedse Academie, ook wel de kleine Nobelprijs genoemd” (LzL 7 2007, 170).

¹⁶⁷ “de prijzenregen die hierna over haar neerdaalde”, “Zo stegen Annie en Astrid elk in hun land tot de hoogste toppen van de Parnassus” (LzL 7 2007, 170). See also (En nu 44 2011, 35).

¹⁶⁸ “In Zweden zat Astrid Lindgren elk jaar in oktober in de rats omdat het monster van de Nobelprijs steeds dichterbij begon te komen” (LzL 7 2007, 171).

¹⁶⁹ (En nu 10 1978, 34); (En nu 11 1978, 20); (JBG 77 1997, 340); (LG 26 1978, 480); (News 42 1978, n.p.); (News 43 1978, n.p.); (News 44 1978, n.p.); (News 63 1987, n.p.); (News 68 1992, n.p.); (News 69 1992, n.p.); (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 92 1997, 16); (News 94 1997, n.p.); (News 143 2002, 10); (News 436 2000, 29); (News 462 2001, 11); (News 473 2002, 2); (News 474 2002, n.p.); (News 476 2002, 10).

¹⁷⁰ (En nu 21 1993, 256); (En nu 30 2002, 30); (News 76 1993, n.p.); (News 77 1993, n.p.); (News 146 2002, 7); (News 479 2002, 1).

¹⁷¹ “personen of instellingen die iets bijzonders op boekgebied hebben gepresteerd” (En nu 21 1993, 256).

common given within children's literature. The Randolph Caldecott Medal and The Hans Christian Andersen Medal are some of the rare similar awards.

As for the ALMA, 112 corpus articles are devoted to it, which makes it an altogether fairly important factor in the canonisation of Lindgren's works in Flanders and The Netherlands, and far more important than the literary prizes she got awarded (twenty articles). *Leesgoed* communicates the establishment of the prize in early 2003.¹⁷² As mentioned in the article, the award is dedicated to the memory of Astrid Lindgren and "is meant to promote children's books [...] [and] is to be awarded to authors, illustrators or reading promoters who deliver the highest possible artistic quality in their literature for children and youths and do so in Astrid Lindgren's humanistic spirit" (En nu 31 2003, 83).¹⁷³ Already at the first awarding of the ALMA,¹⁷⁴ it is referred to as the Nobel Prize for children's literature.¹⁷⁵ Indeed, very soon it seems to have become something to reckon with, as is furthermore demonstrated in an article in *Leesgoed* announcing the nominees for the 2005 ALMA reads that it brings "honour and renown – and besides that SEK 5,000,000" (En nu 34 2004, 385).¹⁷⁶ It is explicitly described prestigious,¹⁷⁷ and by 2012, in the opinion of the Dutch-language reviewers, it has become perhaps the most important prize in the world.¹⁷⁸

From an interview in *Leesgoed* with Elina Druker, one of the ALMA-judges, on 2012 winner Guus Kuijer, one can easily derive what the ALMA-jury values in his work and, in other words, what it sees as Astrid Lindgren's humanistic spirit (En nu 47 2012, 39). A first element which stands out in Druker's argumentation is "the philosophical profundity" as

¹⁷² Other articles reporting its foundation are (News 156 2002, n.p.); (News 157 2002, 2); (News 158 2002, 2); (News 486 2002, 2); (News 488 2002, 11); (News 489 2002, 12); (News 490 2002, 6); (News 491 2002, 11); (News 534 2003, 11).

¹⁷³ "is bedoeld als promotie van kinderboeken [...] [en] wordt gegeven aan auteurs, illustratoren of leesbevorderaars die in hun literatuur voor kinderen en jongeren de hoogste artistieke kwaliteit leveren en dat doen in de humanistische geest van Astrid Lindgren" (En nu 31 2003, 83).

¹⁷⁴ Reported in (News 534 2003, 11); (News 535 2003, 25); (News 541a 2003, 2); (News 541b 2003, 6); (News 544 2003, 47); (News 640 2007, 18).

¹⁷⁵ (News 309 2010, 72); (News 311 2009, 13); (News 314 2010, 9); (News 318 2010, 42); (News 361 2012, L2); (News 337 2011, 31); (News 361 2012, 2); (News 531 2003, KUN1); (News 533 2003, 21); (News 792 2010, n.p.); (News 796 2010, n.p.); (News 828 2011, 10); (News 854 2012, 2); (News 856 2012, n.p.); (News 857 2012, n.p.); (News 858 2012, 14); (News 860 2012, 18); (News 863 2012, n.p.).

¹⁷⁶ "De prijs brengt naast eer en roem SKR [sic] 5.000.000" (En nu 34 2004, 385). See also (En nu 31 2003, 83).

¹⁷⁷ (En nu 47 2012, 39); (News 243 2006, 32); (News 274 2007, 40); (News 303 2009, 12); (News 310 2010, 28); (News 311 2009, 13); (News 324 2011, 39); (News 348 2011, L3); (News 831 2011, n.p.); (News 839 2011, 8); (News 852 2012, 9).

¹⁷⁸ (News 309 2010, 72); (News 324 2011, 39); (News 325 2011, 12); (News 326 2011, 2); (News 332 2011, 40); (News 333 2011, 10); (News 334 2011, 32); (News 335 2011, 47); (News 336 2011, 64); (News 343 2011, 17); (News 345 2011, 28-29); (News 357 2012, 7); (News 358 2012, 3); (News 359 2012, 17); (News 361 2012, 2); (News 362 2012, 11); (News 850 2012, 6); (News 851 2012, n.p.); (News 852 2012, 9); (News 853 2012, 23); (News 854 2012, 2).

well as the “light, magical elegance” which Kuijer brings to heavy subjects (En nu 47 2012, 39).¹⁷⁹ In addition, his “simple, clear and precise style” are praised, as well as his “warmth” and “fundamental respect for children”: “He addresses children with the same earnest and openness as adults, and does not avoid difficult subjects” (En nu 47 2012, 39).¹⁸⁰ Further assets of Kuijer’s are that he likes to mingle reality and imagination, as well as the way in which “the characters are open to existential experiences and easily end up in imaginary worlds which are equally important as everyday reality” (En nu 47 2012, 39).¹⁸¹

As was shown in the chapter on originality (section 4.2), the ALMA-judge’s discourse on Kuijer strongly resembles the rationale of the journal contributors who appraise Astrid Lindgren’s own oeuvre: qualities which are of the utmost value to the former are similarly highlighted by the latter. Moreover, in *De Leeswelp*, An-Sofie Bessemans discusses the impact of having received the ALMA for Guus Kuijer. She quotes Larry Lempert, chairman of the jury, who declares that “although Kuijer has been translated into ten languages and is widely appreciated [...], his books deserve to be accessible to even more readers” (JBG 105 2012, 122).¹⁸² Furthermore, she agrees with Lempert’s judgment that Kuijer represents exactly what ALMA stands for (JBG 105 2012, 122). Bessemans, for her part, envisages that thanks to “the media attention that comes with the prize and the international aura that it boasts, [...] Kuijer’s oeuvre will be read widely and for a long time to come and will make itself felt internationally – and rightfully so” (JBG 105 2012, 122).¹⁸³ An-Sofie Bessemans’ optimistic outlook on the effect of the ALMA proves that Astrid Lindgren’s far-reaching canonicity and esteem can work to further the canonisation of other children’s book authors.

¹⁷⁹ “filosofische diepzinnigheid”, “Tegenover zware onderwerpen plaatst Guus Kuijer humor en een lichte, magische elegantie” (En nu 47 2012, 39).

¹⁸⁰ “eenvoudige, heldere en precieze stijl”, “warmte”, “een fundamenteel respect voor kinderen. Hij spreekt kinderen aan met dezelfde ernst en openheid als volwassenen, en gaat moeilijke onderwerpen niet uit de weg” (En nu 47 2012, 39).

¹⁸¹ “zijn personages staan open voor existentiële ervaringen en belanden makkelijk in imaginaire werelden die even belangrijk zijn als de dagelijkse realiteit” (En nu 47 2012, 39).

¹⁸² “dat hoewel Kuijer in tien talen is vertaald en ruime waardering kent [...] zijn boeken het verdienen om voor nog meer lezers toegankelijk te zijn” (JBG 105 2012, 122).

¹⁸³ “Dankzij [...] de daarbijhorende media-aandacht en internationale uitstraling waarop de prijs kan bogen [...] [ziet het] er dus naar uit dat het oeuvre van Kuijer terecht nog lang en wijdverspreid zal worden gelezen en internationaal kan doorwerken” (JBG 105 2012, 122). Cf. (News 308 2010, 31); (News 369 2012, 2).

5.3 Going the Extra Mile: The Extra-Textual Dimension of Canonical Works

I think of canonical works as books enjoying a *broadly-based* reputation as key components of a given culture's tradition (cf. section 1.3). Therefore, my conception of canonicity naturally encompasses markers of value which fall outside the scope of conservative, highbrow channels of canonisation. What I have in mind are, for instance, reworkings of canonical works in other media, or references to the works in non-literary contexts such as popular culture. I termed these phenomena *extra-textual* (cf. section 1.4), and did so for two reasons. Firstly, because they manifest themselves *outside* the book, and surpass the limits of the literary work. Secondly, they operate *outside* the workings of the fairly predictable traditional channels of canonisation described in section 2.1. In taking into account this factor, this study attempts to reflect evolutions discernible within the literary fields in Western cultures. Over the past few decades, in general, literary practices have become all the more differentiated, transgressing the boundaries of the traditional medium of the book.¹⁸⁴

To my mind, canonical works are texts which are alive and mean something to large groups of adult and child readers. This became evident in my positive evaluation of diachronic features such as popularity and longevity, and it furthermore results in my appreciating adaptation (in the broadest possible sense) as an aid with the potential to stimulate canonicity. Here, too, the findings concerning the progression of Astrid Lindgren's canonisation in the Dutch language area worked to strengthen my initial ideas on the matter. After having expounded my stance regarding theoretical discussions of these issues, I will elucidate the outcome of my analysis.

The Interplay between Canonisation and Adaptation

An important premise underpinning this part of my study is that adaptation processes can influence processes of canonisation and vice versa.¹⁸⁵ One aspect of the mutual influence is that the status of a canonical work may work as an impetus for adaptation. The canonised literary work's being respected might prompt an adaptor to use it as a

¹⁸⁴ See for instance (Kåreland 2009, 121); (Mackey 1998, xii-xvi); (O'Sullivan 2000a, 391); (Persson 1998); (Squires 2007); (Steiner 2009); (Viires 2005, 153-154).

¹⁸⁵ See (Geerts and Van den Bossche 2014). Note that I see adaptation not just as an end result, but that I also pay attention to the process in which that product was shaped. As such, I subscribe to Linda Hutcheon's understanding of adaptation as "both a product and process of creation and reception", and to her choice to examine them "as deliberate, announced, and extended revisitations of prior works" (Hutcheon 2006, xiv).

starting point for a work of art of their own. It is used as a source of inspiration precisely because it is well-known, as a result of which the adapted version may profit from the source text's great stature. In this sense, an adaptation can be seen as a tribute to the much-respected canonised book, affirming its status, which is the foundation of the second dimension of the reciprocal connection between adaptation and canonisation. Self-evidently, not all adaptations adopt an affirmative stance towards the source text. The former can also be seen to question, interrogate, and undermine the latter. Such challenging adaptations start from the same premise, namely that the source text is highly valued, but do not serve the explicit purpose of upholding its standing.

It is the second, target-text-oriented approach which will be expanded here. I wish to foreground the effect adaptations can have in terms of safeguarding the canon by adding to the “buzz” surrounding the canonical work. If the source underlying the adaptation is recognised by the audience, the latter can work to keep the canonised text alive. In a postmodern society, in which literature is consumed in all the more diffuse ways, omnipresence and broad dissemination are a must for canonised books to remain in the picture. This is where adaptations come into play, as they make the literary work more widely accessible, allowing it to reach ever new audiences. Hence, in my understanding, adaptations produce a double effect: they corroborate and validate the status of the source text *and* in adding to cultural transfer can enlarge its canonicity. As I put it elsewhere, in my perspective, adaptations “perpetuate the work’s standing, thus maintaining its canonicity. Without all of the transformations, which keep the work available, it would no longer be read and therefore ‘die out’” (Geerts and Van den Bossche 2014, 10-11). In fact, I would even take this logic further and argue that the impact of adaptations can go beyond mere affirmation and further the canonisation of the source text, which means that they they actually function as catalysts in processes of canonisation.¹⁸⁶

Similarly, Fiona M. Collins and Jeremy Ridgman in *Turning the Page. Children’s Literature in Performance and the Media* point out adaptations’ role in reviving canonical texts. They state, “It could be argued that such adaptations keep the book in print and read by different generations and thereby contribute to the status of the book as a ‘classic’” (Collins and Ridgman (eds) 2006, 11). Moreover, they add, “surely the number of times a book has been adapted for stage, screen or radio will convince us that this is a work of art which is part of our cultural baggage” (Collins and Ridgman (eds) 2006, 11-12). A result of their point is that “adaptability” could be seen as a constituent of canonicity, an idea which I fully endorse. A trendsetting voice in this respect is general literary theorist Julie Sanders, who in *Adaptation and Appropriation* convincingly argues that canonisation and adaptation are intertwined (Sanders 2006, 8). Sanders observes, “Adaptation both appears

¹⁸⁶ Cf. (Van den Bossche 2011a).

to require and to perpetuate the existence of a canon, although it may in turn contribute to its ongoing reformulation and expansion” (Sanders 2006, 8). She contends that “citation infers authority” and adds that if the audience identifies a source in an adaptation, adaptation as a process “becomes a veritable marker of canonical status” (Sanders 2006, 9).

A rationale such as this explicitly runs counter to the widely accepted assessment of adaptations as second-rate.¹⁸⁷ Such an evaluation of course ensues from the prevalence of the Romantic notion of originality (Geerts and Van den Bossche 2014, 10). From that perspective, a work which derives its material from another work of art cannot be appreciated to the full. However, such a point of view fails to acknowledge the fact that “derivative” adaptations can work to maintain or even boost the source text’s canonical status. Professor of Comparative Literature Linda Hutcheon in her seminal monograph *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006) advocates an appreciative outlook on adaptations. She claims,

An adaptation is not vampiric: it does not draw the life-blood from its source and leave it dying or dead, nor is it paler than the adapted work. It may, on the contrary, keep that prior work alive, giving it an afterlife that it would not have had otherwise. (Hutcheon 2006, 176)¹⁸⁸

Furthermore, in a 2009 article in which she applies her ideas to children’s books specifically, Hutcheon makes the link between canonisation and adaptation explicit. She argues, “If a children’s book is adapted to the stage or screen, that testifies to its ‘classic’ status. It also, of course, helps to confer that very status in the first place” (Hutcheon 2009, 337).

Some scholars of children’s literature prove to assume a comparable attitude. Benjamin Lefebvre in his contribution to *Textual Transformations in Children’s Literature. Adaptations, Translations, Reconsiderations* (2013) discusses two television adaptations of Laura Ingalls Wilder’s *Little House on the Prairie* (1935). In a vein similar to Hutcheon’s, he stresses that these “textual transformations”, as he calls them, are “crucial for the cultural survival of *Little House on the Prairie*” (Lefebvre 2013, 178). He furthermore explains, “part of the success and appeal of these two adaptations is due to the enduring

¹⁸⁷ Compare for instance (Oittinen 2000, 76): “As long as there has been literature, there have been adaptations. Yet very often adaptation is seen as a negative phenomenon: compared to its original, the adaptation is of little value; it is secondary, a nonoriginal”.

¹⁸⁸ Also relevant in this respect, although a touch too specialised within the framework of my study, is the approach to book history assumed by Nat Hurley in her chapter in *Textual Transformations in Children’s Literature* (2013). Hurley ties in with theories of cultural circulation and the sociology of texts, which posit that texts “reflexively create the conditions for their own evolution and for the construction of new publics”, the idea behind it being that “texts cannot be separated from their manipulation” (Hurley 2013, 103). As a result, rewritings and adaptations can be used to study how texts “participate in generating new hermeneutic models for their own understanding” (Hurley 2013, 103).

cultural capital of the print text they adapt and revisit” (Lefebvre 2013, 179), a remark which underscores the reciprocal nature of the link between adaptation and canonisation. Nicholas Tucker’s article “Keeping Children’s Classics Alive and the Case of Beatrix Potter” (2002) reads as a plea for uprating adaptations. His argument is that without the support of adapted versions and merchandising, many canonical books would have sunk into oblivion. He writes, “films of classics deserve more thanks from the book world than they sometimes get. Without such screen adaptations, publishers might not always feel obliged to keep particular, treasured texts still in print” (Tucker 2002, 184). To him, their value in terms of canonisation is beyond dispute, especially since they play a part in the shaping of a literary tradition. Seeing that they allow a young audience to get acquainted with famous characters and works, he argues, “a form of literary continuity remains preserved” (Tucker 2002, 185).¹⁸⁹

Also useful here is the approach Helene Høyrup applies in her study on canon in children’s culture, in which she adopts a widened concept of canonicity, encompassing transmedial transpositions,¹⁹⁰ and Anne Lundin’s highlighting of the factors of sentiment and longevity as well as the importance of adaptations in the canonisation processes involving Arthur Ransome’s *Swallows and Amazons* (Lundin 2004, 100-101). So is Anja Müller’s contribution to *Adapting Canonical Texts in Children’s Literature* (2013) on comic book adaptations of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. In this chapter, she identifies the comic versions as interacting with other adaptations of and allusions to the play, in effect “constituting the Bard as a cultural icon” (Müller 2013, 109). Deborah Stevenson’s (1997) rationale, highlighting adaptations’ potential impact on processes of canonisation, likewise supports my case. In a case study looking into the decanonisation of Charles Kingsley’s novel *The Water-Babies*, Stevenson compares it with *The Wind in the Willows* and *Alice in Wonderland*, two books which have retained a high degree of canonicity. A germane point she makes is that both of them “have had their positions bolstered by other media versions, many of which children encounter in lieu of the books but which contribute to

¹⁸⁹ Tucker concludes, “Classics for children exist in the very purest form simply as themselves. But they can also still more or less get through in other versions and mediums that continue to take them seriously, and whose help in keeping them alive should never be rejected when the alternative could one day simply be gathering indifference to the extent of their disappearing forever” (Tucker 2002, 188).

¹⁹⁰ Høyrup writes, “Due to the cultural complexity of the channels of cultural transmission, analytical work pertaining to the canon of children’s literature and classics should take into account both the aesthetic or ‘imagological’ interface with the reader as the cultural context and the multiplicity of versions and functions of the classics – viz. the entire spectrum between faithful literary translations and media adaptations” [På grund af den kulturelle kompleksitet i traseringsvejene må det analytiske arbejde med den børnelitterære kanon og klassiker tilgodeses såvel det æstetiske eller ‘imagologiske’ interface till læseren som den kulturelle kontekst og mangfoldigheden i klassikerens versioner og funktionaliseringer – dvs. hele spektret mellem tekstnære litterære oversættelser og medieadaptationer] (Høyrup 2008, 226).

the awareness of the original texts (and hence the retention in [...] the sentimental canon)” (Stevenson 1997, 120). M.O. Grenby, too, indicates the role of adaptation in sustaining attention for canonical texts. In his introductory exposition in *Popular Children’s Literature in Britain* (2008) he couples enduring popularity with “adaptability, [or,] the continual reinvention of the text” (Grenby 2008, 19). As for *Treasure Island* or *Alice in Wonderland*, he argues, “Abridged and illustrated editions, animated, radio and cinematic versions, games and websites, have all kept them at the forefront of children’s culture” (Grenby 2008, 19; emphasis added).¹⁹¹

It is striking that many canonical works of children’s literature feature abundantly in different segments of the cultural field and that they seem to thrive in various contexts and media. The pervasiveness of metaphors evoking life (and death) in adaptation studies intensifies the impression that only the fittest persist. Kenneth Kidd closes his essay pondering the meaning of the label “classic” included in the reference work *Keywords of Children’s Literature* (2011) on such a note. Citing novelist J.M. Coetzee’s observation that canonicity entails reification, he concludes, also with Coetzee, “The classic defines itself by surviving” (Kidd 2011, 58). Linda Hutcheon in collaboration with Gary R. Bortolotti (2007) applied to adaption ideas from biology. Convincingly, Hutcheon and Bortolotti point out the analogous processes of replication involved in biological and cultural adaption and show how, in both cases, replications with minor adjustments (mutations) are best equipped to endure (Bortolotti and Hutcheon 2007, 447).

In her chapter in *Handbook of Research in Children’s and Young Adult Literature* (2011), Margaret Mackey appropriates concepts from scholars from other disciplines to deal with the phenomenon of canonical narratives’ endless multiplicity. In order to address the “astonishing fluidity” which characterises Harry Potter, who “mov[es] easily between books, movies, Internet sites, magazines, toys, games, Happy Meals, and fan fiction”, she borrows digital culture expert Peter Lunenfeld’s conception of the “aesthetic of unfinish” (Mackey 2011, 497), as well as Kristie S. Fleckenstein’s notion of “slippery texts”, which blur the boundaries of the textual and the visual and hence encompass transmediation (Mackey 2011, 496). Kirsten Stirling in *Peter Pan’s Shadow in the Literary Imagination* (2012) looks into the omnipresence of Peter Pan. Her study shows that this is an excellent example of a slippery text. Stirling notes that the character is widely known, although very few people have read J.M. Barrie’s play or novel. Hence, she finds, the character broke away from the text itself and has assumed an existence of its own (Stirling 2012). Jan Susina, for his part, stresses the significance of the commercial success of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*, and finds the scholarly neglect of this aspect regrettable (Susina 2010, 8). In a comparable fashion, Andrew O’Malley in *Children’s Literature, Popular Culture, and ‘Robinson Crusoe’* (2012) traces the wide dispersion of Defoe’s ubiquitous work,

¹⁹¹ Compare furthermore (Grenby 2008, 9; 11).

and Cecily Devereux in “‘Canadian Classic’ and ‘Commodity Export’” (2001) scrutinises the way in which Lucy Maud Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* proliferates and has become a cultural commodity.

Margaret Mackey observes, “The assumption that a story will exist in a variety of shapes and formats is now commonplace” (Mackey 2011, 496). The pervasiveness of adaptation in children’s literature should therefore no longer be neglected. Remediations make children’s books more visible and, as a result, can influence their lifespan and success. It is my conviction that, ultimately, the interplay between canonisation and adaptation could even cause the notion of canonicity to alter. In her study on *Peter Rabbit*, Margaret Mackey observes,

It is possible indeed that young children, exposed to the range of texts on offer in today’s bookstore or library or video outlet, develop a rough-and-ready definition of a new canon: there are stories which are important enough to exist in multiple manifestations, and then there are the others which they may perceive as also-rans. (Mackey 1998, 156)

This means that certain texts can appear more “canonisable” than others, and that it is precisely the works which are fluid and prove to be adaptable which fulfil this requirement. This is a very important conclusion, which I fully endorse.

Nevertheless, children’s literature researchers have been slow to recognise the positive impact of adaptations as far as canonisation is concerned. This is demonstrated by the fact that the pioneers in this research domain work in the field of adult literature, and that all of the above examples date from the first decades of the twenty-first century (and no earlier). Flemish literary critic Luc Lannoy’s 1993 discussion of canonical works, for instance, displays a fundamentally different approach to adaptation than the one underlying Stirling’s, Susina’s, O’Malley’s, and Devereux’ more recent studies. Lannoy fulminates against the lack of knowledge in average readers, who are familiar with canonised books through hearsay at best, and at worst through an adaptation. In the latter case, readers’ familiarity with the work derives from “the utterly unwarranted idea of having read it themselves, in a simplistic and irresponsible textual adaptation” (Lannoy 1993, 209).¹⁹² His adverse feelings are even stronger with respect to transmediations, which “prompt the kind of merchandising of mutilated and poor products”, which to his mind discredit children’s literature as a whole and degrade literary highlights (Lannoy 1993, 214-215).¹⁹³

In addition, some examples can be found attesting to contemporary children’s literature scholars’ adverse attitude towards this matter. Emer O’Sullivan seems to

¹⁹² “de compleet misplaatste idee zelf gelezen, in een simplistische en onverantwoorde tekstbewerking” (Lannoy 1993, 209).

¹⁹³ “aanzet tot dat soort merchandising van verminkte en verschaalde produkten” (Lannoy 1993, 214).

recognise the significance of publishing houses and the importance of tie-ins and merchandising. She states, “Children’s acquaintance with classic figures who originally appeared in books is today based more often on their appearance in the media (films, CDs, cassettes, etc), as toys, domestic accoutrements or advertising items” (O’Sullivan 2005, 133). However, as was shown in section 5.1, she does not think highly of the commercial circuit and does not consider it a sanctioned channel of canonisation. Kenneth Kidd’s stance is ambiguous as well. He touches upon canonical works’ dissemination in his *Keywords* entry on “Classic” (2011), but his wording betrays ambivalence. He writes, “we all share this sense of ‘classic’ as not only immutable and grand but also portable and familiar. The classic is meant to circulate widely, even *promiscuously*” (Kidd 2011, 58; emphasis added). The undertone of the final adverb in this quotations suggests that “circulation” in itself has a negative connotation.

In what follows, I will discuss the occurrence of references to extra-textual phenomena and their impact in the epitexts. As I explained in section 2.3, I distinguish between different types of material which is not a primary work of Lingren, or even strictly speaking *textual*. For the purpose of grasping their effect connected with different stages of canonisation, I differentiate between intramedial “adaptations” (reworkings published in book form), intermedial “consumables”, and “derivatives” which are not bound to any medium in particular. The third leg of this three-part categorisation in effect corresponds to a fundamental type of audience engagement identified by Linda Hutcheon in her seminal work *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006). Underlying her outlook is a desire to avoid a restrictive medium-specific perspective, which is why she opts to approach the phenomenon from a different angle, informed by the way in which the receivers are involved or absorbed in an adaptation (Hutcheon 2006, 22). The three basic modes she identifies are the telling, the showing, and the participatory mode. She explains,

the telling mode (a novel) immerses us through imagination in a fictional world; the showing mode (plays and films) immerses us through the perception of the aural and the visual [...]; the participatory mode (videogames) immerses us physically and kinesthetically. (Hutcheon 2006, 22)

In my classification, the first two types may overlap. My conception of an “adaptation” can for instance denote the reworking of a novel into a picture book, which involves both telling and showing. “Consumables” generally involve a shift from the telling to the showing mode (e.g. from a novel into a musical). My understanding of “derivatives” fits in nicely with the participatory mode as delineated by Hutcheon. She writes that it implies the audience’s *interaction with* stories (Hutcheon 2006, 22), which is precisely what I see as the main function of derivatives such as theme parks, stamps, or statues related to the author’s oeuvre. Interestingly, such derived phenomena can work in two entirely opposite ways: either the audience deliberately chooses to engage with it, or it can manifest itself in a more unexpected context (e.g. in an advertisement for a large home

furnishing store or in the name of a daycare centre). In the latter case, it may even catch the receiver by surprise, allowing them to respond to the works in a more spontaneous way. As I mentioned before, I see such less self-evident derivatives as signs of far-reaching canonisation, as they demonstrate the work's extensive impact, and show that it lives on autonomously, in a manner which is not necessarily controlled by sanctioned channels of canonisation.

The Extra-Textual Dimension Put into Practice

In the case of Astrid Lindgren's canonisation in Flanders and the Netherlands, I believe one can discern two developments at work simultaneously. On a minor level, the evolution to be observed is that of a shift in attention from textual to contextual and ultimately extra-textual factors, which mirrors the transition between different phases of canonisation (viz. establishment, confirmation, dissemination). This specific oeuvre-related process at the same time coincides with and reflects the debunking of high culture and the ongoing renegotiation of cultural and literary value.

The main findings concerning changing emphasis in the reception is based on the quantitative analysis carried out within the framework of this study. As a result, in the remaining sections of this chapter, the numbers will do much of the talking, so to speak. The distribution of epitexts over the different categories was analysed in section 2.3, but I will recapitulate the measurable trends in the corpus, taking into account all 1176 articles.

Table 11 All Corpus Articles: Overview of Causes

Author	306	26.0 %
Review	212	18.0 %
Review Consumable	210	17.9 %
Review Derivative	116	9.9 %
Prize Commemorative	112	9.5 %
Review Adaptation	87	7.4 %
Recommendation	82	7.0 %
Theme	31	2.6 %
Prize Awarded	20	1.7 %

Epitexts pertaining to the extra-textual dimension make up a large third of the corpus material (35.1 %) and thus are a close second to diachronically oriented epitexts (37.2 %). Articles with a synchronic focus proved to be the least common but nevertheless amounted to over a quarter of the epitexts (27.6 %). The significance of extra-textual phenomena in the processes of canonisation involving Astrid Lindgren's oeuvre cannot be denied. Their prevalence in keeping Lindgren's works to the notice of the reading public and in disseminating them is manifest. Within this category, totalling 413 epitexts,

the lion's share is related to consumables (210 texts, or, 50.8 %). Derivatives make up 28.1 % of the texts (116 articles), adaptations 21.1 % (87 articles).

