



The Swedish Institute for Children's Books

The Book Tasting

Summary 2019

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What is the Book Tasting?

The Book Tasting is an annual event arranged by the Swedish Institute for Children's Books. The aim is to give an overview of the children's and young adult books published in Sweden (Swedish original works and translated works) the previous year by examining prominent themes and presenting statistics. The Book Tasting consists of lectures and a written report, and it also includes an exhibition displaying the children's and young adult books published in Sweden the previous year. The lectures are recorded in Swedish and are available for downloading on the institute's website, as is the report. Here we present selected texts from the latest Book Tasting, which is about books published in 2019.

Summary

In 2019, the number of children's and young adult books published in Sweden decreased for the second year in a row. This year's report includes examinations of the climate and environmental issues in children's literature. Other prominent themes in the children's books of 2019 are depictions of sex and sexual assault, the naked body, collectivism and horror. The report also includes examinations of audiobooks, and fantasy.

For the second year in a row, the number of children's and young adult books published in Sweden decreased. By the last day of February, the institute had received 2,217 printed children's and young adult books published in 2019, which is 91 titles (4 percent) less than in 2018. Potential factors behind the decrease include changes to publishing strategies made by individual publishing houses, debates in recent years about the supposed over-publishing of children's and young adult books, and the increase in digital publishing. The most noticeable change in 2019 is the continued decrease to the number of translated titles published. The overall decrease is a result of the decrease in translations. The

predominance of original Swedish works is thereby reinforced, and statistics indicate that out of the total number of children's books published, the share of translations has not been this low since the mid-1900s.

As part of this year's Book Tasting, three guest writers were invited to examine different themes. Ann Steiner (Lund University) takes a closer look at the audiobooks of 2019. Her overview shows that the publishing of audiobooks for children and young adults has increased significantly in recent years and that recordings of older titles dominate among the audiobooks. Lydia Wistisen (Stockholm University) focuses on environmental issues in the children's and young adult books of 2019. Climate change, environmental protection, and recycling are prominent themes, and she finds them in books of all categories and for all ages. Malin Alkestrand (Linneaus University) examines the fantasy works of 2019. She argues that they continue to be characterised by issues of power and the fight against evil, but also notices the promotion of other values. She sees what is a traditionally conservative genre beginning to take an interest in questions of norms and normativity.

Book Tasting 2019

A Decreased Number of Publications and the Swedish Children’s Books Market

By the last day of February 2020, a total of 2217 books for children and young adults that had been published in 2019 had been received by the Svenska barnboksinstitutet (Swedish Institute for Children’s Books), or Sbi, which is a lower number compared to the previous year by 91 titles (a decrease of 4 percent). This is the second year in a row in which the publication total had decreased, down from the heights of 2017, when 2532 titles had been published (see diagram 1).

In last year’s Book Tasting report, Sbi found that the major share of the decline to the publication total was not caused by a general decrease but rather by individual publishing companies changing their publication strategies. The situation appears to be the same for 2019, when some large publishers have significantly dropped their numbers of published titles. There are a number of overarching factors here. In part, there has been some discussion about an excess level of publication of books for children and young adults in Sweden over the past few years (for more on this,

see, for example, Kärnstrand), and another factor is in part the increased amount of digital publications and audiobooks (see more on this below). It is still unusual to release original works in digital or audio format (in other words, a book that has not first been published in text format but rather is released directly in digital format), but nonetheless, many re-releases come out in these formats instead of as printed books. The republication of printed books decreased from 2018 to 2019 by 13 percent, from 328 to 287 titles. Sbi has not researched the underlying causes in detail, but notes that some of the publishers that have lowered their number of printed books between 2018 and 2019 are also publishers where either they themselves or the larger companies they belong to are investing in digital publishing and have the highest numbers of audiobook releases (see more on this below). This could therefore be one of the explanations for their lower numbers of printed publications.

The three largest publishers of printed works for children and young adults in 2019 in terms of the number of titles published were the same as the previous year: Bonnier Carlsen (202 titles), Rabén & Sjögren (182 titles) and