Adaptations

The phenomena which I have termed adaptations (a modest though not insignificant 21.1 % of the extra-textual corpus material) are dealt with in journal reviews mostly (73.6 %). The summits in the number of reviews in 1980 (11 total, 10 adaptations) and 2003 (12 total, 8 adaptations) can entirely be traced to a surge in the publication of adaptations. The 2003 peak can be explained by the publication of *The Red Bird* and [*In the Land of the Twilight*], both picture books based on a story taken from older fairy tale collections, and the reissue of the novel *Seacrow Island*, which is classed as an adaptation because it is based on the television series which preceded it. The books released and discussed in 1980 were *Do You Know Pippi Longstocking?*,¹⁹⁴ *Lotta's Christmas Surprise*,¹⁹⁵ *I Want a Brother or Sister*,¹⁹⁶ *Springtime in Noisy Village*,¹⁹⁷ *Simon Small Moves in*,¹⁹⁸ *Brenda Brave Helps Grandmother*,¹⁹⁹ and *Most Beloved Sister*.²⁰⁰ It seems that at the beginning of the 1980s, Ploegsma was either not satisfied with the amount of attention paid to Astrid Lindgren's works and felt that her fame needed to be boosted (in response to the decline in reviews after the peak around 1974) or that the publishing house wanted to capitalise on her already established name. In any case, the adaptations can be said to have solidified Astrid Lindgren's standing among the Dutch-speaking journal critics.

As observed earlier, from 1980 onwards the publication and critiquing of adaptations became common practice in the reception of Astrid Lindgren's works in the Low Countries. However, much earlier, in the early 1970s, several adaptations had already been brought to the readers' attention. In 1972, two comic books on Pippi Longstocking, [*Pippi Is Always the Strongest*] and [*Pippi Always Knows What to Do*] are reviewed (JBG 10 1972, 95-96). They are comic book adaptations of several combined episodes from the three *Pippi Longstocking*-books, with scenarios by Astrid Lindgren herself and illustrations by Ingrid Vang Nyman. The anonymous reviewer points out that the author and publisher cleverly tie in with the "turbulent" Pippi Longstocking-hype, but deems the books to be redundant as they do not succeed in conveying the same atmosphere and appeal as the original books (JBG 10 1972, 96) (cf. section 4.2). So, several years before the peak in 1980,

¹⁹⁴ *Ken je Pippi Langkous?* (JBG 26 1980, 63).

¹⁹⁵ *Lotta kan bijna alles* (JBG 27 1980, 63).

¹⁹⁶ *Peter en zijn zusje* (JBG 28 1980, 63).

¹⁹⁷ *Lente in Bolderburen* (JBG 29 1980, 94); (LG 34 1980, 236-237).

¹⁹⁸ *Bart woont bij een kabouter* (JBG 30 1980, 110); (LG 32 1980, 329).

¹⁹⁹ *Katrientje wil oma helpen* (JBG 31 1980, 110).

²⁰⁰ *Anke en haar tweelingzusje* (LG 33 1980, 282-283).

adaptations already come to the fore as fairly important factors in the reception of Astrid Lindgren's works.

In the newspapers, a comment that stands out is one made in response to a new edition of *Do You Know Pippi Longstocking?* which was issued in 2007. The picture book, illustrated by Ingrid Van Nyman and originally published as an adapted version of some of the episodes from the first two Pippi-novels in 1947 already, is discussed in three newspaper articles.²⁰¹ One of those zooms in on the role of illustrations, which can be seen as relevant to processes of canonisation. First of all, the topic of the review underscores an impetus stimulating canonization, because critic Pjotr van Lenteren points out that “publishing house Rubinstein [...] attempted to get a piece of the pie related to the attention paid to Astrid Lindgren’s (1907-2002) one hundredth birthday by means of a resissue of *Do You Know Pippi Longstocking?*” (News 689 2007, 22)²⁰² Apart from hinting at the presumable cause for the republication, Van Lenteren in addition dwells upon the significance of the visual image of a children’s book character. He observes, “we in The Netherlands see Pippi by the grace of the baroque imagination of illustrator Carl Hollander” and furthermore wonders why “Nyman never capitalised on Lindgren’s international breakthrough”, concluding, “Perhaps Nyman and the general public simply didn’t hit it off” (News 689 2007, 22).²⁰³ Although Van Lenteren does not seem to be aware of the unrivalled status of Vang Nyman’s Pippi in Swedish culture (leaving aside the iconic face of Inger Nilsson), he touches upon the significance illustrations have in the imagination of the reading public. They, too, can become canonised, some versions more than others. In The Netherlands and Flanders, Carl Hollander’s ornate Pippi Longstocking has achieved firm canonicity, and it might be difficult for any other *illustrated* Pippi to eclipse it.

Consumables

Carl Hollander’s pictorial interpretation of Pippi Longstocking is perhaps more canonical than the original Swedish illustrations, but his is far from the most famous visualisation of the Pippi-character available in the Dutch language area. A couple of other transmediated versions of Pippi are also accessible, and prove to be quite famous. The

²⁰¹ (News 680 2007, 12); (News 689 2007, 22-23); (News 697 2007, 1).

²⁰² “Uitgeverij Rubinstein [...] probeerde [...] een graantje mee te pikken van de aandacht voor de honderdste verjaardag van Astrid Lindgren (1907-2002) met een heruitgave van *Ken jij Pippi Langkous al?* [sic]” (News 689 2007, 22). Cf. section 2.3.

²⁰³ “wij in Nederland Pippi zien dankzij de barokke verbeelding van illustrator Carl Hollander”; “waarom Nyman nooit heeft geprofiteerd van de internationale doorbraak van Lindgren”; “Of klikte het gewoon niet tussen Nyman en het grote publiek” (News 689 2007, 22).

Pippi-films, television series, and cartoon film are discussed in 63 articles,²⁰⁴ and different musical versions of the stories occur in 44 epitexts.²⁰⁵

In total, 17.9 % of *all* articles are epitexts related to consumables. They make up 50.8 % of the extra-textual articles. Overall, judging by these numbers, the impact of this type of remediation is much larger than that of intramedial adaptations (7.9 % of the total corpus). In effect, several epitexts pinpoint such consumables as decisive factors in Astrid Lindgren's definitive breakthrough in the Flemish and Dutch fields of children's literature.²⁰⁶ All but two of those concern Pippi Longstocking, who is found to be "enormously prosperous, in part because of the successful television series" (JBG 56 1990, 19).²⁰⁷ The following quote illustrates the same point:

Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren owes her international fame more to film, radio, and television (Pippi Longstocking, Karlsson), than to her books in themselves.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ Television series and film: (JBG 8 1969, 100); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (JBG 45 1986, 78); (JBG 56 1990, 19); (JBG 78 1998, 396-399); (LG 21 1975, 85); (News 26 1972, n.p.); (News 32 1974, n.p.); (News 38 1976, n.p.); (News 46 1978, n.p.); (News 51 1980, n.p.); (News 77 1993, n.p.); (News 78 1993, n.p.); (News 79 1994, n.p.); (News 85 1995, n.p.); (News 87 1996, n.p.); (News 88 1996, n.p.); (News 96 1998, n.p.); (News 102 1998, 12); (News 105 1998, 14); (News 107 1998, 36); (News 133 2001, 12); (News 137 2002, 38); (News 195 2003, 27); (News 196 2003, 51); (News 197 2003, 64); (News 219 2004, 48); (News 223 2004, 27); (News 263 2007, 85); (News 276 2007, 65); (News 370 2012, 8); (News 386 1998, 29); (News 387 1998, 19); (News 399 1998, 21); (News 426 1999, 15); (News 466 2001, 15); (News 503 2002, 15); (News 570 2004, 25); (News 590 2005, 17); (News 596 2005, 15); (News 609 2006, 61); (News 622 2006, 2); (News 623 2006, 99); (News 625 2006, 35); (News 645 2007, 19); (News 721 2008, 42-43); (News 722 2008, 14-15); (News 725 2008, 14-15); (News 782 2009, n.p.); (News 783 2009, 39); (News 813 2010, 32); (News 834 2011, 23); (News 861 2012, n.p.); (News 866 2012, n.p.). Cartoon film: (News 78 1993, n.p.); (News 94 1997, n.p.); (News 100 1998, 15); (News 107 1998, 36); (News 147 2002, 10); (News 370 2012, 8); (News 385 1998, 13); (News 386 1998, 29); (News 387 1998, 19).

²⁰⁵ (News 96 1998, n.p.); (News 97 1998, n.p.); (News 101 1998, 8); (News 106 1998, 11); (News 114 1999, 45); (News 137 2002, 38); (News 143 2002, 10); (News 147 2002, 10); (News 197 2003, 64); (News 219 2004, 48); (News 223 2004, 27); (News 225 2005, 36); (News 227 2005, 40); (News 230 2005, 17); (News 231 2005, 23); (News 239 2005, 99); (News 295 2009, 57); (News 302 2009, 64); (News 392 1998, 24); (News 398 1998, 6); (News 399 1998, 21); (News 402 1998, 20); (News 403 1998, 7); (News 404 1998, 12); (News 405 1998, 9); (News 409 1998, 25); (News 422 1999, 23); (News 423 1999, 23); (News 563 2004, 21); (News 570 2004, 25); (News 572 2004, 11); (News 574 2004, 15); (News 576 2004, 11); (News 577 2004, 217); (News 582 2005, 36); (News 583 2005, 22); (News 584 2005, 26); (News 585 2005, WA8); (News 591 2005, 8); (News 759 2009, 24-25); (News 760 2009, 24); (News 761 2009, 36-37); (News 775 2009, 23); (News 786 2010, n.p.).

²⁰⁶ (JBG 45 1986, 78); (JBG 56 1990, 19); (LG 21 1975, 85); (News 32 1974, n.p.); (News 38 1976, n.p.); (News 51 1980, n.p.); (News 102 1998, 12); (News 105 1998, 14); (News 107 1998, 36); (News 137 2002, 38); (News 219 2004, 48); (News 387 1998, 19); (News 399 1998, 21); (News 570 2004, 25); (News 786 2010, n.p.); (News 861 2012, n.p.).

²⁰⁷ "De Pippi Langkous-verhalen kenden een enorm succes, mede door de geslaagde televisieserie" (JBG 56 1990, 19). Similar statements are made in (News 51 1980, n.p.); (News 102 1998, 12); (News 107 1998, 36); (News 219 2004, 48); (News 570 2004, 25); (News 786 2010, n.p.); (News 866 2012, n.p.).

²⁰⁸ Compare (JBG 78 1998, 397): "In many countries, the writer and her creations are connected with film fame rather than with successful book sales" [In vele landen zijn de schrijfster en haar creaties eerder met filmroem verbonden dan met een succesvolle boekenverkoop].

[...] After her successes in the aforementioned media, her name of course stands out when a new book of hers appears in the shops. (News 38 1976, n.p.)²⁰⁹

The fact that consumables can boost attention for the literary works they use as a starting point is highlighted by Leo Roelants in *Lekturgids*. He points out the impact of transmediations in the establishment of Astrid Lindgren's fame. He argues,

If for many people, her name initially brings to mind Pippi Longstocking, this definitely is caused by film and television, which helped propagate the renown of her three individual books, which later were assembled in one festive reissue, even amongst those for whom the road to the book shop or the public library was closed off by laxness or hesitation. (LG 21 1975, 85)²¹⁰

This statement of Roelant's addresses the threefold workings of the consumables based on the Pippi-books: they enhance the books' fame, stimulate their availability, and work as an intermediary enabling the works to reach a new audience of less seasoned readers. In 21 of the articles related to Pippi-consumables,²¹¹ the journalist or critic hints at the potential they have to keep the books available and alive in the audience's imagination. Indeed, on Dutch and Flemish television, the televised version is broadcast at regular intervals. One particular newspaper article playfully urges its readers to put on their striped stockings in honour of Pippi's comeback (News 133 2001, 12). In this connection, Herman Van Doninck argues that dusting off of the TV series entails the opportunity for a new generation of children to enjoy Pippi's adventures (News 197 2003, 64).

The animated version in the cartoon film serves a similar purpose.²¹² Jan-Jaap de Kloet indicates that Astrid Lindgren herself saw as Pippi for a new generation (News 78 1993, n.p.). Two newspaper contributors take into consideration the impact of the specific medium on the character itself. Monique van de Sande in *Algemeen Dagblad* finds that the use of clever visual techniques is a distinguishing advantage of the cartoon, but that it at

²⁰⁹ "De Zweedse schrijfster Astrid Lindgren dankt haar internationale bekendheid meer aan film, radio en televisie (Pippi Langkous, Karlsson) dan aan aan [sic] haar boeken zelf. [...] Na haar successen via de genoemde media valt haar naam natuurlijk wel op, als er een boek van haar in de winkel ligt" (News 38 1976, n.p.). Cf. section 2.3

²¹⁰ "Roep bij velen haar naam in eerste instantie Pippi Langkous voor de geest, dan zijn film en televisie daaraan zeker niet vreemd: zij hielpen de roem van haar drie afzonderlijke boeken, later in één feestelijke heruitgave gebundeld, uitdragen ook onder diegenen voor wie laksheid of drempelvrees de weg naar de boekhandel of openbare bibliotheek afgesloten hield" (LG 21 1975, 85).

²¹¹ (News 197 2003, 64); (News 219 2004, 48); (News 78 1993, n.p.); (News 133 2001, 12); (News 370 2012, 8); (News 386 1998, 29); (News 503 2002, 15); (News 570 2004, 25); (News 584 2005, 26); (News 195 2003, 27); (News 196 2003, 51); (News 590 2005, 17); (News 596 2005, 15); (News 609 2006, 61); (News 645 2007, 19); (News 721 2008, 42-43); (News 722 2008, 14-15); (News 725 2008, 14-15); (News 782 2009, n.p.); (News 783 2009, 39); (News 813 2010, 32).

²¹² (News 386 1998, 29); (News 387 1998, 19).

the same time takes away from Pippi's extraordinary talent (News 386 1998, 29). She states, "in a cartoon, lifting a horse [...] just isn't as impressive as when you see Nilsson doing it with her bare hands. Despite the silly special effects typical of those early days of television" (News 386 1998, 29).²¹³ Belinda van de Graaf's review in *Trouw* likewise displays a degree of metareflection. She shares Van de Sande's opinion and finds that "the fact that in an animated film truly everything is possible devalues Pippi Longstocking's magical nature to a large extent" (News 387 1998, 19). She also illustrates her point by referring to the horse-lifting, which becomes a piece of cake, and indicates that she sees the live action version as superior to the animated. To her mind, Inger Nilsson is the only true Pippi (News 387 1998, 19).²¹⁴

The influence of transmediations also shows in a review of the Pippi-omnibus, which states, "The television series undoubtedly turned Pippi Longstocking into one of the most popular children's heroes and this neat edition will hence enjoy a great deal of attention" (JBG 45 1986, 78).²¹⁵ Jonneke Krans in a piece dating from 1972 maintains, "Ever since [national broadcasting company; svdb] NOS started broadcasting Pippi Longstocking's adventures every Sunday night the fame of the strongest girl in the world has increased significantly" (News 26 bis 1972, n.p.).²¹⁶ Equally relevant is the fact that [*On the Go with Pippi Longstocking*],²¹⁷ a book based on the television series and illustrated with photographs, is labelled a "top-quality book" [keurboek] by *Jeugdboekengids* critic Fred de Swert, who considers this "amazing story" to be "a must for Longstocking-fans" (JBG 13 1973, 44).²¹⁸ The timing of these indications, which appeared midway through the 1970s, strengthens the identification of this specific period as a hinge point in the canonisation of Lindgren's works in Flanders and The Netherlands (cf. sections 2.3 and 2.4).

The effect of the televised version is emphasised from a retrospective viewpoint as well. Writing in 2012, Pieter Steinz, who considers Pippi to be the most famous heroine in children's literature, states,

in the past seventy years, [she] conquered Europe and the rest of the world: not just thanks to the three books devoted to her adventures [...], but also by means of Olle

²¹³ "een paard optillen is in een tekenfilm [...] nu eenmaal minder imponerend dan wanneer je dat Nilsson met haar blote handen ziet doen. Alle knullige special effects uit die vroege televisiedagen inbegrepen" (News 386 1998, 29).

²¹⁴ "het feit dat in een animatiefilm werkelijk alles mogelijk is, doet in hoge mate afbreuk aan het magische karakter van Pippi Langkous" (News 387 1998, 19).

²¹⁵ "De televisieserie heeft Pippi Langkous ongetwijfeld tot één der meest populaire kinderhelden gemaakt en dit verzorgd uitgegeven boek zal dan ook een ruime belangstelling genieten" (JBG 45 1986, 78).

²¹⁶ "Sinds de NOS elke zondagavond de avonturen van Pippi Langkous uitzendt, is de roem van dit sterkste meisje van de wereld aardig vergroot" (News 26 bis 1972, n.p.)

²¹⁷ *Op stap met Pippi Langkous*.

²¹⁸ "een fantaisistisch [sic] verhaaltje"; "dit boek [is] een must voor de Langkous-fans" (JBG 13 1973, 44).

Hellbom's television series, which *moulded a generation of children in the 1970s*. (News 866 2012, n.p.; emphasis added)²¹⁹

The renown of the screen adaptation, which is found to be legendary,²²⁰ is stressed in a similar manner in an interview with actress Inger Nilsson, who played the role of Pippi (News 88 1996, n.p.). The article's introduction reads, "Children's series abound on television. But none of these will have enriched childhood years to the same extent as Pippi Longstocking did. [...] Her adventures glued children all over the world to the TV" (News 88 1996, n.p.).²²¹ Henk van Gelder indicates the iconic status Nilsson acquired when he states, "Pippi Longstocking has the face of Inger Nilsson, nothing can be done about that" (News 85 1995, n.p.).²²² To his mind, the actress and the character are merged into one, which is why he admits to being disappointed by the appearance of a Pippi-impersonator in theme park *Astrid Lindgren's World* [Astrid Lindgrens Värld] (News 85 1995, n.p.) (cf. section 5.3). Film critic Jann Ruyters, too, can be seen to think of Nilsson as the ultimate incarnation of the Pippi-character: he remarks that most people when thinking of Pippi imagine Inger Nilsson (News 466 2001, 15). Hence, he argues that a picture is worth a thousand words and, in the case of Inger Nilsson, that the visual image even outshines the book version (News 466 2001, 15).

The examples cited above demonstrate that Pippi Longstocking has been prone to intermedial adaptations, and that these work to maintain the books' canonicity (Van den Bossche 2011c). Everybody seems to know her (News 370 2012, 8). In fact, one is led to conclude that Pippi is everywhere, and that she is here to stay (News 503 2002, 15). There is an abundance of Pippis, if you will, and the text proves to be utterly fluid. Children do not seem to be bothered by the large variety of Pippis, however. As Marijn van der Jagt comments, in this respect, Pippi resembles Saint Nicholas (or even Santa Claus, I would add): "as long as the costume is more or less right, the details don't matter at all" (News 430 1999, 30).²²³ However, as Jos Bloemkolk points out in a critique of a musical version staged in 2005, the character's ubiquity may have a downside as well. He observes,

²¹⁹ "heeft in de afgelopen zeventig jaar Europa en de rest van de wereld veroverd: niet alleen dankzij de drie boeken die aan haar avonturen zijn gewijd [...], maar ook door de televisieserie van Olle Hellbom die een generatie kinderen in de jaren zeventig heeft gevormd" (News 866 2012, n.p.; emphasis added).

²²⁰ (News 133 2001, 12); (News 223 2004, 27).

²²¹ "Kinderseries zijn er op tv in overvloed. Maar geen ervan zal veler kinderjaren zodanig hebben verrijkt als Pippi Langkous deed. [...] Haar avonturen hielden kinderen over de hele wereld aan de buis gekluisterd" (News 88 1996, n.p.).

²²² "Pippi Langkous heeft het gezicht van Inger Nilsson, daar is niets meer aan te veranderen" (News 85 1995, n.p.).

²²³ "als het uniform in grote lijnen klopt dan maken de details niks uit" (News 430 1999, 30).

The reader might begin to feel slightly weary upon seeing the title Pippi Longstocking combined with musical. Is that even necessary, after the books, the film, the television series and the audio version? Not really, but it can work. It can even work very well. (News 584 2005, 26)²²⁴

Despite this small note of criticism, Bloemkolk does not dislike the actual musical.²²⁵ The first Dutch-language Pippi-musical, however, was not equally well-received.²²⁶ Anita Twaalfhoven finds that it does not do justice to Pippi's versatility (News 403 1998, 7), and Judith Eiselin scorns its lack of imagination as well as the lead character's affected behaviour (News 405 1998, 9). Roel Verniers' review in *De Standaard* is scathing. He is annoyed by the lack of detail and nuance, as well as by "the revolting simplification" the narrative underwent, as he puts it (News 106 1998, 11).²²⁷ This bothers him because it does not reflect the nature of the source text, which leaves room for a wide range of interpretations. He argues, "Pippi Longstocking, of course, [is] one of those stories that stimulate and stupefy at the same time. The kind of story that the reader can colour in at their own pace" (News 106 1998, 11).²²⁸ The problem with the musical, then, is that "everybody colours strictly within the lines, and with very mediocre pencils, at that" (News 106 1998, 11).²²⁹

The phenomenon of consumables is also discussed in more general terms, not associated with a specific title of Lindgren's, in eighteen of the corpus articles.²³⁰ Three of the contributors explicitly take into consideration the role of these mediations. Judith Eiselin observes, "The excellent film adaptations of her books, by Olle Hellbom amongst others, made their way across the world" (News 471 2002, 1).²³¹ Bregje Boonstra, for her part, is convinced that "the countless splendid filmings undoubtedly contribute" to the

²²⁴ "Een licht vermoeid gevoel zou over de lezer kunne [sic] komen bij het zien van de titel Pippi Langkous in combinatie met musical. Moet dat nog na de boeken, de film, de televisieserie en het hoorspel? / Nee, maar het kan wel. Het kan zelfs heel goed" (News 584 2005, 26).

²²⁵ See also (News 239 2005, 99); (News 585 2005, WA8).

²²⁶ The musical got criticised in the following articles: (News 106 1998, 11); (News 403 1998, 7); (News 404 1998, 12); (News 405 1998, 9).

²²⁷ "stuitende simplificering" (News 106 1998, 11).

²²⁸ "Pippi Langkous [is] natuurlijk een van die verhalen die tegelijkertijd stimuleren en verdoven. Zo'n verhaal dat je als lezer in eigen tempo kunt inkleuren" (News 106 1998, 11).

²²⁹ "kleurt iedereen strikt binnen de lijntjes en dan nog met een zeer middelmatige kwaliteit van potloden" (News 106 1998, 11).

²³⁰ (News 33 1974, n.p.); (News 63 1987, n.p.); (News 64 1988, n.p.); (News 68 1992, n.p.); (News 69 1992, n.p.); (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 80 1994, n.p.); (News 81 1994, n.p.); (News 82 1994, n.p.); (News 87 1996, n.p.); (News 93 1997, n.p.); (News 94 1997, n.p.); (News 129 2001, 2); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 141 2002, 1); (News 146 2002, 7); (News 156 2002, n.p.); (News 471 2002, 1).

²³¹ "Ook de uitstekende verfilmingen van haar boeken, onder andere van Olle Helblom [sic], vonden hun weg over de hele wereld" (News 471 2002, 1).

“worldwide dissemination” of Lindgren’s fame (News 73 1992, n.p.).²³² Illustrator Marit Törnqvist, who grew up in Sweden, highlights the importance of early radio broadcastings of Lindgren’s works. She contends, “Every Swede under the age of 40 grew up with her works. During the 1960s, Astrid read aloud her books on the radio, which means that even children living in the remotest regions know her books” (News 87 1996, n.p.).²³³ Seeing that these radio recordings were only ever transmitted in Sweden, it is only natural that they are not mentioned by any of the other newspaper journalists of journal critics.

Singular references to consumables related to other titles of Lindgren’s are made in 47 articles.²³⁴ Besides *Pippi Longstocking*, other fairly strong “contenders” in this category are *Ronia, the Robber’s Daughter* (46 instances)²³⁵ and *The Brothers Lionheart* (38).²³⁶ In both cases,

²³² “Aan die wereldwijde verspreiding leveren de vele schitterende verfilmingen ongetwijfeld hun bijdrage” (News 73 1992, n.p.).

²³³ “Iedere Zweed onder de veertig is met haar werk opgegroeid. In de jaren zestig las Astrid al haar boeken voor op de radio, waardoor zelfs de meest afgelegen wonende kinderen haar boeken kennen” (News 87 1996, n.p.).

²³⁴ The other consumables mentioned are related to the following stories (in alphabetical order): [Astrid Lindgren. Her Life in Pictures]: (News 260 2007, 147); (News 274 2007, 40); (News 278 2007, 99), [Astrid Lindgren Tells a Story] directed by Daniel Bergman: (News 415 1998, 17); (News 416 1998, 23); (News 417 1998, 15); (News 418 1998, 13); (News 419 1998, 61); (News 420 1998, 9), Bill Bergson: (LG 43 1986, 476), Emil: (En nu 38 2007, 343); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (JBG 19 1974, 145); (JBG 71 1993, 242-243); (JBG 81 2000, 291); (JBG 90 2003, 165); (LG 16 1971, 240); (LG 50 1993, 748); (News 28 1974, n.p.); (News 51 1980, n.p.); (News 66 1991, n.p.); (News 622 2006, 2); (News 728 2008, 6), film retrospective: (News 497 2002, K29); (News 666 2007, 16-17), Karlsson: (JBG 32 1981, 30); (JBG 61 1990, 353); (News 499 2002, 21); (News 622 2006, 2), Lotta on Troublemaker Street: (News 244 2006, 99); (News 313 2010, 55); (News 426 1999, 15); (News 608 2006, 21), Mardie: (News 39 1977, n.p.), Noisy Village: (En nu 19 1986, 266), Pippi Longstocking’s Christmas story: (News 515 2002, 9); (News 516 2002, 14); (News 517 2002, 10); (News 518 2002, 3); (News 520 2002, 13), Rasmus: (News 424 1999, n.p.), Seacrow Island: (En nu 39 2007, 353); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (JBG 54 1989, 282); (JBG 89 2003, 202); (JBG 90 2003, 165), The Red Bird: (News 746 2008, 12-13).

²³⁵ (En nu 23 1994, 35); (JBG 101 2007, 231); (News 79 1994, n.p.); (News 271 2007, 5); (News 273 2007, 35); (News 299 2009, 46); (News 301 2009, 41); (News 376 1998, 31) (News 405 bis 1998, 27); (News 406 1998, 39); (News 446 2000, 37); (News 447 2000, 10); (News 448 2000, 26); (News 467 2001, K26); (News 469 2001, 13); (News 550 2003, WA3); (News 551 2003, K17); (News 599 2006, 14); (News 610 2006, 8); (News 655 2007, 21); (News 658 2007, 22-23); (News 660 2007, 15); (News 661 2007, 22-23); (News 663 2007, 22-23); (News 667 2007, 22-23); (News 668 2007, 29); (News 669 2007, 61); (News 670 2007, 22-23); (News 671 2007, 28); (News 672 2007, 57); (News 673 2007, 22-23); (News 675 2007, 17); (News 676 2007, 22-23); (News 677 2007, 22-23); (News 682 2007, 12-13); (News 686 2007, 22-23); (News 692 2007, 26-27); (News 695 2007, 22-23); (News 698 2007, 22-23); (News 708 2007, 20-21); (News 711 2008, 20-21); (News 748 2008, 20); (News 758 2009, 31); (News 778 2009, n.p.); (News 779 2009, 19); (News 780 2009, n.p.).

²³⁶ Film: (News 45 1978, n.p.); (News 46 1978, n.p.); (News 75 1993, n.p.); (News 623 2006, 99); (News 712 2008, 29); (News 713 2008, 42-43); (News 715 2008, 24); (News 716 2008, 40-41); (News 742 2008, 32); (News 743 2008, 34-35). Theatre: (News 75 1993, n.p.); (News 202 2003, 20); (News 216 2004, 21); (News 561 2004, 17); (News 562 2004, 17); (News 626 2006, 32-33); (News 628 2006, 22-23); (News 629 2006, 18-19); (News 631 2007, 17). Musical: (News 691 2007, 99); (News 699 2007, 21); (News 700 2007, 11); (News 700 2007, 99); (News 702 2007, 22-23); (News 703 2007, 16); (News 704 2007, 25); (News 706 2007, 9); (News 707 2007, 18); (News 709 2007, 4); (News 710 2007, 13); (News

movie versions as well as stage adaptations keep bringing the works to the audience's notice. Film critic Fritz de Jong sees the *Ronia*-film as a "[t]extbook example of a successful screen version of a children's book" (News 779 2009, 19).²³⁷ Director Inèz Derksen when discussing her own theatre adaptation highlights its potential effect. She comments, "It feels like an honour to stage this story. That people who might not have heard of the book yet, can get to know it after all" (News 655 2007, 21).²³⁸ Moreover, a striking example of how consumables can impact people's everyday lives is a Dutch school project involving a stage version of *Ronia* (News 610 2006, 8). When two secondary schools in Amsterdam were forced to share a schoolyard, conflicts arose between gangs from the different institutions. In an effort to resolve the tensions, pupils from both schools were offered the opportunity to participate in a joint theatre production. It was no coincidence that the schools chose to perform *Ronia*, which deals with the settlement of a long-standing quarrel between competing bands of robbers.

Finally, Gert Hermans highlights Lindgren's significance for children's films in general. Calling her an icon for the field, Hermans states, "Her films were at the basis of a new style of film and forced the breakthrough of the 'children's film genre' all over Europe" (JBG 78 1998, 397).²³⁹ Another (unnamed) film critic can be seen to make a similar observation: "The four northern countries have a rich children's film tradition, inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales and Astrid Lindgren's children's books", among which Pippi Longstocking is foregrounded as the most prominent (News 265 2007, 27).²⁴⁰

Although the adaptations and consumables are met with varying degrees of critique, it is clear that Astrid Lindgren's being an "early adopter" of "new" media influenced – and perhaps even enhanced – the canonisation of her works. Not only screen versions boost the buzz, also her photo book project with Anna Riwkin-Brick and spin-offs of her work such as picture- and comic books draw reviewers' attention. Astrid Lindgren's own stance with respect to adaptations and consumables was nonetheless ambivalent. Presumably, seeing that she went along in endeavours to proliferate her works, she must to some extent have been aware of the possible impact of those reworkings. In her own writing and in public speeches, she expressed an outspoken preference for the medium of the

711 2008, 20-21); (News 745 2008, 24); (News 747 2008, 18); (News 845 2012, n.p.); (News 846 2012, 11); (News 848 2012, 9); (News 864 2012, 51); (News 865 2012, 59).

²³⁷ "Schoolvoorbeeld van een geslaagde jeugdboekverfilming" (News 779 2009, 19).

²³⁸ "Het voelt als een rijkdom dat ik dit verhaal nu op dat podium mag zetten. Dat mensen die het boek misschien nog niet kenden, er nu alsnog op deze manier kennis mee kunnen maken" (News 655 2007, 21).

²³⁹ "Astrid Lindgren is een icoon voor de kindersfilm. Haar films stonden aan de basis van een nieuwe filmstijl en forceerden de doorbraak van het 'kindersfilmgenre' in heel Europa" (JBG 78 1998, 397).

²⁴⁰ "De vier noordelijke landen hebben een rijke jeugdfilmtraditie, mee ingegeven door de sprookjes van Hans Christian Andersen en de jeugdboeken van Astrid Lindgren" (News 265 2007, 27).

book, as evidenced in her acceptance speech for the Hans Christian Andersen Award, an excerpt of which was published in *En nu over jeugdliteratuur* in 1975:

Nothing can replace the book in the development of children's imagination. Contemporary youngsters watch films, listen to the radio, watch television, read comics – all of which can be very pleasant, but it hasn't got anything to do with imagination. (En nu 5 1975, 22)²⁴¹

To her mind, the book was the epicentre of the human condition, seeing that it spurs people's fantasy. Imagination is the breeding ground for hopes and dreams, which make the world go round. In order to keep stimulating fertile soil for the society of the future, child readers need to be brought back to the book, and adults need to keep an eye on what children read (En nu 5 1975, 22). As Simone Arts remarks in *Leesgoed* on the occasion of Astrid Lindgren's centenary, "Astrid's message was clear: show children the way to the book" (En nu 36 2007, 335).²⁴² However, despite the fact that the book was of primary importance to her, she did seize various opportunities to advocate her works through other media, and quite successfully so, seeing that they already reached millions of children "[l]ong before the marketing age of Harry Potter" (News 479 2002, 1).²⁴³

Derivatives

Finally, I also attach importance to allusions to Astrid Lindgren's works in popular culture and to palpable manifestations of such references in extra-medial forms. Such instances could be seen as a far-reaching form of intertextuality. This view of mine accords with Jacqueline Rose's perspective on *Peter Pan*. As she writes in her influential study *The Case of Peter Pan; or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, "*Peter Pan's* dispersion – the fact that it is everywhere and nowhere at one and the same time – has been taken as the *sign of its cultural value*" (Rose 1984, 6; emphasis added). Similarly, I look upon derivatives as tokens of Lindgren's wide-ranging canonicity. Articles related to such derivatives make up just about 10 % of the corpus, which makes their share in fact larger than that of the literary prizes, both awarded (1.7 %) and commemorative (9.5 %), and of adaptations (7.4 %). In fact, derivatives prevail in the popular media: a mere five of the articles classed in this category were published in journals, the other 111 (95.7 %) featured in daily newspapers. This demonstrates the connection of such phenomena with people's everyday lives. Some

²⁴¹ "Bij de ontwikkeling van de kinderfantasie kan niets het boek vervangen. De hedendaagse jeugd ziet films, luistert naar de radio, kijkt naar televisie, leest strips, - dit kan alles wel plezierig zijn, maar het heeft heel weinig te maken met fantasie" (En nu 5 1975, 22). See also (IDIL 9 1960, 74-75).

²⁴² "Astrids boodschap was [...] duidelijk: wijs kinderen de weg naar het boek" (En nu 36 2007, 335). Cf. (News 44 1978, n.p.).

²⁴³ "Lang voor het marketingtijdperk van Harry Potter" (News 479 2002, 1).

of the corpus contributors mention derivatives which are only relevant in a Swedish context, but of more interest here are indications of derivatives which actually are perceptible in Flemish and/or Dutch culture or accessible to the Flemish and/or Dutch audiences.

Perhaps the most substantial of the extra-textual phenomena in Flanders is the decision made by the *National Centre for Children's Literature* [Nationaal Centrum voor Jeugdliteratuur] to name their accommodation Vilekulle Cottage [Villa Kakelbont], after Pippi Longstocking's house.²⁴⁴ Majo de Saedeleer, the then president of the centre, elucidated that the choice was intended to pay homage to Lindgren (News 112 1999, 11), and that she saw it as "the ultimate tribute" to an author whose "influence on children's literature has been enormous" (News 137 2002, 38).²⁴⁵ The aforementioned concept of the "Children's Consul" [Kinderconsul], too, was meant as an acknowledgement of the author's significance in the Flemish field of children's literature (cf. section 3.1).²⁴⁶

Also noteworthy is the fact that Lindgren was interviewed by Dutch author Adriaan van Dis in his talk show *Hier is ... Adriaan van Dis*.²⁴⁷ The show is said to "still coun[t] as the only successful Dutch television programme on books", and it presented a "cross section of recent literary history" (News 719 2008, 19).²⁴⁸ The row of guests is found to be impressive, and included such as Isabel Allende, Hugo Claus, Roald Dahl, Umberto Eco, Frederick Forsyth, Hella S. Haasse, W.F. Hermans, Hans van Manen, Ischa Meijer, Harry Mulisch, Gerard Reve, Salman Rushdie, Annie M.G. Schmidt, Marten Toonder, Andreas Burnier, Ischa Meijer, Martha Gellhorn, Willem Oltmans, Ryszard Kapuscinski, Roland Topor, Renate Rubinstein, Stephen Spender, A. den Doollaard, Adriaan Morriën, Karel van het Reve, Joseph Heller, and Astrid Lindgren.²⁴⁹ Arjan Peters in *De Volkskrant* argues, because these were all "big shots", the show has become "a historical document" (News 720 2008, 20-21).²⁵⁰ A televised derivative of an entirely different order was an episode of a cooking show by famous Flemish chef Jeroen Meus which was devoted to Astrid Lindgren.²⁵¹ In his television program called *Plat préféré*, Meus cooked the favourite dish of a number of "legendary figures" (News 305 2009, 71), in a setting related to their lives. Other episodes centred around Greta Garbo, Charles De Gaulle, renowned Flemish weather forecaster Armand Pien, famous cabaret artist Toon Hermans (News 305 2009,

²⁴⁴ (News 112 1999, 11); (News 128 2001, 46); (News 132 2001, 15); (News 137 2002, 38).

²⁴⁵ "het ultieme eerbetoon"; "invloed op de jeugdliteratuur is zo enorm geweest" (News 137 2002, 38).

²⁴⁶ (News 256 2007, 21); (News 257 2007, 27); (News 258 2007, 50); (News 274 2007, 40).

²⁴⁷ (News 272 2007, 7); (News 290 2008, 99); (News 719 2008, 19); (News 720 2008, 20-21); (News 879 2012, n.p.).

²⁴⁸ "geldt nog altijd als het enige succesvolle Nederlandse televisieprogramma over boeken"; "dwarsdoorsnee van de recente literatuurgeschiedenis" (News 719 2008, 19).

²⁴⁹ (News 719 2008, 19); (News 720 2008, 20-21).

²⁵⁰ "kanonnen"; "een historisch document" (News 720 2008, 20-21).

²⁵¹ (News 304 2009, 16); (News 305 2009, 71); (News 768 2009, 10); (News 770 2009, 28); (News 772 2009, 17); (News 781 2009, 25); (News 800 2010, 21); (News 801 2010, 17).

71), as well as “stars of yours” Bruce Lee, Bob Marley, Jacques Brel, Maria Callas, and Johnny Cash (News 781 2009, 25). The show in itself became infamous when TV channel *Canvas* was forced to cancel an episode on Adolf Hitler, as a result of viewers’ enraged reactions to its announcement (News 304 2009, 16). Hence, it definitely had the potential to attract some attention for Lindgren as well.

Another example of a telling derivative is Pippi Longstocking’s being chosen as the mascot of a children’s rights festival because she was a forerunner of children’s emancipation (News 120 2000, 26). Further instances of Lindgren’s works being brought closer to their audience include mentions of a primary school in Schiedam being named after Pippi (News 438 2000, 2), a chain of daycare centres bearing Astrid Lindgren’s name (News 883 2012, 22), an array of Pippi-toys and accessories,²⁵² including fancy dress costumes,²⁵³ and actual dress-up parties.²⁵⁴ In this connection, Marijn van der Jagt notes that the staging of a Pippi-musical might work to increase demand for such costumes (News 404 1998, 12). Another striking example of the appeal of the Pippi-character is the visit actress Inger Nilsson paid to a Flemish school providing evening classes in Swedish, in order to attract new students.²⁵⁵ Moreover, people could encounter Pippi at a sand sculpture festival,²⁵⁶ at internationally renowned flower garden *Keukenhof*, in the form of a flower portrait,²⁵⁷ and at an exhibition about children’s literary heroes at the national *Literary Museum* [Letterkundig Museum] in The Hague (News 627 2006, 12-13). What is more, the exposition “Pippi On Paper” [Pippi op Papier, 2x3=4] at the Meermannomuseum in The Hague was devoted entirely to *Pippi Longstocking*’s proper book history.²⁵⁸ It is obvious that Pippi Longstocking once more proves to be the most prone to extra-textuality.

Yet another way for readers to engage with literary works, which could be seen as an exponent of what Linda Hutcheon termed the participatory mode of adaptation (Hutcheon 2006, 22; cf. *supra*), is literary tourism. In Sweden, *Astrid Lindgren’s World* [Astrid Lindgrens Värld] in Vimmerby and *Junibacken* in Stockholm are among the means for interacting with Lindgren’s oeuvre, and several of the corpus contributors can in

²⁵² (News 370 2012, 8); (News 371 2012, 41); (News 432 2000, 3).

²⁵³ (News 404 1998, 12); (News 432 2000, 3).

²⁵⁴ (News 432 2000, 3); (News 441 2000, 30); (News 649 2007, 99). An example from Sweden is also named (News 236 2005, n.p.), as well as one from Germany (News 228 2005, n.p.); (News 229 2005, 18).

²⁵⁵ (News 370 2012, 8); (News 371 2012, 41).

²⁵⁶ (News 364 2012, 18); (News 365 2012, 57); (News 367 2012, 42).

²⁵⁷ The flower portrait was created within the scope of the exhibition “Linnaeus, 300 years King of Flowers” (News 642 2007, 3); (News 644 2007, 10-11).

²⁵⁸ (News 784 2010, n.p.); (News 795 2010, 33); (News 797 2010, 19).

effect be seen to encourage their readership to visit them.²⁵⁹ *Junibacken* (29 instances) proves to be better known than *Astrid Lindgren's World* (9 examples). In all probability, this has to do with the Dutch connection with the project, that is, the fact that Dutch-Swedish illustrator Marit Törnqvist (the daughter of Lindgren's translator Rita Verschuur) planned and coordinated the museum's construction. Overall, *Junibacken* is well-reviewed, with gatekeepers appreciating its magical and wonderfully precise design (News 390 1998, 3). They also set store by the fact that Törnqvist, just like Lindgren, takes children seriously (En nu 28 1999, 114), that they come first and that their imagination is stimulated (News 393 1998, 3). Aptly capturing the spirit of the project, one review reads, "[*Junibacken*] doesn't need rollercoasters in order to be enthralling. In this story house, loopings are made in one's mind" (News 393 1998, 3).²⁶⁰ Once again, Lindgren's child image proves to be of importance.

In this connection, Sweden is dubbed "the land of Abba and Astrid Lindgren" (News 844 2011, 16).²⁶¹ Stockholm is advertised as the city of Alfred Nobel, Abba, Olof Palme, and Pippi Longstocking, and *Junibacken* is listed as one of its highlights (News 167 2002, 37).²⁶² Pippi Longstocking is counted among Sweden's best known export products, along with Volvo and Saab, Greta Garbo, queen Sylvia, and Olof Palme, pop groups Ace of Base, Roxette, and Abba, and sportsmen Ingemar Stenmark, Björn Borg, Stefan Edberg, Mats Wilander, and Magnus Norman (News 118 2000, 90). Moreover, athlete Carolina Klüft is seen as a Pippi incarnate and "Hercules' little sister" (News 270 2007, 44).²⁶³

In addition, Lindgren is found to have stimulated leisure travel to Sweden in general.²⁶⁴ Tellingly, Bregje Boonstra notes, "Astrid Lindgren does not only stand for beautiful

²⁵⁹ *Astrid Lindgren's World*: (En nu 19 1986, 266); (News 85 1995, n.p.); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 227 2005, 40); (News 255 2007, 115); (News 268 2007, 115); (News 476 2002, 10); (News 757 2009, 19); (News 826 2011, 40), *Junibacken*: (En nu 27 1999, 18-20); (En nu 28 1999, 114-117); (En nu 37 2007, 336-340); (News 87 1995, n.p.); (News 89 1996, n.p.); (News 90 1997, n.p.); (News 91 1997, n.p.); (News 92 1997, 16); (News 104 1998, 39); (News 117 2000, 10); (News 137 2002, 38); (News 142 2002, 10); (News 167 2002, 37); (News 169 2002, n.p.); (News 235 2005, 14); (News 377 1998, 31); (News 388 1998, 7); (News 389 1998, 9); (News 390 1998, 3); (News 393 1998, 3); (News 397 1998, 33); (News 401 1998, 17); (News 646 2007, 24-25); (News 647 2007, 63); (News 648 2007, 24-25); (News 737 2008, 8); (News 754 2009, 99); (News 756 2009, 18-19); (News 789 2010, 8).

²⁶⁰ "heeft geen achtbaan nodig om boeiend te zijn. In het verhalenhuis worden de loopings in het hoofd gemaakt" (News 393 1998, 3).

²⁶¹ "het land van Abba en Astrid Lindgren" (News 844 2011, 16).

²⁶² Further recommended city highlights are the railway station, the Drottingholm palace, and the city hall (News 167 2002, 37). References to Abba and Olof Palme are also made in (News 438 2000, 2).

²⁶³ "Het zusje van Hercules" (News 270 2007, 44).

²⁶⁴ (News 167 2002, 37); (News 439 2000, 29); (News 471 2002, 1); (News 474 2002, n.p.); (News 539 2003, 1T); (News 622 2006, 2); (News 724 2008, 15); (News 730 2008, 22).

stories, but also for tourism and employment” (News 63 1987, n.p.).²⁶⁵ Marcel Frost in his obituary argues that the popular films and TV shows based on her books, “against the backdrop of Sweden’s magnificent nature, [...] unintentionally spurred on tourism in Sweden” (News 474 2002, n.p.).²⁶⁶ In effect, Noortje Geertsma-van Gijs indicates that the locations where the Emil- and Noisy Village-films are shot, for instance, attract heaps of tourists (En nu 19 1986, 266). The utterly Swedish, Paradise-like scenery of *Seacrow Island* is identified as a source of inspiration for children’s film *Tsatsiki*.²⁶⁷ Revealingly, Evelien van Veen associates Lindgren with the brownish red colour *faluröd*, typically seen on barns and farm houses in rural areas in Scandinavia. In an article on a hype surrounding hand-knitted Christmas ornaments created by two Norwegian fashion designers, Van Veen conjures up an image of the two of them knitting away in their “red stained Astrid Lindgren-house” in the “inviting-rustic” Nordic countryside (News 840 2011, 40).²⁶⁸ Lindgren-references crop up in the most unexpected contexts, which goes to show some of the mental images connected with her oeuvre are embedded very strongly indeed.

Some of the examples mentioned pertain to derivatives which are not specifically Flemish or Dutch, but linked to the Swedish source context. Such instances include references to stamps with images of the author and her works on them,²⁶⁹ memorials in her home town Vimmerby,²⁷⁰ an Astrid Lindgren children’s hospital (News 555 2004, 8), the plans to turn the writer’s home into a museum,²⁷¹ or to name Dalagatan, the street in Stockholm where she lived most of her life, after her.²⁷² One article states that in the wake of the tax debate she got involved in, “Pomperipossa-effect” became a fixed expression (News 374 2012, 21). In addition, the newspaper journalist mention that Astrid Lindgren is selected as one of the “cultural icons” to embellish a new series of Swedish bank notes.²⁷³ Lindgren and Pippi are to replace Selma Lagerlöf and Nils Holgersson on the

²⁶⁵ “Astrid Lindgren betekent niet alleen prachtige verhalen, maar ook toerisme en werkgelegenheid” (News 63 1987, n.p.).

²⁶⁶ “Tegen de prachtige achtergrond van de Zweedse natuur [...] zorgde Lindgren onbedoeld ook voor een impuls voor het toerisme in Zweden” (News 474 2002, n.p.).

²⁶⁷ (News 537 2003, 18); (News 556 2004, 21). The film, based on books written by Moni Nilsson-Brannstrom, is set in Stockholm but the scenery is nevertheless found to be equally cheerful as *Seacrow Island* (News 537 2003, 18).

²⁶⁸ “roodgebeitste Astrid Lindgren-huis”; “gezellig-landelijk” (News 840 2011, 40).

²⁶⁹ (News 63 1987, n.p.); (News 68 1992, n.p.); (News 155 2002, 23); (News 159 2002, 36); (News 492 2002, 24); (News 678 2007, 26); (News 694 2007, 5).

²⁷⁰ (News 212 2004, 18); (News 482 2002, 11).

²⁷¹ (News 183 2003, n.p.); (News 184 2003, n.p.); (News 185 2003, 12); (News 186 2003, 29); (News 187 2003, 19); (News 188 2003, 37); (News 189 2003, 10).

²⁷² (News 160 2002, n.p.); (News 500 2002, 13).

²⁷³ (News 327 2011, 41); (News 328 2011, 28); (News 329 2011, 21); (News 330 2011, 20); (News 823 2011, 2); (News 824 2011, 28); (News 825 2011, 27).

twenty-krona notes. The remaining notes, will be dedicated to Dag Hammarskjöld, Birgit Nilsson, Ingmar Bergman, Greta Garbo, and Evert Taube.²⁷⁴ One article states, “[The Swedish National Bank] Riksbank chose people who in the past century contributed in a positive and significant way to Swedish cultural heritage” (News 824 2011, 28).²⁷⁵

A similar idea, the suggestion made at Astrid Lindgren’s centenary to immortalise Pippi on the one-krona coins, is particularly interesting because it illustrates how ideology affects processes of canonisation: As is reported in an article in Flemish newspaper *De Morgen* dating from February 2007, in left-wing circles voices were raised in favour of the replacement of the portrait of King Carl XVI Gustaf with an image of Pippi Longstocking. In these circles, where one apparently was looking to undermine the royal family, Pippi is considered to be somewhat of a national emblem, and Lindgren is even deemed “a better symbol for Sweden than the king can ever be”, as Gudrun Shyman, former president of the leftist party *Vänsterpartiet*, stated (News 253 2007, n.p.).²⁷⁶ Social democrat Hillevi Larsson corroborates Shyman’s opinion and rather provocatively maintains that the habit of portraying the monarch on coins and bank notes is “an offensive remnant from the time when Sweden was a dictatorship” (News 253 2007, n.p.).²⁷⁷ Pippi Longstocking is seen as progressive in ideological terms – It is striking that this derivative, which is intended as a homage to Astrid Lindgren,²⁷⁸ simultaneously is deployed as an instrument of resistance against the prevailing view of society.

The reviewers furthermore allude to several ways in which Lindgren’s works left their traces in popular culture. Film critic Gerwin Tamsma points the influence of Pippi Longstocking in Swedish director Lukas Moodysson’s film *Together* [*Tillsammans*], in which the character, always on the lookout for gold coins, ironically is portrayed as capitalistic and materialistic (News 456 2001, 11). Furthermore, Moodysson himself upon the release of *Lilya 4-ever* [*Lilja 4-ever*] foregrounds *The Brothers Lionheart* as one of his main inspirations for the script (News 532 2003, 18). In said interview, Moodysson stresses that he thinks of *The Brothers Lionheart* as one of Lindgren’s strongest books (News 532

²⁷⁴ (News 327 2011, 41); (News 328 2011, 28); (News 329 2011, 21); (News 330 2011, 20); (News 823 2011, 2); (News 824 2011, 28); (News 825 2011, 27).

²⁷⁵ “De Riksbank heeft personen gekozen die in de vorige eeuw een positieve en belangrijke bijdrage geleverd hebben aan het Zweedse culturele erfgoed” (News 824 2011, 28). Cf. (News 825 2011, 27).

²⁷⁶ “een beter symbool voor Zweden dan de koning ooit kan zijn” (News 253 2007, n.p.). Compare (News 222 2004, 99), where Karin Alvtengen states that her great-aunt Astrid Lindgren “in Sweden was more famous and more beloved than the king” [in Zweden beroemder en geliefder dan de koning].

²⁷⁷ “een aanstootgevend overblijfsel uit de tijd dat Zweden nog een dictatuur was” (News 253 2007, n.p.).

²⁷⁸ Cf. (News 254 2007, 4): “The initiative is meant as a tribute to writer Astrid Lindgren, but ideological considerations come into play as well” [Het initiatief is bedoeld als eerbetoon aan schrijfster Astrid Lindgren, maar ook ideologische overwegingen spelen mee]. See also (News 170 2002, n.p.); (News 171 2002, n.p.); (News 172 2002, 23).

2003, 18). He deplors that it was criticised for tackling a controversial topic and strongly appreciates the fact that Lindgren discussed serious subject matter with children (News 532 2003, 18). Furthermore, Pippi is likened to Tarzan (JBG 18 1974, n.p.), as well as to female television action heroes Emma Peel from *The Avengers*, Wonder Woman, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, and La femme Nikita (News 861 2012, n.p.). As mentioned before, she is seen as a forerunner to pop group Spice Girls (cf. section 3.1),²⁷⁹ and the use of soundspelling is a trait she is found to share with Prince (aka Tafkap).²⁸⁰

A striking analogy is the comparison columnist Aaf Brandt Corstius makes between Silvio Berlusconi and Karlsson on the roof, in response to a remark of Berlusconi's that he believes himself to be the most beloved leader in the world (News 763 2009, 7). Brandt Corstius comments that this reminded her of Karlsson. Apart from a strong physical likeness, this is due to Karlsson's seeing himself as the best Karlsson in the world, which "makes him a fictional character that is insufferable and at the same time enormously captivating" (News 763 2009, 7).²⁸¹ She goes on to conclude, "That is what Berlusconi should be, a fictional character. He is perfectly suited for that. Perhaps even the best fictional character in the world" (News 763 2009, 7).²⁸²

The comparison between Pippi and Ernesto "Che" Guevara is also related to a political context (News 402 1998, 20), as is top OECD executive Angel Gurría deployment of the Pippi-character as a pars pro toto representing the exceptional strength of the Swedish economy as opposed to the ailing economical climate in the rest of Europe was (News 833 2011, 21). Last but not least, Pippi features in a series of portraits of cultural phenomena "which bind the continent" in Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* (News 866 2012, n.p.).²⁸³ The other milestones of European culture featuring on the list are the Sistine chapel, Chanel, the English garden, Plato, Romanticism, cartographer Blaeu, Tolstoy, Magnum, De Stijl, Bach, Fabergé, the book, the mini skirt, Chopin, Felline, Abba, *Romeo and Juliet*, and Gregorian chant (News 866 2012, n.p.). Once again, Pippi Longstocking's far-reaching cultural impact is corroborated. Overall, it is safe to say that Astrid Lindgren's works, and *Pippi Longstocking* in particular, circulate widely and "extra-textually", most certainly in Sweden, and to a more modest extent even in Flanders and The Netherlands.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁹ (News 97 1998, n.p.); (News 105 1998, 14); (News 402 1998, 20); (News 403 1998, 7).

²⁸⁰ (News 454 2001, 1); (News 455 2001, 7V).

²⁸¹ "maakt hem een onuitstaanbare en tegelijkertijd enorm innemende romanfiguur" (News 763 2009, 7).

²⁸² "Dat zou Berlusconi ook moeten zijn, een romanfiguur. Daar is hij heel geschikt voor. De beste romanfiguur ter wereld, misschien wel" (News 763 2009, 7).

²⁸³ "de cultuur die het continent bindt" (News 866 2012, n.p.).

²⁸⁴ As such, her oeuvre illustrates Nicholas Tucker's statement that "[s]ome classic children's stories also contain oft-quoted phrases and characters that have become part of the language" (Tucker 2002, 185).

5.4 Intertextuality

One of the main features which researchers with a synchronic outlook on canonicity value in canonical works, is, as was shown in section 4.1, their innovativity. It is a quality that can render a book original. In doing something new, it takes up a place in relation to existing works of literature and, more precisely, sets itself apart from its predecessors. The innovative aspect can therefore equally be considered in the context of intertextuality. In adopting a new approach to a certain style genre or topic, authors can position themselves in relation to other writers within a given literary field, perhaps create a trend, and become a point of reference themselves. Seen from this angle, intertextuality more or less manifests itself as an outcome of exemplariness. As mentioned before, Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer asserted, “Works that chiefly will be read are those that have demonstrably produced and influenced literature” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 192).²⁸⁵ Hence, a characteristic of such exemplary works is that they “are invoked by means of imitation, continuation, or contrafact, or kept present by means of quotations or allusions” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 192).²⁸⁶

Indeed, some scholars draw attention to the role of intertextuality in processes of canonisation. Joke Linders, for instance, argues, “Writers who borrow words, phrases, expressions and motifs from a book or refer to it in other ways, keep the book alive in doing so” (Linders 1994, 151).²⁸⁷ With respect to characteristics of canonical works Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer and Piet Mooren mention association with great literary works as well as with folk literature.²⁸⁸ The latter allows for writers to expand their range of action, as they put it, and thus to enhance their chances of becoming recognised as canonical authors (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 11). Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer likewise contends that writers may refer to other writers for their own benefit, intending

²⁸⁵ “Vor allem diejenigen Werke sollten gelesen werden, die nachweislich Literatur produziert und beeinflusst haben” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 192). Cf. section 4.1.

²⁸⁶ “mittels Nachahmung, Fortschreibung oder Kontrafaktur aufgenommen oder in Zitat bzw. Anspielung präsent gehalten werden” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 192).

²⁸⁷ “Schrijvers die woorden, zinsneden, uitdrukkingen en motieven aan een boek ontlenen of er op andere manieren naar verwijzen, houden het boek daarmee in leven” (Linders 1994, 151).

²⁸⁸ Reinbert Tabbert (1994) links intertextual references to folk literature, with the diachronic attribute of longevity. He believes such allusions will add to an author’s success, in what he calls the tradition-directed type of literature, comprising fairy tales and legends (Tabbert 1994, 46). He notes, “In this case, success already shows in the mere fact that a text has been passed down. If it had not been liked, it would not have been handed down” [Erfolg zeicht sich hier allein schon darin, dass ein Text überliefert worden ist. Hätte er nicht gefallen, wäre er nicht weitergegeben worden] (Tabbert 1994, 46).

“to position [themselves] in a literary tradition and to contribute to the revaluation of [their] own work” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 216).²⁸⁹ Moreover, she remarks,

This tendency becomes utterly striking in instances where intertextual connections occur with international classics of children’s literature or already canonised works of adult literature. By means of this strategy, the author attempts to place him- or herself on the same level as already acknowledged authors and works, and thereby to further his or her own standing and to initiate a process of ‘internal canon formation’. (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 216)²⁹⁰

“Internal canon formation”, Kümmerling-Meibauer adds in a footnote, “refers to the fact that authors themselves can contribute to canon formation – independent of opinions voiced in literary theory or literary criticism” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 216).²⁹¹

As such, seen from the perspective of the work containing intertextual references to canonical works, intertextuality could be understood as a manifestation of representativity.²⁹² If a text becomes canonical through displays of literacy and awareness of a tradition, this attests to the understanding of all literary works as interwoven with one another.²⁹³ This interpretation of intertextuality crops up in children’s book author Els Pelgrom’s contribution to *As Good as Classic*.²⁹⁴ In fact, in her eponymous article, subtitled “The Enigma of What Becomes Classic, Why and When” (1995),²⁹⁵ she mentions intertextuality as an essential part of literature: “Writing a book requires interaction [...], a breeding ground, scrounging from other arts and other writers, and there is nothing disgraceful about that. No book stands alone, it stems from what was already there” (Pelgrom 1995, 20).²⁹⁶ A similar conception can be seen to underpin the selection of works in *Beyond Babar*, seeing that Sandra Beckett writes,

²⁸⁹ “sich damit in eine literarische Tradition zu stellen und zur Aufwertung des eigenen Werkes beizutragen” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 216).

²⁹⁰ “Besonders auffällig wird diese Tendenz dann, wenn intertextuelle Beziehungen zu internationalen Kinderklassikern oder zu bereits kanonisierten Werken der Erwachsenenliteratur bestehen. Der Autor versucht, sich mit dieser Strategie auf dieselbe Stufe mit bereits anerkannten Autoren und Werken zu stellen, damit sein eigenes Ansehen zu fördern und einen Prozess der ‘inneren Kanonbildung’ einzuleiten” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 216).

²⁹¹ “verweist auf das Faktum, dass Autoren selbst zur Kanonbildung – unabhängig von Meinungen, die in der Literaturtheorie oder Literaturkritik vertreten werden – beitragen können” (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 216).

²⁹² See for instance (Sanders 2006, 9) and (Bergsten and Elleström 2004, 39).

²⁹³ See for instance (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 211).

²⁹⁴ *Zo goed als klassiek*.

²⁹⁵ “Het raadsel van wat klassiek wordt, waarom en wanneer” (Pelgrom 1995).

²⁹⁶ “Voor het schrijven van een boek [...] is een wisselwerking [...] nodig, een voedingsbodem, een leentjebuur spelen bij de andere kunsten en bij andere schrijvers en daar is niets schandelijks aan. Geen enkel boek staat op zichzelf, het komt voort uit wat er al was” (Pelgrom 1995, 20).

Often these authors engage in clever intertextual play, alluding to some of the most beloved works of children's literature. [...] Several novels share common traits with traditional tales and other favorite genres for children, but they are generally updated and given a modern twist. (Beckett 2006, xii)

Thus, Pelgrom's, Beckett's, Kümmerling-Meibauer's, and Van Lierop-Debrauwer's views on canonicity tie in with one another.

John Griffith and Charles Frey find that "there is truth to the argument that the formation of literary canons takes place among literary people. Authors make canons; they read each others's works" (Griffith and Frey 1992, 28). Likewise, Beverly Lyon Clark indicates that appraisal by another canonical author has a positive effect on the process of canonisation (Clark 2003, 18). Van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren, too, point out that authors can "so to speak nominate [texts] for canonisation" (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 13).²⁹⁷ They can do so by referring to them in their own works and thus showing their own readership what great importance they attach to these texts. This is a different kind of textuality altogether.

Hence, these scholars discuss two sides of the same coin, that of orientation towards existing literature. Both argumentations underline the impact on processes of canonisation of intertextuality. Therefore, in the analysis of the corpus material, specific attention will be paid to this phenomenon. I will look into the occurrence of "mentions", defined by Karl Erik Rosengren as

the name of a writer, or any paraphrase of such a name, or a book title, a figure from a given book, a quotation from or an illusion to a given writer; always in a review concerning a writer other than the one mentioned[.] (Rosengren 1968, 161)

In Rosengren's understanding, a "mention" is "supposed to be the expression of an association by the reviewer" (Rosengren 1968, 161), and thus may serve to situate Astrid Lindgren in a given tradition. The network of "mentions" in which Lindgren features could be seen as a kind of external canon. (It should be noted that many of those "mentions" are rather succinct and not always substantiated with an elaborated argumentation on the part of the reviewer, the discussion of these indications will be fairly short.) Another question to be investigated is whether any evidence can be found of other authors alluding to Astrid Lindgren or considering her a source of inspiration. In addition, Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that Lindgren herself was well-read and referred to many of her sources of inspiration in her own books.²⁹⁸ She relied heavily on Swedish oral tradition as well, and more specifically on the anecdotes her father used to

²⁹⁷ "teksten [...] als het ware voordragen voor canonvorming" (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 13).

²⁹⁸ See for instance (Kåreland 1999).

tell about his childhood.²⁹⁹ It will therefore be interesting to see whether this aspect is used as a standard for canonicity in the corpus material.

External Canon

Authors

In total, 226 “mentions” occur in the corpus articles, in which 95 different authors are named. 69 of those were found only once, thirteen of them twice. The following are the ten writers with whom Astrid Lindgren was associated most frequently:³⁰⁰

Table 12 “Mentions”: Authors (Top Ten)³⁰¹

Annie M.G. Schmidt	53
Roald Dahl	23
Paul Biegel	11
Hans Christian Andersen	7
Lewis Caroll	6
Selma Lagerlöf	5
A.A. Milne	5
Jan Terlouw	5
Thea Beckman	4
Tonke Dragt	4

The preponderance of Dutch author Annie M.G. Schmidt irrefutable, she eclipses all other writers. For the Dutch-language critics, she is the prime point of reference. The two of them are perceived as each other’s counterparts: Lindgren is considered the Swedish

²⁹⁹ See for instance (Lindgren 1975 [2007]).

³⁰⁰ A table rendering all author-“mentions” is included in the Appendix.

³⁰¹ I should note that three authors stand out in the corpus, as they claim themselves to be heavily influenced by Lindgren. These writers are Bart Moeyaert, Rita Verschuur, and Arnon Grunberg. Technically speaking, though, these references do not count as “mentions”, seeing that all three of them foreground the intertextual relationship themselves. Moeyaert’s connection with Lindgren is mentioned in the following articles: (JBG 84 2002, 90); (News 115 2000, 36); (News 137 2002, 38); (News 143 2002, 10); (News 144 2002, 15); (News 147 2002, 10); (News 275 2007, 41); (News 575 2004, 15). Verschuur mentions hers in these texts: (JBG 90 2003, 164-165); (LG 18 1972, 174); (LG 20 1974, 321); (LG 21 1975, 86); (LG 28 1979, 443); (News 104 1998, 39); (News 113 1999, 32); (News 137 2002, 38); (News 144 2002, 15); (News 168 2002, n.p.); (News 169 2002, n.p.); (News 342 2011, L9); (News 393 1998, 3); (News 401 1998, 17); (News 506 2002, 53); (News 509 2002, 33); (News 524 2002, 23); (News 543 2003, 16); (News 621 2006, 25); (News 650 2007, 24-25); (News 681 2007, 10-11); (News 735 2008, 8-9). Finally, Grunberg highlights his relationship with Lindgren in these articles: (News 381 1998, 5); (News 382 1998, 7); (News 383 1998, 9); (News 384 1998, 7); (News 391 1998, 4); (News 569 2004, 33); (News 619 2006, 59).

Schmidt,³⁰² or Schmidt the “Astrid Lindgren of the Low Countries” (News 340 2011, 4).³⁰³ The critics think of them as matches because they share a childhood image as well. The values which prevail in the conception of children they have in common are mischief (News 400 1998, 13), anarchy (News 470 2001, 45), freedom and tolerance (News 651 2007, 4). Also central are respect for children (News 665 2007, 11), and aversion to adulthood and its values (News 430 1999, 30) (cf. section 3.1).

In this connection, Sofie Scholliers remarks, “Not until the arrival of authors like Astrid Lindgren and Annie M.G. Schmidt are children finally allowed to be themselves and is imagination stimulated to the fullest” (News 176 2002, 12) (cf. section 4.2).³⁰⁴ Likewise, Dutch children’s author Rindert Kromhout emphasises their significance for writers following in their footsteps: “Because of them we can now write what we want to. We are no longer need to educate” (News 477 2002, 1).³⁰⁵ Schmidt’s biographer Joke Linders looks into the salient similarities between the two authors, highlighting that both “have infinite faith in youngsters, have an excellent sense for children’s needs and are rarely patronising and paternalistic. Their language is bursting with humour and originality, their personalities are self-willed and spontaneous” (News 70 1992, n.p.).³⁰⁶ She goes on to wonder if the timing of their respective debuts, right after World War II, may have influenced their style of writing. She asks herself, “Would the liberation of wartime violence have unleashed their boundless fantasy and their dreams?” (News 70 1992, n.p.)³⁰⁷ An argumentation of this kind has indeed already been pursued with respect to Astrid Lindgren’s, Lennart Hellsing’s and Tove Jansson’s breakthrough in post-war Swedish children’s literature (Kåreland 1999).

However, the two of them are not seen as peers exactly. Although their status in their respective home countries is comparable, with both of them arguably surpassing all other authors (News 190 2003, n.p.), Lindgren’s overall impact is found to have been larger. Klas Torstensson, a Swede living in The Netherlands, comments, “In The Netherlands, Astrid Lindgren is seen as the Swedish Annie M.G. Schmidt, but that is chutzpah. It is the other

³⁰² (En nu 20 1992, 118); (News 70 1992, n.p.); (News 190 2003, n.p.); (News 339 2011, 39); (News 603 2006, 19); (News 709 2007, 4).

³⁰³ “Astrid Lindgren van de lage landen” (News 340 2011, 4).

³⁰⁴ “Pas met de komst van auteurs als Astrid Lindgren en Annie M.G. Schmidt kan het kind eindelijk zichzelf zijn en wordt de fantasie volop gestimuleerd” (News 176 2002, 12).

³⁰⁵ “Door hen kunnen wij nu schrijven wat we willen schrijven. We hoeven niet meer op te voeden” (News 477 2002, 1).

³⁰⁶ “heeft een grenzeloos vertrouwen in de jeugd, voelt de behoeften van kinderen uitstekend aan en is zelden betuttelend of bevoogdend. Beider taal sprankelt van humor en originaliteit, hun karakters zijn eigenzinnig en spontaan” (News 70 1992, n.p.).

³⁰⁷ “Zou de bevrijding van oorlogsgeweld ook hun grenzeloze fantasie en hun dromen hebben losgemaakt?” (News 70 1992, n.p.)

way around, of course, ha ha” (News 709 2007, 4).³⁰⁸ Although Torstensson utters this remark in jest, other voices in the corpus make the same point. Rindert Kromhout (News 477 2002, 1) and Rita Verschuur (News 144 2002, 15) both point out that Schmidt’s renown was limited to the Dutch language area, whereas Lindgren’s fame was worldwide. Verschuur finds the latter’s role more meaningful than the former’s. She argues, “Lindgren was truly world famous. Moreover, through her political involvement, she played a much more important societal role” (News 144 2002, 15).³⁰⁹ Odile Jansen sees the poeticness of Lindgren’s writing as an essential difference which renders her work deeper than Schmidt’s: “besides idyl and adventure, there was always room for unhappiness, pain and sorrow. Undoubtedly, that was and is Lindgren’s greatness” (News 480 2002, 11).³¹⁰

Together with Schmidt and Lindgren, Roald Dahl, the second most frequently mentioned author, can be said to dominate the Dutch-language field of children’s literature. The three of them are considered the most important children’s book authors of the twentieth century (News 492 2002, 24), and are often bracketed together.³¹¹ What they are believed to have in common, then, is their rebellious, unconventional nature (News 818 2011, n.p.), and the courage to tell elaborate tales (News 428 1999, 27). In effect, their high level of writing is emphasised repeatedly. Together with Guus Kuijer, Anne Provoost, and Bart Moeyaert, Lindgren, Schmidt, and Dahl are seen as the cream of the bunch in Dutch-language children’s literature (News 99 1998, 2). Pjotr van Lenteren, for his part, is convinced that they set the bar for writing for children very high, in fact, too high for contemporary authors (News 766 2009, n.p.). He argues that Dahl, Schmidt, and Lindgren, along with Dutchman Paul Biegel, “proved how quality and popularity can go together. They did nothing special – writing about good food, whimsical adventures, comical animals and cruel adults – but they did so in an exceptional way” (News 766 2009, n.p.).³¹² To his mind, this extraordinary standard is out of reach for their successors: “The

³⁰⁸ “Astrid Lindgren wordt in Nederland als de Zweedse Annie M.G. Schmidt gezien, maar dat is een gotspe. Het is natuurlijk andersom, haha” (News 709 2007, 4).

³⁰⁹ “Lindgren was echt wereldberoemd. Zij speelde ook, door haar engagement, een belangrijkere maatschappelijke rol” (News 144 2002, 15).

³¹⁰ “naast de idylle en het avontuur was ook altijd plaats voor ongeluk, pijn en verdriet. Daarin lag en ligt ongetwijfeld ook de grootheid van Lindgren” (News 480 2002, 11).

³¹¹ (News 99 1998, 2); (News 262 2007, 30); (News 344 2011, 30); (News 413 1998, 3); (News 428 1999, 27); (News 434 2000, 9); (News 492 2002, 24); (News 766 2009, n.p.); (News 774 2009, 14); (News 597 2005, 9); (News 774 2009, 14); (News 818 2011, n.p.). (Again, though, Schmidt’s limited impact and lack of international acclaim are highlighted (News 262 2007, 30).)

³¹² “hebben bewezen hoe kwaliteit en populariteit samen kunnen gaan. Ze deden niets bijzonders - schrijven over lekker eten, grillige avonturen, komische dieren en wrede volwassenen - maar ze deden dat wel op een bijzondere manier” (News 766 2009, n.p.).

present-day mainstream gently stroll down the paths the past masters took. Apparently, the wheel was invented already and only needs to be kept going” (News 766 2009, n.p.).³¹³ A comparable debate, instigated by author Carry Slee, was discussed in section 4.2 already. It surfaced in 2008 as well, when critics proved to be disappointed by the outcome of the referendum in which children elected the best children’s book ever (cf. section 3.2). Other indications of the Dahl-Schmidt-Lindgren-triumvirate’s carrying a label of quality are found in six articles.³¹⁴ They are undeniably seen as gauges in terms of “good” children’s literature.

In a similar vein, Olaf Tempelman finds that Astrid Lindgren shares with other eminences the trait of universality, which sets them apart from lesser writers (News 738 2008, 26). He contends, “The brothers Grimm, Roald Dahl and Astrid Lindgren surpass temporal junctures and cultural zones; lesser gods, especially didactically oriented ones, rarely manage to accomplish that” (News 738 2008, 26).³¹⁵ Other benchmark figures which Lindgren is compared to are Miep Diekman [sic], Dolf Verroen, and Rita Verschuur (LG 28 1979, 443), as well as Rosemary Sutcliff and Maurice Sendak (En nu 9 1978, 17). Another significant association is made by Nell Westerlaken. In her obituary, she states, “Together with Hans Christian Andersen, Lewis Carroll, and A.A. Milne, Lindgren is one of the immortals of children’s literature” (News 476 2002, 10).³¹⁶ She sees as their most important common denominator the independence and respect they granted their child characters (News 476 2002, 10) (cf. section 3.2).

Finally, two comparisons with important figures from adult literature catch the eye. Firstly, Lindgren is bracketed together with the likes of Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre, all of whom are lauded for having tackled the difficult topic of a possible afterlife (News 540 2003, 28). Lastly, as mentioned in section 4.2, Stine Jensen in a review of Stieg Larsson’s Millennium-cycle argues that Astrid Lindgren together with August Strindberg can be seen as the epitome of the highly individualised Swedish society (News 734 2008, 4-5). She is convinced that Swedes, embedded as they are in a fully emancipated socialization, “require complicated and enormously emancipated characters, which are equally deep as the Swedish lakes” and can find exactly what they are looking for in

³¹³ “De hedendaagse mainstream kuiert verder op de wegen die door de grootmeesters zijn ingeslagen. Kennelijk is het wiel uitgevonden en hoeven we het alleen nog maar draaiend te houden” (News 766 2009, n.p.).

³¹⁴ (News 283 2008, 21); (News 284 2008, 9); (News 286 2008, 50); (News 395 1998, 7); (News 433 2000, 33); (News 434 2000, 9). See also (News 442 2000, 2), in which Dahl and Lindgren are seen as benchmarks and compared with Jean Dulieu. (News 620 2006, 7) highlights Lindgren’s superiority in relation to A.M. de Jong and A.D. Hildebrand.

³¹⁵ De gebroeders Grimm, Roald Dahl en Astrid Lindgren stijgen uit boven tijdsgewrichten en cultuurzones; mindere goden, vooral didactisch ingestelde, lukt dat vaak niet” (News 738 2008, 26).

³¹⁶ “Lindgren hoort met Hans Christian Andersen, Lewis Carroll en A.A. Milne bij de onsterfelijken van de jeugdliteratuur” (News 476 2002, 10).

Lindgren's and Strindberg's oeuvre (News 734 2008, 4-5).³¹⁷ Comparisons of this magnitude attest to Lindgren's having achieved an extensive level of canonicity, which can be seen to even have surpassed the borders of the field of children's literature.

Works

A total number of 53 individual titles of literary works were classified as "mentions", 40 of which occurred only once. The other thirteen titles were the following:

Table 13 "Mentions": Works (Top Thirteen)³¹⁸

Harry Potter (J.K. Rowling)	10
<i>Yip and Yannika</i> (Annie M.G. Schmidt)	6
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	5
<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> (Lewis Carroll)	4
<i>Winnie-the-Pooh</i> (A.A. Milne)	4
Das Sams (Paul Maar)	2
<i>Frog</i> (Max Velthuijs)	2
[<i>Menase's Dream</i>] (Isaac Bashevis Singer)	2
<i>Nobody's Boy</i> (Hector Malot)	2
<i>Peter Pan</i> (J.M. Barrie)	2
<i>Pinocchio</i> (Carlo Collodi)	2
<i>The Lord of the Rings</i>	2
<i>The Wonderful Adventures of Nils</i>	2

Seeing that the pattern of occurrence of these "mentions" is highly scattered, no significant conclusions can be drawn from them. Nonetheless, some of the associations give us clues as to the gatekeepers' assessment of Lindgren's works. For one, Michiel Leezenberg's aforementioned analogy between the settings of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, and Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking*, all of which Leezenberg looks upon as classics of world literature, bears testimony to the latter's range (News 732 2008, 4-5) (cf. section 3.2). Furthermore, illustrator and "Children's Consul" Gerda Dendooven's comparison between Annie M.G. Schmidt's *Yip and Yannika*-stories and Lindgren's *Pippi*-books corroborates the above finding that the former at times is found to be somewhat inferior to the latter. To Dendooven's mind, *Yip and Yannika* are "slightly outmoded" (News 192 2003, 30).³¹⁹ She explains, "I didn't get acquainted with [*Yip and Yannika*] as a child and therefore judge them from an adult's

³¹⁷ "heeft gecompliceerde en gigantisch geëmancipeerde karakters nodig, die zo diep zijn als de Zweedse meren" (News 734 2008, 4-5).

³¹⁸ A full list of work-"mentions" can be found in the Appendix.

³¹⁹ "een beetje achterhaald" (News 192 2003, 30).

perspective. From that viewpoint, Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking* goes further" (News 192 2003, 30).³²⁰ Dutch children's author Mies Bouhuys sees similarities between Pippi and Harry Potter, but finds Lindgren's writing to be of a much higher literary level (News 477 2002, 1). Maarten Moll, then again, in reviewing *1001 Books You Must Read Before You Die* proves to think of Harry and Pippi as equals, seeing that he deplores that the Harry Potter-series is not included in the anthology, whereas *Pippi Longstocking* is (News 636 2007, 6).

As far as *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* is concerned, theatre critic Wouter Hillaert highlights parallels with J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. He stresses that both are coming-of-age-stories which appeal to a dual audience, because neither of them "were written to serve the child in the first place" (News 301 2009, 41).³²¹ What they were intended for, he argues, was "to represent the adult authors' painful experiences. Death, abandonment, struggle, love: all of the great themes are included" (News 301 2009, 41).³²² In addition, *Ronia* is found to incorporate a *Romeo and Juliet*- or *West Side Story*-type plot (cf. section 4.2).³²³ *The Brothers Lionheart*, finally, is seen as a children's version of *The Lord of the Rings*.³²⁴ Overall, I feel that the evidence pertaining to the diachronic and extra-textual dimension of Astrid Lindgren's works shows that they truly bridged the gap between the ivory tower and the broader cultural field.

³²⁰ "Ik heb ze nooit als kind leren kennen en beoordeel ze daarom vanuit het standpunt van een volwassene. Dan gaat Pippi Langkous van Astrid Lindgren verder" (News 192 2003, 30).

³²¹ "geschreven om in de eerste plaats het kind te bedienen" (News 301 2009, 41).

³²² "om verbeelding te geven aan pijnlijke ervaringen van de volwassen auteurs. Dood, verlating, strijd, liefde: alle grote thema's zitten erin" (News 301 2009, 41).

³²³ (En nu 23 1994, 35); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 545 2003, 43); (News 659 2007, 9); (News 610 2006, 8).

³²⁴ (News 202 2003, 20); (News 562 2004, 17).

Coda

Canonising Children's Literature

So far, the argumentation pursued in this study has centred on sources from the professional and the popular spheres, which in a sense are the most *dynamic* of the subdomains within the field of children's literature (cf. section 2.3). Professional and popular agents are actively involved in reviewing literary works and their spin-offs. They bring to their readers' attention what they deem to be interesting, worthwhile, and promising. They keep track of developments within the field and simultaneously predict which works have the potential to break through. Hence, they keep a finger on the pulse of the field *and* direct its evolution. As such, the dynamic professional and popular forces in the canonising establishment prove to be decisive in terms of canonisation in general as well as in the processes of canonisation involving Astrid Lindgren's works in particular.

Yet, some of the professional and popular agents also express their judgments in a more *permanent* sources, for instance by publishing readers and reference works. Moreover, studies on canonisation within children's literature emphasise almost invariably the impact of players operating within the scholarly channel, who have the means to affect processes of canonisation through access to systems of education and literary historiography. Academic agents have the potential to influence canonisation processes by including canonical works in their teaching and by compiling works recording the literary history of the field. The assessment of Lindgren's oeuvre in such less flexible sources is yet to be analysed. Also, to what extent academic agents influenced the canonisation of Astrid Lindgren's works is a question that remains to be answered. The relatively small amount of epitextual sources from this sphere suggests that their influence is limited. This issue is, of course, a significant one within the framework of an academic study concerned with the canonisation of a children's writer's oeuvre such as the present. What was the impact of academic players and what potential does the study at hand have? In taking these questions into consideration, I am framing this very undertaking within a broader perspective, in which the interrelation between the

canonisation of one single author and the canonisation of the field of children's literature as a whole is probed.

Children's Literature as a Non-Canonical Literary Field

The field of children's literature is quite a "young" branch of the general literary field, and so is the research concerned with it. As mentioned before, children's literature started developing considerably later than adult literature, which is why it is essentially lagging behind the latter. Within the adult field, the concept of the canon has been going through a crisis since the 1960s, when it began to be criticised for social exclusion (cf. section 1.2). A comment made by Bruce A. Ronda in the early 1990s attests to the magnitude of the debate. Sketching the state of affairs, Ronda finds,

Canonical criticism is clearly one of the most hotly debated topics in literary circles these days, as once-sacred classics of Western literature are scrutinized for their political and social biases and as neglected texts are thrust forward for our consideration. (Ronda 1992, 33)¹

From the 1970s onwards, the arguably decentralised, ghettoised field of children's literature has been attempting to catch up with the adult one, as a result of which, in recent decades, some obvious signs point to a process of upgrading – or, canonisation, if you will – of the field of children's literature as a whole. As will be argued below, canon construction constitutes a large part of these efforts. The developments rendered here have taken place mainly in academic circles in the United States and Western Europe and have been more or less parallel. I will start by recapitulating the starting point for the debate on the position of children's literature and subsequently discuss scholars' views on the matter.

Crucial in this discussion is the idea that the blueprint for canonisation, with its model of interplay between different channels, can be applied not only to the oeuvre of an individual author, but also on a larger scale, to a literary field in its entirety. Several children's literature scholars in effect link the *position* of the field explicitly to the question of a *canon* of children's literature. One such an academic is Zohar Shavit, who firmly believes in the existence of such a canon. She maintains that children's literature "by itself, is stratified as a whole into canonized and non-canonized systems" (Shavit 1986, 33), a mindset which is supported by Rita Ghesquière, who is convinced that "[t]he fact that children's literature also has a canon of its own hardly requires any proof"

¹ Compare (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999a, 13-14): "Scholars criticize the fact that the previous canon excludes too many groups of authors, world religions, and literary genres".

(Ghesquiere 2004, 59).² The point is, though, that this canon in itself is not necessarily central in the overarching literary field. As was shown earlier (cf. section 1.1), considered from Shavit's and Ghesquière's polysystemic point of view, the position children's literature occupies is comparable to that of inferior, non-canonised adult literature, which it in addition shares some characteristics with. Nevertheless, Shavit argues against totally equating it with the latter. Again in line with polysystem theory, non-canonised adult literature can be seen as a peripheral and single-layered system in essence, whereas children's literature actually is a multi-faceted system in itself, with a canon of its own, even though it likewise operates in the margins of the comprehensive general literary system. Consequently, despite children's literature's having a proper canon, Zohar Shavit does not leave any room for doubt as to whether children's writers and their books can ever reach the same status as canonised adult ones.

Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, too, sees a correlation between canon formation and prestige. She shows that, in Germany, the field of children's literature in itself became decentralised (or, non-canonical) in the nineteenth century, and in her view, this is still the case in contemporary society. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, commercial children's literature became all the more important, resulting in a neglect of literary superior children's books (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2003, 272-273). At several occasions, Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer herself has exhibited an interest in works of children's literature she deems worthy of canonisation, because, as she sees it, "Reflection on the canon *takes the place of the recognized canon* insofar as it reflects the controversial ideas of values and literature in modern society" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999a, 13; emphasis added). In line with cultural studies and postmodern reception theory, she argues that if the traditional, singular, and exclusive canon is on the decline in terms of authority, alternative sources of authority need to be tapped into. To her mind, considerations of the forces underpinning canon formation can supplant the reviled traditional canon. Kümmerling-Meibauer has, in effect, instigated several efforts to form a canon of children's literature. A first such attempt was *Classics of Children's Literature. An International Lexicon* (1999b). In addition, she studied processes of (de)canonisation elaborately in *Children's Literature, Canon Formation and Literary Evaluation* (2003). These efforts of her own notwithstanding, Kümmerling-Meibauer believes that the marginal position of the children's literary field as a whole has stood in the way of the construction of a canon proper to the field: "This canon debate was hardly even taken up in children's literature research. The argument that children's literature is not canonical has prevented a serious discussion of this topic until now [the late 1990s; svdb]" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999a, 14).

² "Dat de jeugdliteratuur over een eigen canon beschikt, behoeft nauwelijks bewijzen" (Ghesquière 2004, 59). See also (Ghesquière 1982, 18).

While Kümmerling-Meibauer did not see any signs of willingness to create a children's literature canon among children's literature scholars, others have called attention to a change of attitude that surfaced in the latter half of the twentieth century, as was shown in section 1.1. Anne Lundin (2004), for example, stresses that the introduction of children's literature in the academic world embarked upon in the 1960s and 1970s eventually resulted in "an interest in creating a children's literature canon, which would provide common texts for shared dialogue and curricula" (Lundin 2004, 65).³ At its height, in the U.S., this urge for canon construction was expressed in the compilation and publication of the three-volume *Touchstones*-anthology (1985-1989). Similarly, in Holland and in Flanders, Harry Bekkering observes that children's literature research from the mid-1980s onwards has displayed an "interest in aspects of canon formation and, consequently, in literary historiography" (Bekkering 2003, 8).⁴ Bekkering continues to state,

Several occurrences underline the growing attention for this subject: the genesis of [*De hele Bibelebontse berg*] during the 1980s,⁵ the symposium *The Hidden Place of Children's Literature at School* [...] in 1989, the dissertation *What Are Good Children's Books Thought to Be?* by Anne de Vries in the same year, his lecture *The Disappearing Children's Book* in 1990 [...] and [literary history; svdb] *Grown to Full Stature*, which was published in 1999. (Bekkering 2003, 8-9)⁶

³ Being both a librarian and a academic herself, Lundin sees strong similarities between the ways in which both groups of players in the field of children's literature have struggled to gain recognition for their field. She sees them both as having played a major part in its ongoing upgrading: "the roles and contributions of both [librarians and academics, svdb] in defining a high standard – an adult standard – for the cultural valorization of the book in their midst. I saw the construction of a canon – a selective tradition – to be the way to begin to see these institutional cultures and their effects as a field, as a child-centered, literature-centered enterprise" (Lundin 2004, xvi).

⁴ "belangstelling [...] voor aspecten van canonvorming in de jeugdliteratuur en, in het verlengde daarvan, voor literatuurgeschiedschrijving" (Bekkering 2003, 8).

⁵ *De hele Bibelebontse berg* is a history of children's literature in the Netherlands and Flanders compiled by said Harry Bekkering. (*Grown to Full Stature* [*Tot volle waschdom*], too, is a work of literary historiography by Bekkering.) The title is a reference to a famous Dutch nursery song, which is practically untranslatable: "*Op de Bibelebontse berg wonen Bibelebontse mensen | En die Bibelebontse mensen hebben Bibelebontse kinderen | En die Bibelebontse kinderen eten Bibelebontse pap | Met een Bibelebontse lepel uit een Bibelebontse nap*". See <http://www.peuteren.nl/kinderliedjes/liedjes/bibelebontse_berg.php?paginanaam=bibelebontse_berg.php> [Accessed 12 June 2012]. It features also in the poem "Alphabet" by Annie M.G. Schmidt, included in *De hele Bibelebontse berg*.

⁶ "Verschillende gebeurtenissen onderstrepen de groeiende aandacht voor dit onderwerp: de wording van *De hele Bibelebontse berg* in de jaren tachtig, het symposium *De verborgen plaats van kinderliteratuur op school* [...] in 1989 [...], de dissertatie *Wat heten goede kinderboeken?* van Anne de Vries in datzelfde jaar, zijn [...] lezing *Het verdwijvende kinderboek* in 1990 [...] en het in 1999 verschenen *Tot volle waschdom*" (Bekkering 2003, 8-9).

To this list we can add the collection of essays entitled *This You Must Read. Literary and Educational Canon Formation in (Children's) Literature* (van Lierop-Debrauwer, Mooren and Bekkering (eds) 2004) and the literary history *A Land of Delusion and Wisdom. History of Dutch-Language Children's Literature* (Ghesquière, Joosen and van Lierop-Debrauwer (eds) 2014).⁷

The main point in this context is that such efforts to describe the evolution of children's literature and to pinpoint its defining landmarks tie in with broader attempts to formalise the field of children's literature. In fact, they fit the overall function of a canon, which is to provide structure and anchorage (van Lierop-Debrauwer and Mooren 2004, 8). The canonical works of a given culture constitute for its members a shared frame of reference, which is created by the preservation, reproduction, and dissemination of literary works over time (Høyrup 2003, 55). John Stephens and Robyn McCallum likewise assert that "the function of a canon is to construct, preserve, and perpetuate particular forms of cultural knowledge" (Stephens and McCallum 1998, 21). Acquiring knowledge of these canonical texts is an essential precondition for understanding that culture, as also becomes evident in Hans-Heino Ewers' description of one of the possible meanings of a literary canon, namely "a selection of works and authors [...], knowledge of which is considered to be indispensable for a general literary education" (Ewers 2007a, 101).⁸ He stresses that this is not merely a random choice of favourite writers and books but rather a socially sanctioned one, "a pool of literary knowledge of cultural relevance and general validity" (Ewers 1997, 58).⁹ The process of getting acquainted with a specific literary tradition and its canonised works is referred to by Ewers as literary education in the narrowest sense, and he asserts that whoever possesses this kind of knowledge can call him- or herself "at home in the world of literature" (Ewers 1997, 58).¹⁰

It is in fact deemed to be vital that child readers get the opportunity to become acquainted with the corner stones of their literature. In a sense, one could say that canonical works (both of children's and of general literature) are utterly important for a young audience. Hence, Dutch children's literature critic and biographer Joke Linders contends that people who value their culture will ensure that their offspring gets to know the stories which were important and valuable to previous generations (cited in (van Ginkel 1994, 149)). Beverly Lyon Clark is of the same opinion,¹¹ and argues that, as a result,

⁷ *Een land van waan en wijs. Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse jeugdliteratuur* (Ghesquière, Joosen and van Lierop-Debrauwer (eds) 2014).

⁸ "eine Auswahl von Werken und Autoren [...], deren Kenntnis als unerlässlich für die allgemeine literarische Bildung angesehen wird" (Ewers 2007a, 101). Ewers refers to this kind of canon as a "canon of education" [Bildungskanon].

⁹ "einen literarischen Wissensbestand von kultureller Relevanz und allgemeiner Gültigkeit" (Ewers 1997, 58).

¹⁰ "in der Welt der Literatur [...] zu Hause" (Ewers 1997, 58).

¹¹ "Canonical works are precisely those that a culture wishes to preserve by passing them on to its young" (Clark 2003, 53).

“Canonical works are always, in some sense, literature for children” (Clark 2003, 53). Therefore, it is by identifying the canonical works of children’s literature and transferring them that the field as a whole will acquire stability and hence credibility.

Indeed, in the particular context of children’s literature, canon formation serves the specific purpose of lending stature to the entire domain. This point is made by Anne Lundin, among others, who argues that the creation of a canon of children’s literature “presumably [would] position the field within canonical strata of academic privilege” (Lundin 2004, 65). In her 2004 monograph *Constructing the Canon of Children’s Literature. Beyond Library Walls and Ivory Towers*, she starts from the *Touchstones*-anthology. She analyses the argumentation for including the separate works featured on the *Touchstones*-list, in an attempt to “reveal the discourse on canon that emerges from academia as acts of definition of greatness, of *cultural validation of the field*” (Lundin 2004, 67; emphasis added). Lundin draws the conclusion that the processes of canon construction under scrutiny in her study were motivated by a quest for cultural capital.¹² The crux of Lundin’s rationale is that the act of assigning value is one which reflects on the object as well as on the subject. As an agent in a literary field giving a work credit, one shows not only that the work is important, but also that one knows how to separate the wheat from the chaff. On that basis, an agent deserves to acquire some authority. Canonising individual works of children’s literature, then, will eventually serve to canonise the entire field.

A comparable view on the effect of canon formation is expressed by Sandra Beckett in her introduction to *Beyond Babar. The European Tradition in Children’s Literature* (2006). It can be discerned in her statement that “[t]he books selected have radically *marked* children’s literature and *affected* significantly *its status* in their country of origin and, in most cases, far beyond” (Beckett 2006, x; emphasis added). In field-internal terms, a canonical work gains authority by becoming indispensable in the domain and thus setting its stamp on it. An additional effect beyond the boundaries of the field, Beckett implies, is that the work raises the bar for the entire domain, hence making its esteem rise.

Jean Webb equally frames instances of canon formation within an on-going process of “defining, interrogating, and establishing children’s literature as an academic discipline” (Webb 2006, 60). In her view, the issues at the core of this development are issues related to the notions of canon and canonicity (Webb 2006, 60). Thus, Webb considers canon formation to be an essential step in the academic embedment of children’s literature studies. In fact, Webb sees as necessary “validating parameters” in the early phases of *any* field of literary study the following three components: the creation of its canon; the construction of its history and finally the questioning of the canon and its criteria of selection (Webb 2006, 60). Writing in 2006, Webb states that up until then she has not

¹² “Choosing greatness must convey greatness, where both awardee and awarder share the prize. What is the prize? I believe it is cultural positioning, cultural validation” (Lundin 2004, 141; emphasis in original).

observed a finalised canon of children's literature, but it is clear that she is convinced that this canon is in the making. Moreover, she finds that many different actors are involved in the field of children's literature, and that each group has a canon of its own. The emerging canon in the children's literary field can therefore be characterised as bottom-up and multi-faceted, as opposed to the canon of general literature which originally was more or less uniform and dominated by Dead White European Males.

Eva-Maria Metcalf sees the current state of play within children's literature as a reflection of evolutions in the literary field in its entirety, not pertaining to children's literature exclusively. In "The Changing Status of Children's Literature" (2006), she focuses on the manifestation of improved conditions for children's literature in Germany between 1960 and 2000 (roughly) and frames the recent growth in prestige and status against the backdrop of two new developments in the literary field: "the demythification and democratization of childhood [...] [and] of the literary establishment through attacks on the canon and the razing of hierarchical structures" (Metcalf 2006, 213). Increasing literary and academic attention for the subjects of children and their reading, along with a general rearranging of hierarchies in the literary field, has led to "an unparalleled professionalization and literarization" of children's literature (Metcalf 2006, 212), thus paving the way for it and permitting it to attain a slightly more central position. The critical voices being raised against the imperative, elitist canon of general literature in the 1960s eventually also worked to liberate children's literature, Metcalf holds. The lowering of the bar that canon criticism entailed resulted in "a creative push" in children's literature and subsequent heightened prestige (Metcalf 2006, 213). She believes that proof of the rising status can be found in literary prizes for children's literature and increasing research on children's books and their authors. Again, academic and highbrow instances prove to be significant parameters of canonisation (although one could also argue against the benefit of a separate circuit of literary awards for children's books, as this might evoke a sense of ghettoisation).¹³

It is evident from Metcalf's argumentation that she believes in the idea of a canon of children's literature, and even in the inclusion of children's literature in the general canon. An obvious illustration of her stance is the following comment, pertaining to German author Jörn Peter Dirx' *Alles Rainer Zufall*,¹⁴ a pastiche of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. She writes, "It is probably no 'coincidence' that in one of the illustrations [...] Kafka appears next to Alice, Mary Poppins, Struwwelpeter, Babar, Tarzan, Superman, Mickey Mouse, Don Quixote, and other cultural icons from within and without the children's literature canon" (Metcalf 2006, 218). In addition, *Alles Rainer Zufall* exemplifies

¹³ See section 2.2.

¹⁴ The title of this book contains a pun on the phrase "reiner Zufall" (meaning "sheer coincidence") combined with Rainer, which is a boy's name.

specific tendencies in children's literature which have contributed to its growing allure, such as (post-)modern and subversive inclinations. Metcalf explains, "This collage also illustrates the playful bending of high and low, adult and child cultures that has contributed to the integration of children's literature into the mainstream" (Metcalf 2006, 218). So, although children's literature had been a marginal phenomenon for quite some time, Eva Maria Metcalf holds that it is now leaving the literary periphery. In her opinion, for the past few decades, it has been getting ample opportunities to gain status, seeing that "in no century before the twentieth children [have] been studied so intensely, gained so much recognition, and been valued so highly, and the same can be said for children's literature" (Metcalf 2006, 211). The quotation above as well as the argumentation underpinning Metcalf's article as a whole clearly reveal an outspokenly positive and hopeful outlook on children's literature and its status, an attitude which – as this chapter shows – is by no means shared by all children's literature researchers.

One other scholar having expressed an optimistic outlook, though, is Rita Ghesquière. She finds, "[One can] state that children's literature has been moving towards the literary centre since the 1970s" (Ghesquiere 2009, 21).¹⁵ In her view, indications of the evolution towards increased appreciation in Flanders include a growing number of prizes, and separate publications, as well as expanding critical and academic attention (both in terms of research and education) (Ghesquiere 2009, 21). Rita Ghesquière herself definitely has been in the vanguard of children's literature research and teaching in Flanders. Admittedly, she finds that the picture of the last decade of the twentieth century is slightly less rosy (due to disappointing newspaper coverage and the discontinuation of several journals (Ghesquiere 2009, 21)). On the whole, though, Ghesquière remains sanguine about the state of affairs in the children's literary field. Astrid Surmatz in her study on the German reception of Astrid Lindgren's works (2005) equally expresses a hopeful judgment. In her view, the increased attention for popular literature and culture in academic circles, resulting in more research on these topics, has been advantageous for children's literature as well (Surmatz 2005, 25). On the whole, all of the indications discussed here allow for a modification of Zohar Shavit's viewpoints concerning the liminal position children's literature takes up in the overarching literary field, implying that it is safe to take up a slightly more optimistic stand.

Finally, I would like to turn to Deborah Stevenson's contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to Children's Literature* (2009), which deals with "Classics and Canon", as the title states. Starting from the statement that the field of children's literature as such still is not canonised in the umbrella field of general literature, Stevenson gives an overview of recent developments in the domain. She points out that the canon of children's literature

¹⁵ "[Men kan] stellen dat jeugdliteratuur zich sinds de jaren zeventig van de twintigste eeuw in de richting van het literaire centrum beweegt" (Ghesquière 2009, 21).

is a rather new phenomenon, as children's literature itself has not been the subject of academic study for a very long time. Like Anne Lundin (2004), she sees the 1970s as a crucial period in the development of the field of study, when children's literature began to be taught at universities and its leading scholarly journals were founded. What is more, she argues that the academic notice for children's literature contributed to the upgrading of the field as a whole, resulting in "a rising profile within the literary community" (Stevenson 2009, 111), a claim I would like to align myself with.

Seen from this angle, the creation of a canon of children's literature is a natural step in the process of legitimising the field of study, mirroring the development of adult literature.¹⁶ However, addressing the issue is by no means unproblematic, as Stevenson aptly indicates:

Canon creation [...] is never a simple and uncontroversial matter. In children's literature, this drive towards canon creation came, ironically, just as English departments were reconsidering and dismantling canons, making children's literature an old-fashioned field of study even as it newly arrived[.] (Stevenson 2009, 111)

I would not necessarily call the field "old-fashioned" myself, but I do agree with Stevenson that the situation is highly contradictory. This development indeed results in a strangely paradoxical situation, in which scholars in a relatively young field endeavour to create a high profile for themselves and their field by concerning themselves with a matter – the notion of a canon – which long since became obsolete in the established field of general literature.

Summarising the points made in this section, it is clear that several scholars of children's literature believe that tackling the subject of a canon can be beneficiary for the entire field, for two reasons mainly. On the one hand, the compilation of a canon list as an instrument of literary education serves to show the outside (literary) world that the field of children's literature is worthy of serious attention due to the weight of the outstanding, valuable works included in the list. Such a canon list has the potential to carry across this message despite its being a conservative phenomenon – relatively speaking. Secondly, as was argued at the beginning of this chapter, individual instances of literary criticism, published in daily newspapers or literary journals, are an excellent measure of ever-evolving processes of canonisation within the field of children's literature. In comparison with these time-contingent indications of canonisation, readers and anthologies provide records of processes of canonisation of a more enduring kind.

¹⁶ Moreover, a parallel can be drawn here with endeavours of different cultural groups within the "postmodern cultural state" that are identified as a "struggle for recognition" by Roderick McGillis (McGillis 2006, 326). In my view, the insight that certain groups attempt to gain respect could be applied to scholars and critics of children's literature as well.

Due to the more definitive nature of the records, the rationale “stored” in them has better odds at being unveiled. Moreover, the unveiling to be done is less demanding, so to speak. The compilation of readers and historical overviews entails intentional, collective engagements with canon formation and explicit considerations of canonical value. These are easier to distil than the singular, often implicit, assessments underpinning individual reviews and underscore the value of the field in its totality. Therefore, on a second – though not secondary – level, reflecting on the canon, and laying bare processes involved in conscious canonising efforts, contributes to the canonisation of the entire domain. Herein lies the value of the present study, in my view.

A consequence of the observed correlation between canon formation and canonisation of the field is that the inclusion of Astrid Lindgren in anthologies and textbooks can be seen to demonstrate her significance for the domain as a whole. A further case underscoring her weight is the fact that the 2003 exhibition *Sweets for the Sweets*, dedicated to the history of the illustrated children’s book in Flanders and The Netherlands,¹⁷ featured some of Lindgren’s works. That they were a part of such an outspoken act of legitimation speaks volumes.¹⁸ In the final sections of this dissertation, I will engage in a concluding discussion of the explicit, intentional motivations for canonising Astrid Lindgren’s works discernible in Dutch-language anthologies and textbooks intended for higher education. The argumentations in these types of publications will be treated not just as gauges for the criteria of value predominant in the field but also, if you will, as the trump cards children’s literature holds which could enable it to gain status.

Factors for Including Astrid Lindgren’s Oeure in Anthologies and Literary Histories

This section addresses the factors which account for the inclusion of Astrid Lindgren’s works in readers and textbooks. First and foremost I should note that the entries on Astrid Lindgren in anthologies and works of literary history are similar to a striking extent: the same types of arguments recur throughout them. I will discuss them in an order that mirrors the order in which the criteria in the previous chapters were analysed.

¹⁷ *Wie zoet is, krijgt lekkers*. The exhibit was curated by the National Centre for Children’s Literature and on display at Antwerp’s city library and Royal Museum of Fine Arts between 7 December 2002 and 9 March 2003. See <<http://www.erfgoedcelantwerpen.be/product.php?lang=NL&prodid=72&catid=90&itemno=&pos=20>> [Accessed 30 April 2015].

¹⁸ Cf. (News 176 2002, 12).

Child Image and Ideology

Just as the popular and professional epitexts, the rationale in the “enduring” professional and academic sources centres on elements in the books which reflect Astrid Lindgren’s child image. The contributors point out the self-willed and rascally purport of characters.¹⁹ In fact, Lindgren’s conception of children was the main reason for including ten of her works in *The Children’s Book from a Different Perspective* (1974),²⁰ a catalogue of children’s books written *against* the traditional, outdated, and distorted world view predominant within children’s literature at the time (1974, 1; 3). Its editors oppose the depiction of complete, happy families as well as imperialist and patriarchal undercurrents in children’s books (1974, 3). By way of alternative, they advocate books which discuss the topics of death, emancipation, divorce, and homosexuality (a.o.) (1974, 5). Lindgren’s books dominate the section of books in which “children criticise power relations” (1974, 21):²¹ nine out of nineteen books in this category are hers.²² Overall, her share in the total selection is overwhelming: whereas the average is 0.5 books per author (117 titles by 64 individual writers), Lindgren’s total amounts to no less than ten books.

As could be expected, the character of Pippi Longstocking is found to be pivotal with respect Lindgren’s child image. The academic/professional agents stress her anti-conventional attitude, which entails that she mocks docility and is not bound by anyone or anything herself.²³ Furthermore, Vanessa Joosen and Katrien Vloeberghs point out the social criticism underpinning the Pippi-books (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 126), and several of the anthologies and textbooks make mention of the Pippi-feud.²⁴ Bregje Boonstra, for her part, underscores the character’s agentic potential. She argues, “Pippi Longstocking has become the symbol of the child as a being that thinks and acts independently” (Boonstra 1999, 52).²⁵

Critic and publisher Marita Vermeulen in *Sweets for the Sweet* commends Astrid Lindgren (and Annie M.G. Schmidt along with her) for her emancipating child image (Vermeulen 2002, 57). In Vermeulen’s opinion, Lindgren’s view, in which children are

¹⁹ (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 227); (de Sterck, Franck and Kakebeeke (eds.) 1999, 207); (Het kinderboek vanuit een andere hoek 1974, 21-23); (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 319); (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 214).

²⁰ *Het kinderboek vanuit een andere hoek* (1974).

²¹ “kinderen gezagsverhoudingen kritiseren” (Het kinderboek vanuit een andere hoek 1974, 21).

²² These are the two books about the children on Troublemaker Street, *Pippi Longstocking*, the three Emil-books, and the Karlsson-trilogy.

²³ (Boonstra 1999, 52); (Boxall 2010, 428); (Eiselin 2002, 156); (Het kinderboek vanuit een andere hoek 1974, 22); (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 319); (Steinz 2003, 219); (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 263).

²⁴ (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 226); (de Sterck, Franck and Kakebeeke (eds.) 1999, 207); (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 320); (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 119).

²⁵ “Pippi Langkous is het symbool geworden voor het kind als onafhankelijk denkend en opererend wezen” (Boonstra 1999, 52). Compare (News 723 2008, 12).

seen as real people, is much more complete than the traditional child images which roughly fall into two categories. One is governed by the conviction that children, who are naturally ill-behaved, need to be moulded into obedient adults, the other amounts to a romanticised vision of children as innocent, pure souls in need of protection from bad influences (Vermeulen 2002, 57). The fact that Lindgren allows her child characters to misbehave, Vermeulen holds, attests to this comprehensive child image (Vermeulen 2002, 57). In this connection, Jan Van Coillie points out that Pippi Longstocking's unlimited wealth and strength fit children's secret wishes (Van Coillie 1999, 187).²⁶ Also, he sees the type of subversivity characteristic of the Pippi-books (and of many of Roald Dahl's works, for that matter) as very appealing to children.²⁷ He writes, "children get a great deal of enjoyment out of circumstances in which they outsmart those who are taller than them", and goes on to add that situations in which those in power are getting it in the neck are popular with children as well (Van Coillie 1999, 327).²⁸ Further features which appeal to young readers are fantastic creatures who make wishes come true, such as Karlsson (Van Coillie 1999, 187). In a similar vein, the fact that Karlsson is a projection of boyish dreams is highlighted in *Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 214).

In *Wonderland. The World of the Children's Book* critic Judith Eiselin, some of whose reviews for daily newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* are included in the corpus as well, shows appreciation for Lindgren's "unique feeling for the 'childlike' in literature", meaning that "[s]he could write as well as read with the eyes of a child" (Eiselin 2002, 156).²⁹ The latter quality proved to be very helpful in her career as a children's books editor, Eiselin argues (Eiselin 2002, 156). In other anthologies, too, mention is made of Lindgren's capacity as an editor and publisher of children's literature.³⁰ Her views on the translation of children's books, too, bear witness to a far-reaching belief in children's abilities, as Rita Ghesquière shows. She mentions that Lindgren felt that children were underestimated and therefore argued in favour of a type of translation in which culture-specific elements were maintained, so as to introduce child readers to new, foreign phenomena (Ghesquière 1982, 39). Lindgren's highlighting of children's adaptability is yet another manifestation of her child image, one that was not pointed out in any of the other epitextual sources.

²⁶ Cf. (Het kinderboek vanuit een andere hoek 1974, 22).

²⁷ Cf. (Boxall 2010, 428).

²⁸ "kinderen beleven veel plezier aan situaties waarin ze slimmer zijn dan wie groter is" (Van Coillie 1999, 327).

²⁹ "uniek gevoel voor het 'kinderlijke' in de literatuur"; "Ze kon behalve schrijven, ook lezen met de ogen van een kind" (Eiselin 2002, 156). Cf. (Boxall 2010, 428).

³⁰ (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 226); (de Sterck, Franck and Kakebeeke (eds.) 1999, 205); (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 321).

Overall, the preponderance of arguments of a moral kind is – yet again – overwhelming. In *The ABC of Children's Literature*, for instance, Astrid Lindgren's oeuvre is introduced by means of the famous device from *The Brothers Lionheart*, that there are certain things that one must do, that one otherwise would not be a human being but just a piece of dirt,³¹ which is used as a motto above the entry (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 318).³² The same article highlights the fact that Lindgren advocates patience and unshakeable self-confidence as antidotes to negative forces (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 321). Van Coillie, Linders, et al. likewise stress the emphasis Lindgren placed on courage and conquering one's fears (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 215). Furthermore, her message that violence is pointless is foregrounded,³³ as is her altruistic conviction that "one can only live meaningfully when one cares about others" (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 229).³⁴ The author of the ABC-article praises Lindgren for providing food for thought and for doing so in a non-moralising fashion, by means of "a refined, playful language which is averse of pomposity" (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 321).³⁵ Marita Vermeulen, too, sees Lindgren's style as authentic and non-compelling, which is what sets her writing apart from books containing an oppressive moralistic message (Vermeulen 2002, 58). All in all, the ideological purport of Astrid Lindgren's works proves to be utterly significant. The prevalence of arguments pertaining to moral values in *The ABC of Children's Literature* notwithstanding, the article contributors note that Lindgren once stated that there was no specific intention behind her writing, and that she only wrote to occupy and amuse the child within herself (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 320).

Synchronic Features

As far as Lindgren's writing skills and thematic choices are concerned, a number of qualities are foregrounded as pivotal characteristics of her body of work. To begin with, the author's versatility is emphasised,³⁶ as is her clever use of humour, tension, and imagination.³⁷ Compare the following comment taken from the anthology titled *Wanted: Author*: "Even when she writes about simple things, such as children's daily adventures,

³¹ See <<http://www.astridlindgren.se/en/more-facts/quotes/jonathan>> [Accessed 28 April 2015].

³² This device is also cited in (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 119).

³³ (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 229); (de Sterck, Franck and Kakebeeke (eds.) 1999, 207); (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 321).

³⁴ "men pas zinvol kan leven als men om de anderen geeft" (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 229).

³⁵ "een verfijnde, speelse taal die wars is van gewichtigdoenerij" (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 321).

³⁶ (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 229); (de Sterck, Franck and Kakebeeke (eds.) 1999, 207); (Eiselin 2002, 156); (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 214).

³⁷ (Ghesquière 1982, 128-130); (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 321); (Van Coillie 1999, 102-112; 183-187); (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 214).

she does this with so much humour and imagination that one as a reader would like to play a part in her stories” (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 229).³⁸ The focus on children’s everyday experiences is once again coupled with Lindgren’s use of her own happy childhood memories.³⁹ The particular sense of safety and security central in the Ericsson’s parenting is mentioned explicitly in *The ABC of Children’s Literature* (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 318). In addition, *Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature* links the idyllic and adventurous traits in Lindgren’s narratives not only with her childhood but also with the Swedish oral tradition, which is equally humoristic (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 214), and foregrounds the room left for children’s play in the Noisy Village-trilogy (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 51). Rita Ghesquière points out Lindgren’s ability to conjure up an entire narrative universe based solely on a recollected detail and adds that, in Classic rhetorical terms, she is a so-called *poeta vates* (or, a visionary poet) (Ghesquière 1982, 34). Overall, the focus on the incorporation of childhood reminiscences brings to mind Reinbert Tabbert’s category of inner-directed writing (cf. section 4.2).

Finally, emphasis is placed on the prevalence of emotions in Lindgren’s stories. *The ABC of Children’s Literature* foregrounds friendship, love, and loyalty as all-important themes (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 320-321).⁴⁰ *Wanted: Author* stresses the comforting role of imagination into which characters going through hardship can retreat and states that the figures experiencing sorrow, fear, and loneliness serve as a counterbalance to their prankster side (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 227-228). It concludes, “[Lindgren] owes her success to the skilful and sensitive way in which she portrays her characters’ feelings” (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 229).⁴¹ *The Children’s Book from a Different Perspective* (1974, 21) foregrounds the apt description of the inner struggle Lotta goes through as she oscillates between the desire for independence and the security provided by her parents. Also in this connection, *The Brothers Lionheart* is included in the second volume of this catalogue (1976, 38): it is seen as “truly a book from a different perspective because of the way in which the concept of death is dealt with”, and possibility it offers for coping with sorrow.⁴² Similarly, Joosen and Vloeberghs highlight the possible cognitive and therapeutic value *The Brothers Lionheart* may have (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 45). They

³⁸ “Ook als ze over eenvoudige dingen vertelt, zoals de dagelijkse belevenissen van kinderen, doet ze dat met zoveel humor en fantasie dat je als lezer wel een rol in haar verhalen zou willen spelen” (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 229).

³⁹ (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 226); (de Sterck, Franck and Kakebeeke (eds.) 1999, 206); (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 319); (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 51; 214).

⁴⁰ Cf. (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 228).

⁴¹ “haar succes te danken heeft aan de knappe en gevoelvolle manier waarop ze de emoties van haar personages beschrijft” (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 229). Cf. (de Sterck, Franck and Kakebeeke (eds.) 1999, 207).

⁴² “echt een boek vanuit een andere hoek door de wijze waarop het begrip dood wordt benaderd” (Het kinderboek vanuit een andere hoek 2 1976, 38).

argue that this healing effect is enabled by the unrolling of a fantastic, supernatural setting in which distance in relation to reality is created. They write, “thus, fantastic stories can bring up delicate or complex topics, adjusted to young readers’ intellectual or emotional capacities” (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 45).⁴³

Literariness

Arguments on canonical value pertaining to literariness reflect an important development marking the emancipation of children’s literature, that is, an effort to rid it of its educational connotation. Before delving into the corpus I will briefly summarise the main theoretical considerations of this factor. According to Anne Lundin, the evolution arose when academics started devoting special attention to this specific type of literature in the 1960s, struggling to “promote children’s literature *as literature*” (Lundin 2004, 64; emphasis added). As children’s literature experts at different universities began to team up and join each other in professional networks, the focus slowly moved from the use of children’s books to children’s literature as a form of *art*, with increasing attention paid to literary analysis of the texts. In a similar vein, Helene Høystrup observes,

In the history of the establishment of children’s literary domains in the twentieth century, texts were often proclaimed ‘classics’ as part of an argumentation that children’s literature was real literature and not – aesthetically speaking – a form of low or popular culture á [sic] la the type of mass literature that did not grow forcefully until in the twentieth century. (Høystrup 2008, 223)⁴⁴

The prominence of literariness in Høystrup’s contemplation of the deployment of canon formation as a means for heightening the standing of the field illustrates that champions of children’s literature evidently are looking to distance it from popular literature.

Borrowing Maria Nikolajeva’s phrase that children’s literature is coming of age, Sandra L. Beckett stresses the important role in this emancipation of literary qualities reflecting norms predominant in adult literature (Beckett 1999, xvii). Maria Nikolajeva herself obviously holds a similar belief, and argues that only when approached *as literature* can children’s literature even begin to aspire to a place in the general literary canon (cf. section 4.1). As this kind of thinking is winning ground within new branches of children’s

⁴³ “op die manier kunnen fantasieverhalen delicate of complexe onderwerpen ter sprake brengen, aangepast aan de verstandelijke of emotionele draagkracht van vaak jonge kinderen” (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 45) Cf. (Joosen and Vloeberghs 2008, 119).

⁴⁴ “I de børnelitterære miljøers etableringshistorie i det tyvende århundrede blev tekster ofte udnævnt til ‘klassikere’ som led i en argumentation for, at børnelitteratur var rigtig litteratur og ikke en æstetisk lav- eller populærkulturel form á [sic] la den masselitteratur, der var i kraftig fremvækst først i det tyvende århundrede” (Høystrup 2008, 223).

literature research, she is convinced that children's literature slowly but surely is catching up with general literature – at least in this respect (Nikolajeva 1996, 10).

The criterion of literary quality is not particularly common among academic/professional gatekeepers. A rare example can be found in Pieter Steinz' *Reading & cetera* (2003), who happens to be a critic of *adult* literature. He deems Lindgren's books to be written according to what he calls "the Schopenhauer method", viz. the ability "to say uncommon things in common words" (Steinz 2003, 219).⁴⁵ In my view, this could be seen as an argument related to literariness. More obvious instances are the remark in *The ABC of Children's Literature* that Lindgren's body of work gained in profundity over the years (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 320), or the evaluation of her style in *Wanted: Author* as "pretty", "refined", and "close to poetry" (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 229).⁴⁶ Equally clearly quality-oriented is the appreciation Rita Ghesquière shows for what she terms the "compositional parallelism" in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, which she deems to be developed in a masterly fashion (Ghesquière 1982, 135).

Interestingly, Rita Ghesquière also employs diametrically opposite arguments with respect to Lindgren's works (as does Jan Van Coillie (1999)). In a discussion of light fiction (or, so-called "trivial" writing), Ghesquière contends, "Even *good* children's books are often clichéd in certain aspects (characterisation, plot, humour, style)" (Ghesquière 1982, 153; emphasis added).⁴⁷ In the case of *Pippi Longstocking*, which in her view counts as a high-quality book, she nevertheless identifies some weaknesses. These comprise repetitiveness and the depiction of failings typical of children's behaviour, such as lying, overeating, and a pedantic attitude towards adults (Ghesquière 1982, 154). Importantly, though, she finds that these are redeemed by Pippi's being an exceptional child that appeals to readers' imagination, which makes the book attractive (Ghesquière 1982, 154).

Jan Van Coillie was a pupil of Ghesquière's and proves to have been heavily influenced by her views. This is evidenced by his comment that "[e]ven masterpieces of children's literature such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl, *Odette* by Annie M.G. Schmidt, or *Pippi Longstocking* by Astrid Lindgren include 'clichés' such as stereotypical

⁴⁵ "de methode-Schopenhauer ('ongewone dingen zeggen in gewone woorden')" (Steinz 2003, 219).

⁴⁶ "Haar mooie, verfijnde stijl staat dicht bij poëzie" (de Sterck, Baccarne, et al. 1988, 229).

⁴⁷ "Ook goede kinderboeken zijn vaak op bepaalde punten (karaktertekening, plot, humor, stijl) clichématig" (Ghesquière 1982, 153). Ghesquière names Roald Dahl's deployment of simple linguistic humour in *Danny, the Champion of the World* (1975) as a case in point, as well as his use of stereotypical characters, repetitive plot, grotesque humour, and an affirmative image of society in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964), which is counterbalanced by the imaginative language by means of which Dahl creates the incredible chocolate factory universe (Ghesquière 1982, 153-154).

villains, popular humour and predictable incidents” (Van Coillie 1999, 88).⁴⁸ However, like Ghesquière, Van Coillie qualifies his own critical note. He writes, “Yet, these books set themselves apart from trivial literature by means of the original language through which the authors create a fantasy world, the surprising turns and the unique protagonists” (Van Coillie 1999, 88).⁴⁹ Despite the self-contradictory remark about the occurrence of “surprising turns”, which runs counter to the preceding argument regarding “predictable incidents”, it is clear that Van Coillie does not seek to undermine the status of Dahl, Schmidt, and Lindgren. Quite on the contrary, in general, Van Coillie’s rationale exudes admiration for these three authors, for instance when he praises their work for having a pedagogic effect without sermonising, as he puts it: “Their little heroes are always paragons of sincerity. Unlike trivial authors, however, they are never ‘preachy’” (Van Coillie 1999, 31).⁵⁰

Diachronic Features

In each and every one of these anthologies and text books, Astrid Lindgren’s significance in the children’s literary field is highlighted. Repeatedly, she is referred to as one of the “great” of children’s literature. Judith Eiselin in *Wonderland* states that Lindgren became “the international queen of the children’s book” (Eiselin 2002, 156),⁵¹ and the exact same phrase is used in *The ABC of Children’s Literature* (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 321). *Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature* even calls her the *unrivalled* ruler of the international realm of children’s literature (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 215). These statements echo judgments made in certain newspaper articles.⁵² I should add that the rank of “nobility”, if you will, is one which Astrid Lindgren proves to share with the ineluctable Roald Dahl and Annie M.G. Schmidt.⁵³

Further observations which fit in with the diachronic paradigm pertain to the impact of the character of Pippi Longstocking. Bregje Boonstra looks upon the first Pippi-book as probably the most influential post-war work within children’s literature worldwide

⁴⁸ “Zelfs meesterwerken uit de kinderliteratuur als *Sjakie en de chocoladefabriek* van Roald Dahl, *Otje* van Annie M.G. Schmidt of *Pippi Langkous* van Astrid Lindgren bevatten ‘ clichés’ als typische slechteriken, populaire humor en voorspelbare gebeurtenissen” (Van Coillie 1999, 88).

⁴⁹ “Deze boeken onderscheiden zich evenwel van de triviaalliteratuur door de oorspronkelijke taal waarmee de auteurs een fantasiewereld scheppen, door de verrassende wendingen en door de unieke hoofdpersonages” (Van Coillie 1999, 88).

⁵⁰ “Hun kleine helden zijn altijd toonbeelden van eerlijkheid. Anders dan triviale auteurs zijn ze echter nergens ‘boodschapperig’” (Van Coillie 1999, 31).

⁵¹ “de internationale koningin van het kinderboek” (Eiselin 2002, 156).

⁵² E.g. (News 388 1998, 7).

⁵³ (Ghesquière 1982, 154); (Van Coillie 1999, 31, 88, 306, 346). Van Coillie (1999, 346) in addition considers Paul Biegel, Wim Hofman, Otfried Preussler, and Margaret Mahy to be apogees of children’s literature.

(Boonstra 1999, 52). In addition, she highlights the figure's significance as a catalyst in children's emancipation (Boonstra 1999, 52).⁵⁴ Judith Eiselin notes that it is difficult to estimate who has become more famous: Astrid Lindgren herself or her famed creation (Eiselin 2002, 157). In order to illustrate the magnitude of Pippi's iconic status, she refers to the subtle, indirect way in which the character's presence is evoked in *Junibacken*:⁵⁵

Two immense shoes on a pillow: that is all there is to be seen of Pippi Longstocking in Junibacken [...]. And that is more than enough for people from all over the world to know who is lying there. Everybody knows how Pippi sleeps. All children know Pippi, dream of Pippi, of meeting her or perhaps even of being her. (Eiselin 2002, 156)⁵⁶

The shoes on the pillow have become a telling synecdoche, a powerful symbol of the figure's subversive outlook on life.⁵⁷ It goes to show that Pippi Longstocking needs no further introduction.

Canonising the Field by Canonising Astrid Lindgren

As was shown earlier in this chapter, canon formation within the field of children's literature and the canonisation of the field itself are strongly correlated. In what follows, I will discuss how this perspective reflects in some of the ways in which Astrid Lindgren's body of work is dealt with. What is at stake here, is the idea that the treatment of Astrid Lindgren and her works as canonical may affect the canonicity of the entire domain of Dutch-language children's literature. As this issue in itself is determined by the position the domain occupies in relation to adult literature, an important question is how Lindgren's works are visible in the sphere of Dutch-language adult literature. Seeing that the materials studied here are confined to the children's literary field and that I myself

⁵⁴ Boonstra argues, "Whomever rereads [the stories about Pippi] half a century later, whilst giggling and rubbing their hands, can only conclude how revolutionary and liberating this book must have been at a time when children did not yet have a say in things" [Wie [de verhalen over Pippi] een halve eeuw later giechelend en handenwrijvend leest, kan alleen maar vaststellen hoe revolutionair en bevrijdend dit boek moet zijn geweest in een tijd dat kinderen nog niets in de melk te brokkelen hadden] (Boonstra 1999, 52). Cf. (News 73 1992, n.p.).

⁵⁵ I should add that this particular element was removed from the *Junibacken*-scenery.

⁵⁶ "Twee immense schoenen op een hoofdkussen: dat is alles wat er van Pippi Langkous te zien is in Junibacken [...]. En dat is ruim voldoende voor mensen van over de hele wereld om te weten wie daar ligt. Iedereen weet hoe Pippi slaapt. Alle kinderen kennen Pippi, dromen van Pippi, willen Pippi ontmoeten of haar misschien zelfs zijn" (Eiselin 2002, 156). Cf. (En nu 28 1999, 115); (News 87 1995, n.p.); (News 89 1996, n.p.).

⁵⁷ The same image also features prominently in Maria Nikolajeva's research on Pippi Longstocking: a section of her chapter on the Pippi-books in *Beyond Babar* is titled "Why does Pippi sleep with her feet on a pillow?" (Nikolajeva 2006, 67-72), as is an article of hers in *Bonniers litterära magasin* (Nikolajeva 2003).

am an agent firmly rooted within that very field, I should stress that the following discussion inevitably adopts an insider perspective. I attempt to illustrate what effect the transgression of field borders may have, but unless comprehensive research is conducted from the perspective of adult literature to corroborate or refute these considerations, they are bound to remain speculative.

These reservations notwithstanding, comparisons between Lindgren and authors of adult books, too, are indications of her weight which have the potential to reach beyond the boundaries of the domain of children's literature. A telling example is the following laudatory comment made by an unnamed reviewer in a piece on the Noisy Village-books: "that she is one of the truly great and that her work relatively speaking in terms of quality and significance is not inferior to that of renowned and rightly highly valued authors of adult literature is beyond doubt to me" (News 10 1965, n.p.).⁵⁸ In this critic's opinion, it is clear that Lindgren should be up there with the most important adult writers.

Furthermore, Astrid Lindgren's possible contribution to an increasing canonisation of the field itself was already highlighted by Rita Ghesquière in the early 1980s. Tying in with Zohar Shavit's notion of children's authors as suffering from a low self-image,⁵⁹ Ghesquière in *The Phenomenon of Children's Literature* (1982) contemplates common prejudices against children's literature. One such preconception, she explains, is the idea that it is easier to write for children than for adults, and that devoting oneself to children's literature commonly is perceived as casting pearls before swine (Ghesquière 1982, 29). In an effort to refute this partiality, she quotes from Lindgren's ironic "chat" with a future children's book author published in *Samuel August in Sevedstorp and Hanna in Hult* (Lindgren 1978 [2002]).⁶⁰ Ghesquière comments, "The recipes [Lindgren] goes on to provide, amount to a subtle indictment of the many prejudices and, at the same time, to a plea for children's authors to write in complete freedom, as they like it" (Ghesquière 1982, 29).⁶¹ The fact that she in her defense of the field draws on the status of an author

⁵⁸ "dat zij een der heel groten is en dat haar werk relatief gezien in kwaliteit en betekenis niet onderdoet voor dat van befaamde en recht hooggewaardeerde schrijvers van volwassen literatuur staat voor mij vast" (News 10 1965, n.p.).

⁵⁹ Ghesquière refers to two early occasions where Shavit presented this topic, namely a paper held at the *International Conference of the Child and The Book* in 1979 in Istanbul, and an article titled "The Ambivalent Status of Texts. The Case of Children's Literature", published in *Poetics Today* (1980, volume 1, pp. 75-86). Later, Shavit went on to develop this argumentation in her seminal book *Poetics of Children's Literature* (Shavit 1986, 63). Cf. section 1.1.

⁶⁰ The essay was also published separately (En nu 1 1974).

⁶¹ "De recepten die ze daarna geeft, vormen een subtiele aanklacht tegen de vele vooroordelen en tegelijkertijd een pleidooi om als auteur van kinderboeken in alle vrijheid te schrijven zoals je het wil" (Ghesquière 1982, 29). Cf. (En nu 1 1974, 10).

such as Lindgren, whom she proves to respect deeply, indicates the latter's importance for the revaluation of children's literature.

Peter van den Hoven, too, mentions Lindgren's recipes. In his study dealing with what he terms "the emancipation of the children's book" (van den Hoven 1994, 12),⁶² he frames Lindgren's essay within the literary context of the 1970s, when so-called problem books dominated the field. Significantly, Van den Hoven foregrounds Lindgren's role as a weighty voice in the debate countering "the threat of a new pedagogical moral" which was looming (van den Hoven 1994, 48).⁶³ Lindgren reacted against the formulaic nature of the problem book with its accumulation of conflicts and ensuing exaggerated emphasis on contents. She denounced the compulsive adherence to the problem book's recipe, which resulted in oversimplification as well as the interference of the author's guiding hand in the narration (van den Hoven 1994, 48). Van den Hoven considers this stance of Lindgren's, resisting the educational yoke prevalent at the time, as a key contribution to the emancipation of the field.

Looking at the literary field in Sweden, one can point to Astrid Lindgren as an icon of children's literature who seems to challenge and overcome the traditional borders between the separate fields of children's and adult literature, working to upgrade the former in field-*external* terms.⁶⁴ Lindgren can be said to have breached some of the constraints imposed upon the children's literary field as laid out by Zohar Shavit. Her works are studied and taught elaborately at Swedish universities, and she received several honorary doctorates at Swedish as well as foreign institutions. Moreover, Lindgren was awarded several important literary prizes, amongst which the Swedish Academy's Great Gold Medal [Svenska Akademiens stora guldmedalj] indubitably is the most important one. Last but not least, Astrid Lindgren was a person of high social stature, who was considered to be an "opinion former",⁶⁵ and whose views on social matters were taken very seriously. During her lifetime she actually managed to affect Swedish public opinion on several occasions, as was shown before (cf. section 5.2 **Fout! Verwijzingsbron niet gevonden.**). Hence, Lindgren seems to have succeeded in gaining access to certain

⁶² "de emancipatie van het kinderboek" (van den Hoven 1994, 12).

⁶³ "de dreiging van een nieuwe pedagogische moral" (van den Hoven 1994, 48).

⁶⁴ One could be inclined to take Selma Lagerlöf into consideration as well, because she was the first woman to ever be awarded the Nobel Prize in 1909 and to even be voted into the Swedish Academy in 1914 and thus gain considerable recognition. However, the bestowal of these status symbols can in all likelihood be ascribed to the fact that she mainly wrote for adults. The children's book which she is most known for, *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* [*Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige*], originally published 1906-7, forms an exception within her body of work.

⁶⁵ "Opinionsbildare". See for instance *No Piece of Dirt. Astrid Lindgren as an Opinion Maker* [*Ingen liten lort. Astrid Lindgren som opinionsbildare*] (Törnqvist and Öhman-Sundén (eds) 2007).

status symbols which Shavit deemed out of reach for her, whereas others remained unattainable.

One phenomenon which contributes to the transgression of borders between children's and adult literature foregrounded by Sandra Beckett in *Transcending Boundaries* is crosswriting (or, writing for both children and adults) (Beckett 1999, xvii).⁶⁶ As such, this aspect, too, is part of the larger theoretical discussion on the status of children's literature, and it is in this capacity that it will be discussed here. Indeed, the issues pertaining to narrative address (discussed in sections 3.2 and 4.1) raise questions concerning children's books and their connection with the general field of literature. The premise of the debate is that certain children's stories appeal to adult readers as well. A pertinent question is if these narratives could be championed by those adult readers to such an extent that they become liable to being issued into the general literary canon. Or have some of them perhaps already succeeded in doing so?

This is not at all self-evident, as Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer (1999) shows. In an article in *Transcending Boundaries* on the reception of Dutch authors known for addressing a dual audience, she notes that they rarely manage to become successful in the two fields simultaneously, if they are successful at all. She states, "The majority of the authors are canonized in one, but not in the other literary system, or are marginalized in both systems" (van Lierop-Debrauwer 1999, 4). In the final decades of the twentieth century, however, van Lierop-Debrauwer observed a surge in the number of authors who succeeded in establishing themselves in both areas of the literary field. Van Lierop-Debrauwer thus draws attention to the recent tendency to blur the boundaries between children's and adult literature which brings children's literature into the limelight. She remarks, "Dual-readership authors [...] are responsible for the fact that authoritative adult literature critics now and then pay attention to children's literature" (van Lierop-Debrauwer 1999, 10). She goes on to point out the importance of this trend of writing for a dual audience for the canonisation of the field of children's literature: "When that interest becomes permanent, one can expect that it will possibly influence the recognition of children's literature in literary studies. And that can only further raise the status of children's literature" (van Lierop-Debrauwer 1999, 10).⁶⁷ To my mind, the ongoing evolution seems quite incongruous. Over the past two centuries, the field of

⁶⁶ Beckett posits as further features lending stature to the domain of children's books "complex narrative strategies – including polyfocalization, composite genres, deviations from chronological, linear narrative, fragmentation and gaps, absences of closure, intertextuality, irony, parody, metafiction" (Beckett 1999, xvii).

⁶⁷ In a talk given at a canon conference in September 2014, Van Lierop-Debrauwer suggested that this prediction of hers may have been too rosy. Assessing the evolution observable in Holland and Flanders in the fifteen years between the 1999 article and the 2014 paper, she concluded that things apparently have not moved forward as quickly as hoped for. (The paper was titled "Finally Coming Together? The Bridging Role of Adolescent Literature". It was presented at the following conference: *Canon Constitution and Canon Change in Children's Literature*, University of Tübingen (Germany), 11-13 September 2014.)

children's literature broke away from adult literature and has struggled to establish itself as a fully functional and respectable entity in the overarching literary field. Now, ironically, it seems that in order to be taken seriously it should have to grow *towards* the field which it originally separated itself from.

Returning to the concept of crosswriting, dual address is seen as its narrative manifestation. Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer in said volume advocates it as an emancipating factor for children's literature as a whole. She writes,

It is to be hoped that future studies will acknowledge the important impact of crosswriting and will reach beyond the borders of adult and children's literature. In this way, children's literature studies will eventually be recognized not as a peripheral field annexed to an established canon, but as a central core in its own right. (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999a, 23-24)

The kind of border traffic brought about by crosswriting, then, is found to be favourable for all of children's literature. In Hans-Heino Ewers' research a comparable outlook on dual address comes to the fore. Along with Renate von Heydebrand, Ewers argues for a "renewed conception of the canon" (Ewers 1997, 66),⁶⁸ which in his opinion is necessitated by the differentiation into a variety of subliterations that the process of modernisation has brought about in the literary field. As a result of this process, the old-fashioned, elitist interpretation of the canon as one single entity has become obsolete.⁶⁹ Furthermore, Ewers indicates that Von Heydebrand argues that in order to diminish the difference in prestige between the different newly emerged subsystems, all of the subareas should be represented in the general canon of tradition by a few exponents (Ewers 2007a, 101). She seeks, in other words, to eliminate the existing exclusions by expanding the general canon with works from the different subcanons, such as popular, women's, working class and children's literature. This objective fits in with Von Heydebrand's approach to canonisation as a "bottom-up" process, starting from below, within the separate subliterations.

Yet, Renate von Heydebrand warns against the mere creation of subcanons, which will not suffice to counter the supremacy of the general canon. She therefore considers the inclusion of "top examples" [Spitzenbeispielen] (Ewers 1997, 66) of the subareas in the general canon as the next step to be taken. The final aim is for the "canon of high literature" [Hohe-literatur-Kanon] (Ewers 1997, 67) to become just one subcanon among many in the new general literary canon, which despite the emergence of several subfields still would serve a connecting purpose. Overall, the "promotion" of children's literature to the general literary canon would render the knowledge of a number of canonical

⁶⁸ "Neukonzeption des Kanons" (Ewers 1997, 66).

⁶⁹ Compare section 1.2.

children and young adult books a vital constituent of adults' literary education and entail a considerable upgrading of children's literature as whole. Hans-Heino Ewers, for his part, considers the selection of the works which are to be included in the general canon (from the internal canon of children's literature) to be a matter for experts. He therefore pleads with researchers dealing with the history of children's literature to come up with suggestions of individual children's books which can be used to expand the general literary canon.⁷⁰

Moreover, Ewers seeks to supplement Von Heydebrand's suggestion by requiring that the works which are added to the general canon meet specific requisites. To his mind, they should transcend the role of mere representatives of the different subliterations; "they should not only count as representatives of an individual literature; they should beside that always be able to exist on their own in the new environment" (Ewers 1997, 68).⁷¹ As far as children's literature is concerned, this has implications with regard to narrative address. Ewers explains, "In our case this means that a children's literary work that is being proposed for the general literary canon should be able to provide even readers other than the child readers with a substantial and simultaneously satisfying reading experience" (Ewers 1997, 68).⁷² In other words, Ewers looks upon dual address as an advantage for a children's book, as this quality can help it to please the adult canonising agent, whose consent is needed in order for the book to become canonical in the field of general literature.

Likewise, in Dutch children's literature research, the late literary critic Peter van den Hoven (1994) and literary theorist Piet Mooren (2001) take into consideration the impact of border traffic. The way Mooren sees it, crosswriting ensures canonisation as well as admittance to the general literary canon. He writes,

under the flag of polysystem theory, participants in the border traffic between children's literature and literature for adults are given preference when it comes to

⁷⁰ Within the framework of German literature, Ewers himself regards the Brothers Grimm's *Children's and Household Tales* [*Kinder- und Hausmärchen*], E.T.A. Hoffman's *Nutcracker and the Mouse King* [*Nussknacker und Mausekönig*], and Erich Kästner's *Emil and the Detectives* [*Emil und die Detektive*] as possible candidates for inclusion in the canon of tradition (Ewers 1997, 68).

⁷¹ "dürfen sie nicht allein als Repräsentanten einer Sonderliteratur gelten wollen; sie müssen in der neuen Umgebung immer auch für sich bestehen können (Ewers 1997, 68).

⁷² "Auf unseren Fall bezogen heißt dies: Ein kinderliterarisches Werk, das für den allgemeinverbindlichen Kanon vorgeschlagen wird, müßte auch anderen als nur den kindlichen Lesern eine substantielle und zugleich befriedigende Lektüre anbieten" (Ewers 1997, 68).

canon formation, and [...] dual-audience authors are more likely to be considered for inclusion in the 'Valhalla' of literary history. (Mooren 2001, 334)⁷³

As such, he is proven to share Hans-Heino Ewers' point of view. In addition, it should be noted that Mooren also warns against a negative effect of this tendency. Seeing that it emanates from the elitist "reversed deployment of polysystem theory", as Mooren puts it, the risk is that "the [...] proposal [...] to include children's literature in a work of literary history for adults in fact goes hand in hand with the exclusion of the largest part of children's literature" (Mooren 2001, 331).⁷⁴ In such cases, the effect will be disproportionate; seeing that "[t]he 'avant-garde' of non-canonised children's literature is then admitted to a common canon, whereas the 'bulk' of children's literature is left behind non-canonised" (Mooren 2001, 331).⁷⁵ From a broader literary perspective, the risk with the implementation of crosswriting as a criterion for canonisation is that what will be "upgraded" is just the tip of the iceberg, whereas the majority of children's books will remain invisible, a situation which eventually could lead to a ghettoisation of the larger part of children's literature.⁷⁶

In recent years, in the theoretical discourse crosswriting and its effect on the boundaries between literature for children and for adults has won ground. An implication of the emphasis placed on dual address as a requisite for canonical texts by contemporary children's literature theorists is that those borders are perceived as fading and perhaps even dissolving altogether. Rita Ghesquière (1982), for instance, explicitly links crosswriting and the ensuing transgression of boundaries with prestige: "To the extent to which children's literature has a dimension of depth, *it becomes literature* and acquires an intangible, mysterious meaning which is impossible to grasp fully. Then the border between children's literature and adult literature is blurred" (Ghesquière 1982, 25; emphasis added).⁷⁷ In her view, the key to a positive reevaluation of children's literature lies in the abandonment of generational boundaries between readers and a choice to

⁷³ "deelnemers aan het grensverkeer tussen de jeugdliteratuur en de literatuur voor volwassenen [krijgen] onder de vlag van de polysysteemtheorie een streepje voor in de canonvorming en [...] dubbelpublieksauteurs [komen] eerder voor opname in het Walhalla van de literatuurgeschiedenis in aanmerking" (Mooren 2001, 334).

⁷⁴ "in omgekeerde richting ingezet"; "wanneer het [...] voorstel [...] om de jeugdliteratuur in een literatuurgeschiedenis voor volwassenen op te nemen de facto gepaard gaat met uitsluiting van het grootste deel van de jeugdliteratuur" (Mooren 2001, 331).

⁷⁵ "De 'avantgarde' van de niet-gecanoniseerde jeugdliteratuur wordt dan opgenomen in een gemeenschappelijke canon, terwijl de 'tros' van de jeugdliteratuur niet-gecanoniseerd achterblijft" (Mooren 2001, 331).

⁷⁶ See also (Ros 1999).

⁷⁷ "In de mate waarin jeugdliteratuur dieptedimensie heeft, wordt ze ook literatuur en krijgt ze een ongrijpbare mysterieuze zin die zich nooit volledig laat vatten. Dan vervaagt de grens tussen jeugdliteratuur en volwassenenliteratuur" (Ghesquière 1982, 25).

focus on the value of individual works instead. If quality were to become imperative instead of age, she argues, there would be no such thing as children's or adult books, only good and bad books, which means that high-quality books for children could be treated in precisely the same manner as high-quality books for adults (Ghesquière 1982, 25).⁷⁸ Consequently, the emphasis placed on crosswriting and dual address could have far-reaching consequences for these scholars' notion of children's literature itself. In their interpretation, it could eventually evolve into a concept of "ageless" literature.⁷⁹

In investigating whether questions concerning crosswriting were dealt with in the "permanent" corpus material, I discovered that they are of little importance. Just as in the majority of the "flexible" epitexts, Astrid Lindgren is portrayed predominantly as a single address-author, with an eye for the child audience mainly. Repeatedly, anthology and textbook contributors highlight the significance of single address in Astrid Lindgren's poetics by referring to her oft-quoted tenet that a children's author should never disregard child readers.⁸⁰ Citing the author's outlook on literature as expressed explicitly in *Samuel August in Sevedstorp and Hanna in Hult* (Lindgren 1978 [2002]), the entry in *Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* reads,

The fact that Lindgren takes her readers seriously is evidenced by the following statement: 'I believe that one can and should discuss most things with children. Feel free to write things that are liked only by children and not by adults. Likewise, feel free to write things that may be appreciated both by children and by adults. But don't ever write anything in a children's book about which your common sense tells you that it's only appreciated by adults.' (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 214)⁸¹

⁷⁸ Ghesquière continues to state, "As soon as the author succeeds in creating a book in which meaning can grow without it being explicitly articulated, his or her text can be read with equal reading pleasure and aesthetic gratification by both adults and children" [Zodra de auteur erin slaagt een boek te scheppen waarin een betekenis kan groeien zonder dat hij die expliciet verwoordt, kan zijn tekst met evenveel leesgenot en esthetisch genoegen door volwassenen en door kinderen gelezen worden] (Ghesquière 1982, 25). Compare (van den Hoven 1994, 12-13).

⁷⁹ Compare (Beckett 1999, xix): "Perhaps the twenty-first century will bring an age in which 'child' and 'adult' are no longer defining categories and crosswriting will no longer be seen as a transgressing or transcending of 'borders[']".

⁸⁰ (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 214); (Eiselin 2002, 156-157); (Linders and Tromp (eds.) 1995, 321).

⁸¹ "Dat Lindgren haar lezers serieus neemt, blijkt uit de volgende uitspraak: 'Ik geloof dat je met kinderen over de meeste dingen kunt en mag praten. Schrijf gerust dingen die alleen door kinderen leuk gevonden worden en niet door volwassenen. Schrijf ook gerust dingen die zowel door kinderen als volwassenen gewaardeerd kunnen worden. Maar schrijf in een kinderboek nooit iets waarvan je gezonde verstand zegt dat het alleen door volwassenen wordt gewaardeerd[']" (Van Coillie, Linders, et al. 2004, 214) Cf. (En nu 1 1974, 10).

In subscribing to this position of Lindgren's, the academic and professional players in the field of children's literature in effect can be seen to discard the notion of crosswriting as a factor in the canonisation of her works.

In *1001 Books You Must Read Before You Die*,⁸² one of the two reference works of general literature comprised in the corpus, crosswriting does not crop up in the discussion of *Pippi Longstocking* (Boxall 2010, 428). However, it turns out to be a criterion for the inclusion of some of the other children's books covered in the collection. Dual address is taken into account in the entry on *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), for example (Boxall 2010, 156). The book is introduced as follows: "With its bizarre satire, word games, and comical situations, Carroll's famous children's book is highly suited for adults as well" (Boxall 2010, 156).⁸³ Citing surrealist André Breton, anthology contributor Doug Haynes furthermore notes that it allows the adult, in going along with the absurd, to get back in touch with the enigmatic realm of children (Boxall 2010, 156). Moreover, Haynes points out, "*Alice* is not patronising in tone towards children: quite on the contrary, it is adults who can learn something from it" (Boxall 2010, 156).⁸⁴ As far as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is concerned, the fact that it is an example of crosswriting clearly is seen as an asset.

The same goes for Louisa May Alcott's 1868 novel *Little Women*. Lizzie Enfield characterises it as "a timeless family saga", which was "written as a girls' book originally, but most definitely appealed to adults as well and went on to become one of the most popular American books of all times" (Boxall 2010, 165).⁸⁵ In order to emphasise the book's import, Enfield states that it inspired famous writers such as Simone de Beauvoir, Joyce Carol Oates, and Cynthia Ozick (Boxall 2010, 165). However, the caption for the accompanying illustration of Alcott states, "*Little Women* brought the writer enormous fame, *to be sure, but* it established her name as a 'children's book writer' once and for all" (Boxall 2010, 165; emphasis added).⁸⁶ Strikingly, the quotation marks as well as the modal adverb and conjunction suggest a derisive attitude with respect to children's literature on the part of the contributor and/or the anthology editors. Similarly, with respect to Tove Jansson and Selma Lagerlöf, the choice to include only one of the author's works

⁸² The fact that *Pippi Longstocking* is included in *1001 Books You Must Read Before You Die* is noted in (News 636 2007, 6).

⁸³ "Met zijn bizarre satire, woordspelletjes en komische situaties is Carrolls bekende kinderboek ook zeer besteed aan volwassenen" (Boxall 2010, 156).

⁸⁴ "*Alice* is niet neerbuigend van toon tegenover kinderen: integendeel, juist volwassenen kunnen er nog iets van opsteken" (Boxall 2010, 156).

⁸⁵ "een tijdloze familieroman"; "was geschreven als meisjesboek, maar sprak zeker ook volwassenen aan en zou een van de populairste Amerikaanse boeken worden" (Boxall 2010, 165).

⁸⁶ "*Onder moeders vleugels* bracht de schrijfster weliswaar grote roem *maar* bevestigde voorgoed haar naam als 'kinderboekenschrijfster'" (Boxall 2010, 165; emphasis added).

aimed at an *adult* audience – *The Summer Book* (1972) and *Gösta Berling's Saga* (1891) respectively – reveals that the editorial board may evaluate children's books in general as slightly less significant than adult books. In Jansson's case, the popularity of her beloved Moomin stories is pointed out (Boxall 2010, 649), whereas Lagerlöf's influential *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* is not even mentioned at all (Boxall 2010, 213).

By contrast, crosswriting does not seem to have played any role at all in Pieter Steinz' decision to incorporate Astrid Lindgren in his "guide to world literature" *Reading & cetera* (2003). Steinz' section on Lindgren opens with the following statement: "The influence of Astrid Lindgren (née Ericsson) on world literature cannot be overestimated; that is why she is *the only children's book writer* to be included in this reading guide" (Steinz 2003, 219; emphasis added).⁸⁷ Other big names in children's literature such as Lewis Carroll, Roald Dahl, and Selma Lagerlöf are all considered dual-audience authors by Steinz and are treated as belonging to both literary fields.⁸⁸

Seeing that crosswriting is not the "tool" by means of which Astrid Lindgren breached the wall between children's and adult literature, what is? Judging by Pieter Steinz' assessment of her works, her strength derives from the way in which she influenced subsequent authors of adult books. He comments, "One could wonder what child hasn't grown up with her inventions, and hence what post-war authors depicting nonconformist heroes haven't been influenced by her" (Steinz 2003, 219).⁸⁹ He deems *Pippi Longstocking* and *Karlsson on the Roof* to be Lindgren's most important works and couples them not only with other influential works of children's literature,⁹⁰ but also with some well-known works of adult literature. Steinz sees as thematically related to the Pippi- and Karlsson-books Günter Grass' *The Tin Drum*, Raymond Queneau's *Zazie in the Metro*, John Irving's *A Prayer for Owen Meany* and John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces*. Within the Dutch-language literary field, he identifies as kindred works Gerard Reve's [*Werther Nieland*], Kees van Kooten's [*Hedonia*] and [*Modernisms*], as well as Marek van der Jagt's [*The History of my Baldness*] (Steinz 2003, 220). His explicit foregrounding of Lindgren's unique position – both within world literature and in his anthology – attests to Pieter Steinz' deep-found respect for the author. The fact that Steinz here operates in

⁸⁷ "De invloed van Astrid Lindgren (geboren Ericsson) op de wereldliteratuur kan niet overschat worden; vandaar dat ze in deze leesgids *als enige kinderboekenschrijfster* is opgenomen" (Steinz 2003, 219; emphasis added).

⁸⁸ See (Steinz 2003, 54-55; 82; 213).

⁸⁹ "Je kunt je afvragen welk kind niet met haar creaties is opgegroeid, en dus ook welke naoorlogse beschrijvers van non-conformistische helden niet door haar beïnvloed zijn" (Steinz 2003, 219).

⁹⁰ Steinz identifies the following works as having influenced Lindgren's writing: Zacharias Topelius' fairy tales, Selma Lagerlöf's *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*, Robert L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, some unspecified "pulp" children's books, J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, Pamela L. Travers' *Mary Poppins*, Annie M.G. Schmidt's *Wiplala*, and Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (Steinz 2003, 220).

his capacity of critic of *general* literature means that he in effect sought to usher Lindgren into mainstream literature.

There are a few more instances of border crossing related to Lindgren's legacy in the Dutch-Flemish literary field. The comparisons made between Lindgren's works and those of established writers of adult literature, for example, demonstrate her import. Furthermore, references to Lindgren's works made in contexts entirely *unrelated* to children's literature demonstrate her influence outside the scope of the children's literary field. An excellent example is a Norwegian book club's inquiry among one hundred writers from fifty-four countries to rank their ten favourite books of all times. *Pippi Longstocking* acquired a spot in the final selection of one hundred most frequently named titles.⁹¹ *Don Quixote* took the lead, and other weighty contestants foregrounded in the newspaper articles were Fjodor Dostoyevski, Charles Dickens, and Salman Rushdie.⁹² A further important gauge pertains to literary prizes. In connection with the German Booksellers' Peace Prize, won by Algerian Assia Djebar in the year 2000, Lindgren is mentioned as an important point of reference, along with previous laureates Hermann Hesse and Mario Vargas Llosa (News 436 2000, 29). Both her bearing away the prize (in 1978) and her being considered as one of the most valuable awardees are significant facts. Equally telling is her being named as a possible laureate for the 1999 Nobel prize, alongside Jorge Amada, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Salman Rushdie, Ismail Kadare, Bei Dao, and Cees Nooteboom (News 425 1999, 11).

In addition, the canonicity of *Pippi Longstocking* is highlighted in the announcement made in November 2007 that the book was to be a part of an Arabic translation project.⁹³ The aim of the extensive endeavour, instigated by the United Arab Emirates government, is to translate and distribute one hundred Great Books from the West. Apart from important studies on science and philosophy, literary works by acclaimed authors such as Albert Camus, Nadine Gordimer, Umberto Eco, Rainer Maria Rilke, George Eliot, Haruki Murakami, and Isaac Bashevis Singer.⁹⁴ At the time, Astrid Lindgren was the only children's book author named as a viable candidate for inclusion in the project.⁹⁵ Perhaps even more significant is UNESCO's decision to grant Lindgren's archives and original manuscripts "high symbolic protection" (News 234 2005, 21).⁹⁶ Her legacy was assigned this elevated status within the framework of the Memory of the World, UNESCO's register of documentary world heritage, which for instance also encompasses the brothers

⁹¹ (News 161 2002, n.p.); (News 162 2002, n.p.).

⁹² (News 161 2002, n.p.); (News 162 2002, n.p.).

⁹³ (News 279 2007, 72); (News 693 2007, 8).

⁹⁴ (News 279 2007, 72); (News 693 2007, 8).

⁹⁵ See <<http://www.kalima.ae/en/Default.aspx>> [Accessed 4 May 2015].

⁹⁶ "hoge symbolische bescherming" (News 234 2005, 21).

Grimm's fairy tale collection.⁹⁷ A final example manifesting Lindgren's overall impact is her being named as one of the "World's Heavyweights" in a turn-of-the-century inquiry among Dutch and Flemish intellectuals (News 427 1999, 7).⁹⁸ Newspaper *De Volkskrant* asked its respondents to single out the "most salient world citizens of the twentieth century[, who] have left their mark on our planet's standing" (News 427 1999, 7).⁹⁹ When asked this question, Doeko Bosscher, then rector magnificus of the University of Groningen mentioned Lindgren (News 427 1999, 7).

Summarising, part of the evidence presented here is related to transgressions of the boundaries between adult and children's literature Astrid Lindgren has been involved in. In line with theories on border traffic, this suggests that these specific processes of canonisation pertaining to her oeuvre could work to upgrade the entire field of children's literature. Furthermore, as I wrote in the opening paragraph to this chapter, the pieces on Astrid Lindgren and her works included in readers, anthologies, and literary histories are highly comparable. Significantly, they do not only resemble each other closely, but also echo all of the main aspects discussed by the Dutch and Flemish critics across the different types of publications from the professional and popular spheres. In fact, these epitexts (mainly academic ones, and some with links to the professional subdomain) read as a neat summary of the criteria governing the evaluation of Astrid Lindgren's works in the Dutch-language field of children's literature in its entirety. As a result, these entries aptly illustrate the extent to which Dutch-language gatekeepers' opinions on Lindgren are orchestrated, which is quite far-reaching indeed. This, I would argue, is one of the main findings of this study.

⁹⁷ (News 233 2005, n.p.); (News 234 2005, 21). Cf. <<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-1/astrid-lindgren-archives/>> [Accessed 4 May 2015].

⁹⁸ "Kopstukken van de wereld" (News 427 1999, 7).

⁹⁹ "meest in het oog springende wereldburgers van de twintigste eeuw [die] bij uitstek hun stempel gezet [hebben] op het aanzien van onze planeet" (News 427 1999, 7).

Conclusion:

The Consecration of Astrid Lindgren in the Dutch-Language Field of Children's Literature

In scrutinising the reception of Astrid Lindgren's works in Flanders and in the Netherlands between 1952 and 2012, and extracting from that inquiry the criteria of value underlying the canonisation of these works, the following ideas proved to be central. Firstly, as the final chapter illustrates, the gatekeepers of Flemish and Dutch children's literature seem to have adopted a common grammar for the discussion of Lindgren's oeuvre. Their discourse is orchestrated to the extent that they all sing a fairly similar tune, constructing a narrative which consists of comparable building blocks.

In addition, my inquiry demonstrates that the process of canonisation, in which a literary work acquires canonicity is a matter of ever-expanding influence. In a first stage, the book impacts individual readers (gatekeepers included), by the grace of text-internal qualities and text-induced effects, such as relatable subject matter which evokes identification. These textual properties embody the work's potential to become canonised. In a subsequent phase, the book can be seen to affect a community of readers. Its influence becomes more extensive, as it is distributed extensively, gains acclaim, and capitalises on its canonical potential. The final stage, then, sees the book leaving increasingly widely scattered traces, becoming truly embedded in a literary and even cultural field. Indeed, with respect to individual works, successful canonisation surpasses the primary works themselves. The dissemination of their impact can be seen to evolve in a funnel-shaped way, with the manifestations of canonisation fanning out, if you will. The works' scope becomes ever broader, in a pattern which could be compared to an inverted bottle neck. As far as Astrid Lindgren's oeuvre is concerned, this evolution is most easily observed in the reception of *Pippi Longstocking*.

The canonisation and ensuing dispersion of Lindgren's works in the Dutch-language field of children's literature are in fact mirrored in the discourse surrounding them. I would argue that the support of the canonising agents, who discuss these books, stimulates their proliferation. My phenomenographical analysis shows that evaluations predominant during what I termed the establishment phase are of a persuasive kind,

urging readers to get acquainted with Astrid Lindgren's books based on their immanent qualities. The books are reviewed because they *ought to be* well-known. Gradually, in the confirmation stage, as the works are still around, the rationale becomes affirming instead, implying that the initial recommendations were justified. Eventually, a retrospective viewpoint comes to predominate in the dissemination phase. At that point, the enduring success and, in a best case scenario, the ubiquity of the works prove that their canonicity is deserved. Now, they are reviewed and discussed because they *are* well-known.

What is decisive in the establishment stage, that is, in terms of gaining gatekeeper approval, is whether the work corresponds to the gatekeepers' world view and outlook on literature. The latter proves to be reader-oriented primarily, with the adult canonising agents in the field of children's literature taking into account what will appeal to child readers. Another important question is whether the gatekeepers will be able to relate to the child image comprised in the works. Canonical works of children's literature, so it seems, should not just touch child readers, but grown-up readers as well.

In this respect, the Flemish and Dutch canonising agents turn out to be on the same page as Astrid Lindgren entirely: they commend her progressive conception of childhood and her ability to sense what children like. Her canonicity derives from the fact that she wrote for children in an emancipatory way, and that she provided ample opportunities for her readers to relate to her works by tying in with universal subject matter. Having put her on a pedestal, the canonising agents consequently meet Lindgren with concerted reverence. This culminates in the proverbial consecration of the author, which makes it hardly acceptable for Dutch or Flemish critics to voice criticism against Lindgren and to be "unfaithful" to her, if you will. One could say that the Dutch and Flemish gatekeepers appear to be ardent supporters of a self-induced and self-perpetuating cult of Astrid Lindgren, who during her lifetime was considered to be a living myth and whose status is sacrosanct. As such, the canonisation of Lindgren's works in Flanders and the Netherlands reflects back the aforementioned sense of worship that is associated with canonical works as well as the origins of the concept in religious history.

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Appendix

Table 14 Astrid Lindgren's Works in Flanders and the Netherlands (1952-2012)¹

Year	Bibliography Swedish (English title)	Bibliography Dutch-language (Publisher)
1944	Britt-Mari lättar sitt hjärta [Britt-Mari Pours out her Heart]	
1945	Kerstin och jag [Kerstin and I] Pippi Långstrump (Pippi Longstocking)	
1946	Alla vi barn i Bullerbyn (The Six Bullerby Children) Mästerdetektiven Blomkvist (Bill Bergson, Master Detective) Pippi Långstrump går ombord (Pippi goes on Board)	
1947	Jag vill inte gå och lägga mig (I Don't Want to Go to Bed) Känner du Pippi Långstrump? (Do You Know Pippi Longstocking?)	
1948	Pippi Långstrump i Söderhavet (Pippi in the South Seas)	
1949	Sjung med Pippi Långstrump [Sing with Pippi Longstocking] Nils Karlsson-Pyssling [Simon Small]	
1950	Kati i Amerika (Kati in America) Kajsa Kavat [Brenda Brave] Sex pjäser för barn och ungdom [Six Plays for Children and Youths]	
1951	Mästerdetektiven Blomkvist lever farligt (Master Detective Bergson Lives Dangerously)	

¹ Dutch editions based on the catalogue of the Royal Library in The Hague, The Netherlands.

	Jag vill också gå i skolan (I Want to Go to School Too)	
1952	Boken om Pippi Långstrump (The Best of Pippi Longstocking) Kati på Kaptensgatan (Kati in Italy) Bara roligt i Bullerbyn (Happy Times in Noisy Village)	Pippi Langkous (Born) Pippi gaat aan boord (Born)
1953	Kalle Blomkwist och Rasmus (Bill Bergson and the White Rose Rescue) Kati i Paris (Kati in Paris)	
1954	Jag vill också ha ett syskon [I Want a Sybling Too] Mio, min Mio (Mio, my Son)	
1955	Lillebror och Karlsson på taket (Smidge and Karlsson on the Roof)	
1956	Nils Karlsson-Pyssling flyttar in (Simon Small Moves in) Eva möter Noriko-San (Noriko-San, Girl of Japan) Rasmus på luffen (Rasmus and the Tramp)	Mio, mijn Mio (C.P.J. van der Peet)
1957	Rasmus, Pontus och Toker [Rasmus, Pontus and Toker]	Wij uit Bolderburen (C.P.J. van der Peet) Meer over Bolderburen (C.P.J. van der Peet) Voor het laatst: Bolderburen (C.P.J. van der Peet)
1958	Kajsa Kavat hjälper mormor [Brenda Brave Helps Grandmother] Sia bor på Kilimandjaro (Sia Lives on Kilimanjaro) Barnen på Bråkmakargatan (The Children on Troublemaker Street)	Pippi Langkous gaat aan boord (C.P.J. van der Peet)
1959	Sunnanäng [Sunnanäng] Pjäser för barn och ungdom. Första samlingen [Plays for Children and Youths. First Volume] Mina svenska kusiner (My Swedish Cousins]	Sia woont op de Kilimanjaro (Raad voor Zending der Ned. Hervormde Kerk) Erik en Karlsson van het dak (C.P.J. van der Peet) Pippi Langkous in Taka-Tuka-land (C.P.J. van der Peet) Rasmus en de landloper (C.P.J. van der Peet)
1960	Lilibet cirkusbarn (Circus Child) Madicken (Mardie)	Rasmus en de degenslikker (C.P.J. van der Peet)
1961	Lotta på Bråkmakargatan (Lotta on Troublemaker Street)	

	Bullerbyboken (All About the Bullerby Children)	
	Jul i stallet (Christmas in the Stable)	
1962	Jul i Bullerbyn (Christmas in Noisy Village)	
	Karlsson på taket flyger igen (Karlsson Flies Again)	
	Marko bor i Jugoslavien (Marko Lives in Yugoslavia)	
1963	Emil i Lönneberga (Emil and the Great Escape)	
	Jackie bor i Holland (Dirk Lives in Holland)	
1964	Vi på Saltkråkan (Seacrow Island)	
1965	Vår i Bullerbyn (Springtime in Noisy Village)	Samen op 't eiland Zeekraai (Ploegsma) Kati in Italië (Het Spectrum) Kati in Amerika (Het Spectrum)
1966	Randi bor i Norge (Gerda Lives in Norway)	
	Nya hyss av Emil i Lönneberga (Emil Gets into Mischief)	
	Noy bor i Thailand (Noby Lives in Thailand)	
	Barnens dag i Bullerbyn (A Day at Bullery)	
1967	Salikons rosor [The Roses of the Willow] Skrällan och sjörövarna (Scrap and the Pirates)	Michiel laat de poppetjes dansen (Ploegsma)
1968	Matti bor i Finland (Matti Lives in Finland)	Michiel zet alles op z'n kop (Ploegsma)
	Karlsson på taket smyger igen (The World's Best Karlsson)	
	Pjäser för barn och ungdom. Andra samlingen [Plays for Children and Youths. Second Volume]	
1969	Pippi flyttar in [Pippi Moves in] Pippi ordnar allt [Pippi Arranges Everything]	Karlsson vliegt weer (Ploegsma)
1970	Pippi är starkast i världen [Pippi Is the Strongest in the World] Pippi håller kalas [Pippi Has a Party] Än lever Emil i Lönneberga (Emil and His Clever Pig)	De beste Karlsson van de wereld (Ploegsma) Er zit een rover in het bos-bos-bos (Ploegsma)
1971	Mina påhitt. Ett urval [My Inventions. A Selection]	Michiel zet z'n beste beentje voor (Ploegsma) Pippi weet altijd raad (Ploegsma)

	Visst kan Lotta cykla (Lotta's Bike) På rymmen med Pippi Långstrump [Getting Away with Pippi Longstocking] Pippi vill inte bli stor [Pippi Does Not Want to Grow up] Pippi går till sjöss [Pippi Goes to Sea]	Pippi is altijd de sterkste (Ploegsma) De kinderen uit de Kabaalstraat (Ploegsma)
1972	Den där Emil [That Emil] Allt om Karlsson på taket [Karlsson on the Roof]	Pippi Langkous verzamelalbum (Vanderhout internationale uitgaven) Lotta uit de Kabaalstraat (Ploegsma) Op stap met Pippi Langkous (Ploegsma) De rode vogel (Ploegsma) Pippi Langkous met al haar kleurige avonturen in één groot boek vol tekeningen van Carl Hollander (Ploegsma)
1973	Allrakäraste syster (Most Beloved Sister) Bröderna Lejonhjärta (Brothers Lionheart)	Superdetective Blomkwist (Ploegsma) ²
1974		Rasmus loopt weg (Wolters-Noordhoff) Madieke van het rode huis (Ploegsma) Voor 't laatst: Bolderburen (Ploegsma) De gebroeders Leeuwenhart (Ploegsma)
1975	Samuel August från Sevedstorp och Hanna i Hult (Samuel August in Sevedstorp and Hanna in Hult)	Superdetective Blomkwist leeft gevaarlijk (Ploegsma) Wie het hoogst kan springen (Ploegsma)
1976	Madicken och Junibackens Pims (Mardie to the Rescue) När Emil skulle dra ut Linas tand (Emil and the Bad Tooth)	Hier spreekt superdetective Blomkwist! (Ploegsma)
1977	Visst kan Lotta nästan allting (Lotta's Christmas Surprise)	Madieke en Liesbet (Ploegsma) De kinderen van Bolderburen: omnibus (Ploegsma)
1978	En bunt visor för Pippi Emil och andra [A Stack of Tunes for Pippi, Emil and Others]	Het land dat verdween (Ploegsma)
1979	Pippi har julgransplundring (Pippi Longstocking's After Christmas Party)	Katrientje wil oma helpen (Deltas) Anke en haar tweelingzusje (Deltas) Bart woont bij een kabouter (Deltas) Lotta kan bijna alles (Ploegsma) Peter en zijn zusje (Deltas) Ken je Pippi Langkous? (Zuidnederlandse Uitgeverij)

² Apparently, the book had already been translated by A. van Overzee, and published with Mertens & Stappaerts in 1954 (see (LG 19 1974, 70)). However, the Royal Library's online catalogue does not show any record of this version.

1980	Sagorna [The Fairy Tales]	Karlsson en Erik: omnibus (Ploegsma) Lente in Bolderburen (Ploegsma) Winter in Bolderburen (Ploegsma) Michiel van de Hazelhoeve: omnibus (Ploegsma) Rasmus en de landloper (Grote Letter Bibliotheek)
1981	Ronja rövardotter (Ronja, the Robber's Daughter)	Toen Michiel zomaar een paard kreeg (Ploegsma) Sprookjes (Ploegsma) Toen Michiel een kies wilde trekken (Ploegsma) Tomte Tummetot (Christofoor) Ronja de roversdochter (Ploegsma)
1982	Småländsk tjurfäktare [Bullfighter from Småland]	Lotta kan al fietsen (Ploegsma)
1983	Allas vår Madicken [Our Mardie] Titta, Madicken, det snöar! (The Runaway Sleigh Ride)	Pippi Langkous verzamelalbum (Gary Publishing) Als ik jou toch niet had! (Ploegsma)
1984	Spelar min lind, sjunger min näktergal (My Nightingale is Singing) Stora Emilboken [The Big Emil Book] När lilla Ida skulle göra hyss (Emil's Little Sister)	Kijk, Madieke het sneeuwt! (Ploegsma)
1985	Emils hyss nr 325 (Emil's Sticky Problem) Julberättelser [Christmas Stories] Draken med de röda ögonen (The Dragon with Red Eyes)	Speelt mijn linde zingt mijn nachtegaal (Ploegsma) Ridder Niels van Eka (Ploegsma)
1986	Inget knussel, sa Emil i Lönneberga [Money Is No Object, Said Emil] Skinn Skerping (The Ghost of Skinny Jack)	De bende van de Witte Roos (Ploegsma) Michiel de vliegenvanger (Ploegsma) Het draakje met de rode ogen (Ploegsma)
1987	Assar Bubbla (Assar Bubbla)	Magere Lat (Ploegsma) Winterverhalen van Astrid Lindgren (Ploegsma) Michiel viert feest (Ploegsma) Astrid Lindgren en haar werk (Ploegsma) Astrid Lindgren vertelt (Ploegsma)
1988		Assar Bubbla, of Hoe het boek over Pippi Langkous bijna verloren was gegaan (Ploegsma) Ik wil nog niet naar bed (Ploegsma)
1989	Emil och Ida i Lönneberga (Emil and Ida) När bäckhultarn for till stan (A Calf for Christmas)	En hij zag dat het niet goed was: bijdrage aan de totstandkoming van een unieke wet:

		dieren krijgen rechten om verlost te worden uit hun troosteloze bio-bestaan (Ploegsma) Een kalf valt uit de hemel (Ploegsma)
1990	Visst är Lotta en glad unge (Lotta's Easter Surprise)	Michiel en kleine Ida (Ploegsma)
1991	När Adam Engelbrekt blev tvärarg [The Day Adam Got Mad] När Lisabet pillade in en ärta i näsan [The Day Lisbet Fiddled a Pea into her Nose]	Lotta is best een vrolijk kind (Ploegsma)
1992		Kalle de kleine stierenvechter [The Day Adam Got Mad] (Ploegsma) Liesbet en het erwtje in haar neus (Ploegsma) Alle verhalen van Astrid Lindgren (Ploegsma)
1993	Jullov är ett bra påhitt, sa Madicken [Christmas Vacation Is a Good Invention, Said Mardie]	
1994	I Skymningslandet [In the Land of the Twilight]	Madieke en Liesbet in de sneeuw (Ploegsma) In Schemerland (Ploegsma)
1995	Emil med paltsmeten [Emil and the Dumpling Dough]	Toen Michiel zijn honderdste poppetje sneed (Ploegsma) Michiel en kleine Ida (Wolters-Noordhoff)
1996		
1997	Astrids Bästa! [Astrid's Best!] Emil och soppskålen (Emil in the Soup Tureen)	Lotta uit de Kabaalstraat (Astrid Lindgren Bibliotheek; Ploegsma)
1998		Michiel de vliegenvanger (Wolters-Noordhoff)
1999		Pippi gaat (niet) naar school en andere verhalen (Ploegsma) Mio, mijn Mio (Wolters-Noordhoff) Ronja de roversdochter (Wolters-Noordhoff)
2000	Pippi Långstrump i Humlegården (Pippi Longstocking in the Park)	Vakantie in Bolderburen en andere verhalen (Ploegsma) Op stap met Pippi Langkous (Helden & Boeven Kinderboeken) Pippi doet haar eigen zin (Ploegsma) Lotta uit de Kabaalstraat (Wolters-Noordhoff)
2001	Hujedamej och andra visor av Astrid Lindgren [Hujedamej and Other Tunes by Astrid Lindgren]	De kinderen uit de Kabaalstraat (Wolters-Noordhoff)

		De gebroeders Leeuwenhart (Boektoppers: bekende en bekroonde kinderboeken. Groep 7 en 8)
2002	God Jul! Astrid Lindgrens mest älskade julberättelser (God Jul! Astrid Lindgren's Most Loved Christmas Stories)	Kerstmis in de stal (Christofoor)
	Mirabell (Mirabell)	Superdetective Blomkwist (Wolters- Noordhoff)
	Sagobok [Fairy Tale Book]	Alle verhalen (Ploegsma)
2003	Sunnanäng (The Red Bird)	Samen op het eiland Zeekraai (Astrid Lindgren Bibliotheek; Ploegsma)
		Mirabel (Ploegsma)
		De rode vogel (Querido)
		Pippi en de dansende kerstboom (Ploegsma)
2004	Pippi Långstrump på Kurrekurredudden [Pippi on the South Sea Island]	De bende van de Witte Roos (Astrid Lindgren Bibliotheek; Ploegsma)
		Spaghetti met een schaar: kookboek voor kinderen (Ploegsma)
		Het grote luisterboek van Astrid Lindgren: met verhalen, sprookjes en prentenboeken (Wolters-Noordhoff)
2005	Boken om Lotta på Bråkmakargatan [The Lotta on Troublemakerstreet Book]	Pippi is jarig (Ploegsma)
		Pippi gaat op reis (Ploegsma)
		Nils en het geheime genootschap (Ploegsma)
2006	Sagoresan [Fairy Tale Journey]	
2007	Ur-Pippi [Proto-Pippi]	Verhalenreis (Hoogland & Van Klaveren)
	Junker Nils av Eka [Squire Nils of Eka]	Verhalen uit Bolderburen (Hoogland & Van Klaveren)
	Peter och Petra [Peter and Petra]	Pippi doet boodschappen: Astrid Lindgren's Pippi Langkous (Rubinstein)
	Barnen i Bullerbyn [The Children of Noisy Village]	Ken jij Pippi Langkous? (Rubinstein)
	Alla mina barn [All my Children]	Kalle de kleine stierenvechter (Hoogland & Van Klaveren)
		Astrid Lindgren, haar leven in beelden (Ploegsma)
2008	Pippi Långstrumps visor [Pippi Longstocking's Songs]	Peter en Petra (Ploegsma)
	Hujedamej och 20 andra visor [Hujedamej and 20 Other Tunes]	Michiel viert feest (Ploegsma)
	Pippi hittar en spunk [Pippi Finds a Spunk]	
2009	Madicken och Lisabet på Junibacken [Mardie and Lisbet in Junedale]	Tomte Tummetot (Christofoor)
		Madieke en Liesbet (Ploegsma)

	Ingen rövare finns i skogen [There Aren't Any Robbers in the Forest]	
2010	Lille katt [Little Cat] Pippi flyttar in och andra serier [Pippi Moves in and Other Comics] Här kommer Pippi Långstrump [Here Comes Pippi Longstocking] Pippi ordnar allt och andra serier [Pippi Arranges Everything and Other Comics] Sagor, hyss och äventyr [Fairy Tales, Pranks and Adventures]	Feest in Villa Kakelbont (Ploegsma) Er zit een rover in het bos-bos-bos (Ploegsma)
2011	Pippi vill inte bli stor och andra serier [Pippi Does Not Want to Grow up and Other Comics]	Pippi is altijd de sterkste (Ploegsma)
2012	Tomten är vaken [Tomte Tummetot]	Pippi kan en durft alles (Ploegsma) Pippi Langkous (Ploegsma, ill. Lauren Child) De rode vogel (Hoogland & Van Klaveren) Winterverhalen (Ploegsma)

Table 15 Internal Canon: Works Mentioned (10 instances and more)

<p>Pippi Longstocking (* = only title mentioned)</p>	<p>(En nu 2 1974, 9); (En nu 16 1983, 165); (En nu 25 1996, 146-150)*; (En nu 26 1997, 33-36)*; (En nu 28 1999, 115); (En nu 29 2000, 185-187)*; (En nu 30 2002, 30); (En nu 35 2007, 331); (En nu 36 2007, 332-335); (En nu 37 2007, 339); (En nu 38 2007, 341); (En nu 39 2007, 343); (En nu 40 2008, 92)*; (En nu 42 2008, 140); (En nu 43 2009, 34)*; (En nu 46 2011, 11)*; (IDIL 3 1958, n.p.)*; (IDIL 4 1959, n.p.)*; (IDIL 5 1959, n.p.)*; (IDIL 11 1965, 101)*; (IDIL 14 1966, n.p.)*; (IDIL 19 1966, n.p.)*; (IDIL 22 1968, n.p.); (JBG 1 1960, 120)*; (JBG 6 1967, 11)*; (JBG 8 1969, 100); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (JBG 19 1974, 145); (JBG 21 1976, 74); (JBG 25 1979, 157); (JBG 45 1986, 78); (JBG 51 1988, 236); (JBG 56 1990, 19)*; (JBG 77 1997, 337); (JBG 78 1998, 396); (JBG 79 1999, 112); (JBG 85 2002, 91); (JBG 87 2002, 222)*; (JBG 88 2003, 59); (JBG 98 2007, 229); (LG 1 1958, 188)*; (LG 6 1966, 45-46); (LG 21 1975, 85); (LG 30 1979, 443)*; (LG 31 1979, 443)*; (LG 46 1992, 202-203); (News 1 1959, n.p.)*; (News 11 1965, n.p.)*; (News 13 1965, n.p.)*; (News 14 1965, n.p.)*; (News 16 1967, n.p.); (News 18 1967, n.p.); (News 24 1970, n.p.); (News 25 1971, n.p.); (News 26 1972, n.p.); (News 32 1974, n.p.); (News 33 1974, n.p.); (News 39 1977, n.p.); (News 43 1978, n.p.); (News 44 1978, n.p.); (News 46 1978, n.p.); (News 48 1980, n.p.); (News 51 1980, n.p.); (News 53 1980, n.p.); (News 62 1986, n.p.); (News 63 1987, n.p.); (News 64 1988, n.p.); (News 68 1992, n.p.); (News 69 1992, n.p.); (News 70 1992, n.p.); (News 71 1992, n.p.); (News 72 1992, n.p.); (News 73 1992, n.p.); (News 76 1993, n.p.)*; (News 77 1993, n.p.)*; (News 78 1993, n.p.)*; (News 79 1994, n.p.); (News 80 1994, n.p.)*; (News 81 1994, n.p.)*; (News 82 1994, n.p.)*; (News 85 1995, n.p.); (News 86 1995, n.p.); (News 87 1995, n.p.); (News 88 1996, n.p.); (News 89 1996, n.p.); (News 90 1997, n.p.); (News 91 1997, n.p.); (News 92 1997, 16); (News 93 1997, n.p.); (News 94 1997, n.p.); (News 95 1997, n.p.); (News 96 1998, n.p.)*; (News 97 1998, n.p.)*; (News 98 1998, 27); (News 100 1998, 15)*; (News 102 1998, 12); (News 104 1998, 39); (News 105 1998, 14)*; (News 106 1998, 11)*; (News 107 1998, 36)*; (News 108 1998, 51)*; (News 111 1999, 14)*; (News 112 1999, 11)*; (News 114 1999, 45)*; (News 115 2000, 36); (News</p>
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117 2000, 10)*; (News 118 2000, 90)*; (News 120 2000, 26)*; (News 121 2000, 46)*; (News 122 2001, 2)*; (News 126 2001, 11)*; (News 128 2001, 46)*; (News 129 2001, 2); (News 130 2001, 29)*; (News 131 2001, n.p.)*; (News 132 2001, 15)*; (News 133 2001, 12)*; (News 134 2002, n.p.)*; (News 135 2002, n.p.)*; (News 136 2002, 32)*; (News 137 2002, 38); (News 138 2002, 15); (News 139 2002, 33)*; (News 140 2002, 1)*; (News 141 2002, 1); (News 142 2002, 10); (News 143 2002, 10); (News 144 2002, 15)*; (News 146 2002, 7)*; (News 147 2002, 10); (News 149 2002, 38)*; (News 150 2002, 38)*; (News 151 2002, 11); (News 152 2002, 16); (News 154 2002, 2)*; (News 155 2002, 23)*; (News 156 2002, n.p.); (News 157 2002, 2)*; (News 158 2002, 2)*; (News 160 2002, n.p.)*; (News 161 2002, n.p.)*; (News 162 2002, n.p.)*; (News 163 2002, 57)*; (News 167 2002, 37)*; (News 169 2002, n.p.); (News 170 2002, n.p.)*; (News 171 2002, n.p.)*; (News 172 2002, 23)*; (News 179 2002, 49); (News 181 2002, 11)*; (News 182 2002, 26)*; (News 183 2003, n.p.)*; (News 184 2003, n.p.)*; (News 185 2003, 12)*; (News 186 2003, 29)*; (News 187 2003, 19)*; (News 188 2003, 37)*; (News 189 2003, 10)*; (News 191 2003, 12)*; (News 192 2003, 30)*; (News 194 2003, n.p.); (News 195 2003, 27); (News 196 2003, 51); (News 197 2003, 64)*; (News 198 2003, 18); (News 202 2003, 20); (News 206 2003, 13); (News 219 2004, 48)*; (News 220 2004, 31)*; (News 222 2004, 99)*; (News 223 2004, 27)*; (News 224 2005, 11); (News 225 2005, 36)*; (News 227 2005, 40)*; (News 228 2005, n.p.)*; (News 229 2005, 18)*; (News 230 2005, 17)*; (News 231 2005, 23)*; (News 232 2005, 13)*; (News 235 2005, 14)*; (News 236 2005, n.p.)*; (News 238 2005, 18)*; (News 239 2005, 99)*; (News 240 2006, 65)*; (News 241 2006, 39); (News 243 2006, 32); (News 244 2006, 99); (News 249 2006, 48); (News 252 2007, 20)*; (News 253 2007, n.p.)*; (News 254 2007, 4)*; (News 255 2007, 115); (News 257 2007, 27)*; (News 257 2007, 27); (News 260 2007, 147); (News 262 2007, 30); (News 263 2007, 85)*; (News 265 2007, 27)*; (News 268 2007, 115); (News 270 2007, 44); (News 273 2007, 35); (News 274 2007, 40); (News 276 2007, 65)*; (News 279 2007, 72); (News 283 2008, 21); (News 284 2008, 9); (News 285 2008, 77); (News 286 2008, 50); (News 287 2008, 85); (News 295 2009, 57)*; (News 296

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<i>Mio, my Son</i>	(En nu 7 1976, 25); (En nu 15 1983, 157); (En nu 30 2002, 30); (En nu 38 2007, 342); (En nu 39 2007, 344); (IDIL 1 1957, n.p.); (IDIL 21 1967, n.p.); (JBG 1 1960, 120); (JBG 8 1969, 100); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (JBG 58 1990, 238); (JBG 72 1994, 78); (JBG 79 1999, 112); (JBG 83 2001, 219-220); (JBG 88 2003, 59); (LG 0 1956, 220); (LG 8 1968, 130); (News 29 1974, n.p.); (News 44 1978, n.p.); (News 63 1987, n.p.); (News 64 1988, n.p.); (News 141 2002, 1); (News 156 2002, n.p.); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 484 2002, 55); (News 653 2007, 28); (News 866 2012, n.p.); (Raf 2 1956, n.p.); (Raf 3 1957, n.p.); (Raf 21 1968, 9);

Rasmus	(En nu 2 1974, 9); (En nu 12 1979, 199); (En nu 15 1983, 157); (En nu 20 1992, 118); (En nu 35 2007, 331); (En nu 39 2007, 343); (IDIL 6 1959, n.p.); (IDIL 8 1960, n.p.); (IDIL 12 1965, n.p.); (JBG 1 1960, 125); (JBG 8 1969, 100); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (JBG 78 1998, 397); (LG 5 1965, 52); (LG 15 1971, 118); (LG 21 1975, 85); (LG 27 1979, 140); (News 6 1960, n.p.); (News 7 1964, n.p.); (News 8 1965, n.p.); (News 29 1974, n.p.); (News 34 1975, n.p.); (News 44 1978, n.p.); (News 53 1980, n.p.); (News 54 1980, n.p.); (News 72 1992, n.p.); (News 141 2002, 1); (News 156 2002, n.p.); (News 179 2002, 49); (News 217 2004, 22); (News 366 2012, 3); (News 401 1998, 17); (News 424 1999, n.p.); (News 521 2002, 13); (News 530 2003, 28); (News 539 2003, 1T); (News 817 2011, n.p.); (Raf 6 1959, 10); (Raf 9 1960, 9); (Raf 10 1960, 9); (Raf 13 1961, 9); (Raf 16 1962, 9); (Raf 19 1965, 11);
<i>Seacrow Island</i>	(En nu 10 1978, 34); (En nu 39 2007, 353); (IDIL 15 1966, n.p.); (JBG 3 1966, 115); (JBG 8 1969, 100); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (JBG 54 1989, 282); (JBG 84 2002, 90); (JBG 89 2003, 202); (LG 21 1975, 85); (News 87 1995, n.p.); (News 193 2003, n.p.); (News 196 2003, 51); (News 268 2007, 115); (News 530 2003, 28); (News 537 2003, 18); (News 556 2004, 21);
Mardie	(En nu 2 1974, 9); (En nu 15 1983, 157); (En nu 19 1986, 266); (En nu 28 1999, 114); (En nu 39 2007, 353); (En nu 42 2008, 140); (JBG 24 1979, 157); (JBG 42 1985, n.p.); (JBG 77 1997, 337); (JBG 86 2002, 147); (JBG 98 2007, 229); (LG 20 1974, 320-321); (LG 21 1975, 85); (LG 49 1993, 437); (News 27 1974, n.p.); (News 29 1974, n.p.); (News 39 1977, n.p.); (News 40 1977, n.p.); (News 87 1995, n.p.); (News 90 1997, n.p.); (News 91 1997, n.p.); (News 95 1997, n.p.); (News 164 2002, 7); (News 169 2002, n.p.); (News 205 2003, 13); (News 260 2007, 147); (News 274 2007, 40); (News 389 1998, 9); (News 401 1998, 17); (News 530 2003, 28); (News 539 2003, 1T); (News 678 2007, 26); (News 694 2007, 5);
The Red Bird	(En nu 33 2003, 213); (En nu 37 2007, 340); (En nu 39 2007, 344); (JBG 88 2003, 59); (JBG 93 2003, 332); (News 297 2009, 31); (News 306 2009, 53); (News 353 2011, L7); (News 375 2012, 7); (News 548 2003, n.p.); (News 612 2006, 6-7); (News 614 2006, n.p.); (News 615 2006, 9);

(News 616 2006, 5); (News 634 2007, 25); (News 729 2008, 14-15); (News 736 2008, 16);
(News 746 2008, 12-13);

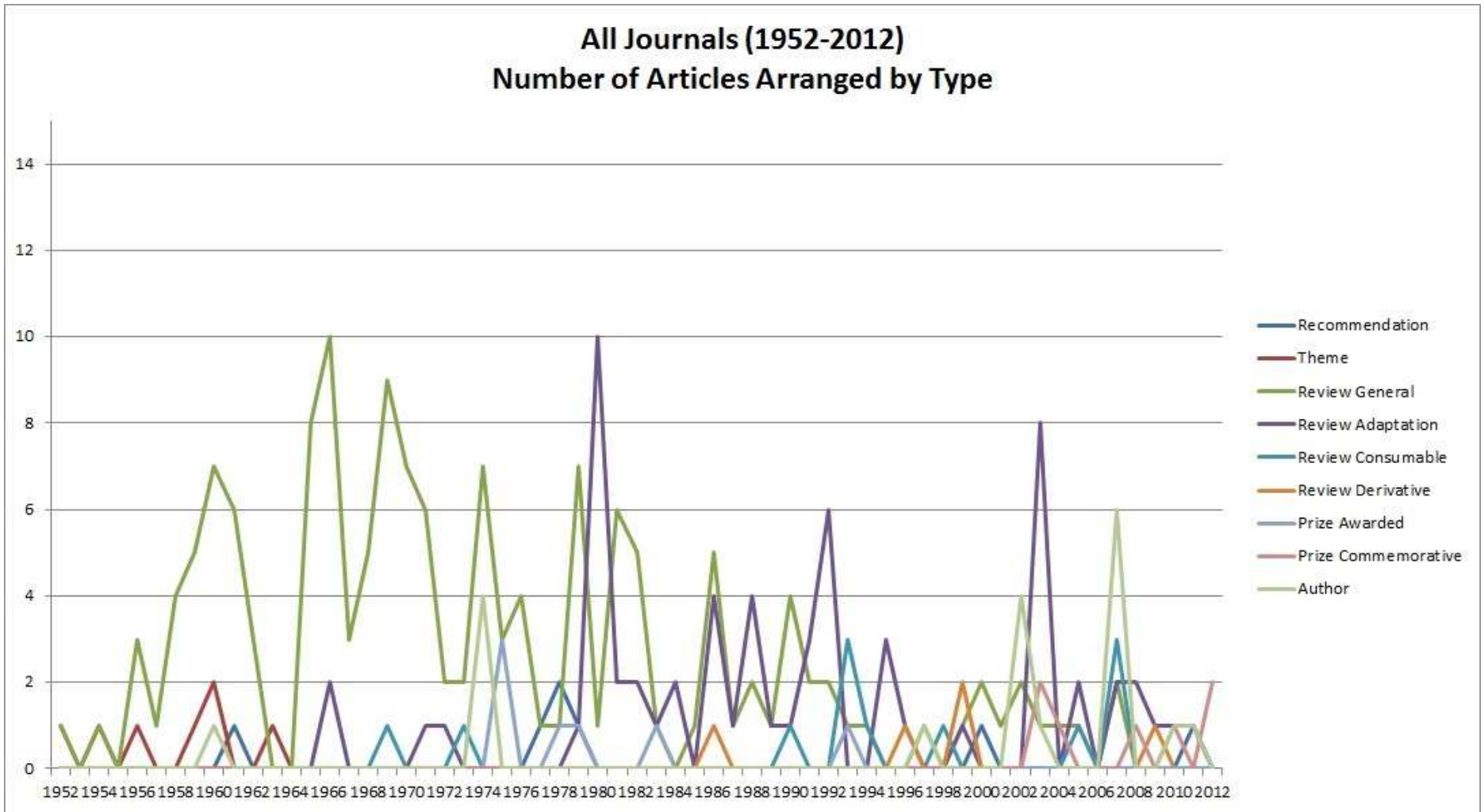


Figure 11 Graph: Overview of Journal Articles Arranged by Type (1952-2012)

Table 16 “Mentions”: Authors (All)

Name	References
Annie M.G. Schmidt (53)	(En nu 20 1992, 118); (En nu 44 2011, 34-35); (News 70 1992, n.p.); (News 85 1995, n.p.); (News 99 1998, 2); (News 127 2001, 46) (News 144 2002, 15); (News 147 2002, 10); (News 163 2002, 57); (News 176 2002, 12); (News 190 2003, n.p.); (News 262 2007, 30); (News 286 2008, 50); (News 292 2009, 99); (News 294 2009, 30); (News 344 2011, 30); (News 346 2011, 30); (News 352 2011, 31); (News 395 1998, 7); (News 400 1998, 13); (News 413 1998, 3); (News 414 1998, 15); (News 415 1998, 17); (News 428 1999, 27); (News 429 1999, 4); (News 430 1999, 30); (News 471 2002, 1); (News 434 2000, 9); (News 435 2000, 23); (News 437 2000, 2); (News 449 2000, n.p.); (News 470 2001, 45); (News 477 2002, 1); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 492 2002, 24); (News 507 2002, 15); (News 520 2002, 13); (News 535 2003, 25); (News 559 2004, 99); (News 578 2004, 22); (News 597 2005, 9); (News 603 2006, 19); (News 627 2006, 12-13); (News 651 2007, 4); (News 655 2007, 18); (News 664 2007, 17); (News 665 2007, 11); (News 709 2007, 4); (News 744 2008, 3); (News 766 2009, n.p.); (News 773 2009, 13); (News 774 2009, 14); (News 818 2011, n.p.).
Roald Dahl (23)	(JBG 78 2007, 396-399); (News 99 1998, 2); (News 116 2000, n.p.); (News 262 2007, 30); (News 286 2008, 50); (News 292 2009, 99); (News 294 2009, 30); (News 344 2011, 30); (News 413 1998, 3); (News 428 1999, 27); (News 433 2000, 33); (News 442 2000, 2); (News 445 2000, 47); (News 492 2002, 24); (News 520 2002, 13); (News 535 2003, 25); (News 578 2004, 22); (News 595 2005, 9); (News 597 2005, 9); (News 738 2008, 26); (News 739 2008, 99); (News 766 2009, n.p.); (News 774 2009, 14); (News 818 2011, n.p.); (News 847 2012, 6).
Paul Biegel (11)	(JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (News 292 2009, 99); (News 294 2009, 30); (News 346 2011, 30); (News 535 2003,

	25); (News 624 2006, 24-25); (News 662 2007, 33); (News 664 2007, 17); (News 766 2009, n.p.); (News 771 2009, 18); (News 835 2011, 5).
Hans Christian Andersen (7)	(JBG 1 1960, 117-127); (LG 40 1986, 291); (News 119 2000, 3); (News 190 2003, n.p.); (News 265 2007, 27); (News 437 2000, 2); (News 476 2002, 10).
Lewis Carroll (6)	(News 292 2009, 99); (News 445 2000, 47); (News 476 2002, 10); (News 455 2001, 7V); (News 457 2001, 1); (News 352 2011, 31).
Selma Lagerlöf (5)	(En nu 2 1974, 9); (LG 4 1965, 48); (News 92 1997, n.p.); (News 94 1997, n.p.); (News 480 2002, 11).
A.A. Milne (5)	(JBG 1 1960, 117-127); (News 292 2009, 99); (News 476 2002, 10); (News 545 2003, 43); (News 849 2012, 18).
Jan Terlouw	(JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (News 245 2006, 40); (News 246 2006, n.p.); (News 291 2008, 69); (News 346 2011, 30).
Thea Beckman (4)	(News 245 2006, 40) (News 246 2006, n.p.); (News 554 2004, 13); (News 291 2008, 69).
Tonke Dragt (4)	(JBG 18 1974, n.p.); (LG 21 1975, 85); (News 535 2003, 25); (News 662 2007, 33).
The brothers Grimm (3)	(JBG 1 1960, 117-127); (News 437 2000, 2); (News 738 2008, 26).
Erich Kästner (3)	(JBG 1 1960, 117-127); (News 288 2008, 75); (News 421 1999, 35).
Joke van Leeuwen (3)	(News 292 2009, 99); (News 352 2011, 31); (News 535 2003, 25).
Isaac Bashevis Singer	(News 464 2001, n.p.); (News 465 2001, 32);
Dick Bruna	(News 352 2011, 31); (News 559 2004, 99);
Carlo Collodi	(JBG 1 1960, 117-127); (News 352 2011, 31);
Imme Dros	(News 437 2000, 2); (News 611 2006, 9);
Jean Dulieu	(News 442 2000, 2); (News 627 2006, 12-13);
Janosch	(News 292 2009, 99); (News 535 2003, 25);
Guus Kuijer	(News 99 1998, 2); (News 352 2011, 31);
Arnold Lobel	(News 535 2003, 25); (News 849 2012, 18);
Bart Moeyaert	(News 127 2001, 46); (News 360 2012, L12);
J.K. Rowling	(News 433 2000, 33); (News 445 2000, 47);
Maurice Sendak	(En nu 9 1978, 17); (News 535 2003, 25);
Rosemary Sutcliff	(En nu 9 1978, 17); (JBG 18 1974, n.p.);
J.R.R. Tolkien	(News 116 2000, n.p.); (News 292 2009, 99);

Tineke Beishuizen	(News 592 2005, 3);
Elsa Beskow	(News 98 1998, 27);
Godfried Bomans	(News 744 2008, 3);
Aidan Chambers	(News 360 2012, L13);
Kitty Crowther	(News 360 2012, L12);
Miep Diekman [sic]	(LG 28 1979, 443);
Simone de Beauvoir	(News 540 2003, 28);
Marc De Bel	(News 99 1998, 2);
Miguel de Cervantes	(JBG 1 1960, 117-127);
Olaf J. de Landell	(News 592 2005, 3);
Meindert Dejong	(JBG 18 1974, n.p);
Jean Echenoz	(News 540 2003, 28);
Michael Ende	(News 292 2009, 99);
Wolf Erlbruch	(News 360 2012, L12);
Johan Fabricius	(News 627 2006, 12-13);
Ed Franck	(News 360 2012, L12);
Mireille Geus	(LzL 8 2007, 86-87);
Maria Gripe	(News 298 2009, 33);
Christina Guirlande	(JBG 18 1974, n.p).
Jacqueline Harpman	(News 540 2003, 28);
Chris Haughton	(News 352 2011, 31);
A.D. Hildebrand	(News 545 2003, 43);
Odo Hirsch	(News 545 2003, 43);
Wim Hofman	(News 395 1998, 7);
Anna Höglund	(News 98 1998, 27);
James Joyce	(News 457 2001, 1);
Rudyard Kipling	(News 545 2003, 43);
Tom Lanoye	(News 127 2001, 46);
Stieg Larsson	(News 734 2008, 4-5);
Cor Ria Leeman	(JBG 18 1974, n.p);
C.S. Lewis	(News 292 2009, 99);
Annie Makkink	(News 464 2001, n.p.);
Hector Malot	(JBG 1 1960, 117-127);
Vilhelm Moberg	(News 730 2008, 22);
Pablo Neruda	(News 127 2001, 46);
Sven Nordqvist	(News 104 1998, 39);
Els Pelgrom	(News 360 2012, L12-13);
Charles Perrault	(JBG 1 1960, 117-127);
Peter Pohl	(News 98 1998, 27);
Otfried Preussler	(JBG 18 1974, n.p);

Jan Prochazka	(JBG 18 1974, n.p);
Anne Provoost	(News 99 1998, 2);
Philip Pullman	(News 292 2009, 99);
Gerard Reve	(News 457 2001, 1);
Joost Roelofsz	(News 535 2003, 25);
Jean-Paul Sartre	(News 540 2003, 28);
Arthur Schopenhauer	(News 638 2007, 6-7);
Josephine Siebe	(LG 12 1970, 178)
Ulf Stark	(News 98 1998, 27);
August Strindberg	(News 734 2008, 4-5);
Jonathan Swift	(JBG 1 1960, 117-127);
Shaun Tan	(News 352 2011, 31);
Toon Tellegen	(News 535 2003, 25);
Annika Thor	(News 508 2002, n.p.);
Jenny Valentine	(News 847 2012, 6);
Chris van Abkoude	(News 507 2002, 15);
Didier van Cauwelaert	(News 540 2003, 28);
Sini Van Iterson	(JBG 18 1974, n.p);
Anthony van Kampen	(News 592 2005, 3);
Ted van Lieshout	(News 360 2012, L13);
Paul Van Ostaijen	(News 127 2001, 46);
Sylvia Vanden Heede	(News 352 2011, 31);
Max Velthuijs	(News 360 2012, L12);
Dolf Verroen	(LG 28 1979, 443);
Rita Verschuur	(LG 28 1979, 443);
Mieke Versyp	(News 360 2012, L13);
Jacques Vriens	(News 437 2000, 2);
Reiner Zimnik	(JBG 18 1974, n.p);
Alexander Zinovjev	(News 638 2007, 6-7);

Table 17 “Mentions”: Works (All)

Title	References
Harry Potter	(News 115 2000, 36); (News 116 2000, n.p.); (News 132 2001, 15); (News 344 2011, 30); (News 441 2000, 30); (News 464 2001, n.p.); (News 466 2001, 15); (News 477 2002, 1); (News 636 2007, 6); (News 812 2010, n.p.);
<i>Yip and Yannika</i>	(News 163 2002, 57); (News 192 2003, 30); (News 432 2000, 3); (News 538 2003, BB5); (News 597 2005, 9); (News 611 2006, 9);
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	(En nu 23 1994, 35); (News 480 2002, 11); (News 545 2003, 43); (News 610 2006, 8); (News 659 2007, 9);
<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>	(News 292 2009, 99); (News 389 1998, 9); (News 464 2001, n.p.); (News 466 2001, 15);
<i>Winnie-the-Pooh</i>	(News 115 2000, 36); (News 545 2003, 43); (News 739 2008, 99); (News 849 2012, 18);
<i>Das Sams</i>	(News 502 2002, 29); (News 511 2002, 14);
<i>Frog</i>	(News 360 2012, L12); (News 627 2006, 12-13);
[<i>Menase’s Dream</i>]	(News 464 2001, n.p.); (News 465 2001, 32)
<i>Nobody’s Boy</i>	(News 217 2004, 22); (News 466 2001, 15);
<i>Peter Pan</i>	(News 301 2009, 41); (News 466 2001, 15);
<i>Pinocchio</i>	(News 115 2000, 36); (News 116 2000, n.p.);
<i>The Lord of the Rings</i>	(News 202 2003, 20); (News 562 2004, 17);
<i>The Wonderful Adventures of Nils</i>	(News 320 2011, 31); (News 322 2011, 5);
<i>Abel</i>	(News 627 2006, 12-13);
[<i>Bart and the Legend of Run</i>]	(News 545 2003, 43);
[<i>Bear Bolke</i>]	(News 545 2003, 43);
[<i>Bros.</i>]	(News 360 2012, L13);
<i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i>	(News 595 2005, 9);
[<i>Crusade in Jeans</i>]	(News 291 2008, 69);
<i>Daisy</i>	(News 627 2006, 12-13);
<i>Dance on My Grave</i>	(News 360 2012, L13);
[<i>Dikkertje Dap</i>]	(News 627 2006, 12-13);
<i>Don Quixote</i>	(News 638 2007, 6-7);
<i>Duck, Death and the Tulip</i>	(News 360 2012, L12);
[<i>Forever, Ever</i>]	(News 360 2012, L12);
<i>Gulliver’s Travels</i>	(News 638 2007, 6-7);

<i>Heart of Darkness</i>	(News 732 2008, 4-5);
[<i>Harlequins</i>]	(LG 12 1970, 178);
[<i>Heroes in Socks</i>]	(News 464 2001, n.p.);
[<i>How to Become King</i>]	(News 291 2008, 69);
[<i>Hugo and Josephine</i>]	(News 298 2009, 33);
[<i>Joop ter Heul</i>]	(News 627 2006, 12-13);
<i>Linus</i>	(News 360 2012, L13);
<i>Matilda</i>	(News 597 2005, 9);
<i>Miffy</i>	(News 559 2004, 99);
[<i>Paul the Gnome</i>]	(News 627 2006, 12-13);
<i>Pettson and Findus</i>	(News 388 1998, 7);
[<i>Pietje Bell</i>]	(News 18 1967, n.p.);
[<i>Sebastian, the Spider</i>]	(News 627 2006, 12-13);
<i>The BFG</i>	(En nu 25 1996, 25);
[<i>The Children from the Railway Station Zoo</i>]	(News 595 2005, 9);
<i>The Jungle Book</i>	(News 545 2003, 43);
[<i>The Little Death and the Girl</i>]	(News 360 2012, L12);
<i>The Little Match Girl</i>	(LG 40 1986, 291);
<i>The Little Mermaid</i>	(News 464 2001, n.p.);
<i>The Little Prince</i>	(News 389 1998, 9);
<i>The Mennymys</i>	(News 115 2000, 36);
[<i>The White One</i>]	(JBG 38 1982, 139);
<i>The Wind in the Willows</i>	(News 535 2003, 25);
<i>Tow-Truck Pluck</i>	(News 294 2009, 30);
[<i>Twinkle</i>]	(News 627 2006, 12-13);
[<i>Virenzo and I</i>]	(LzL 8 2007, 86-87);
[<i>Will I Ever See You Again?</i>]	(News 360 2012, L12);
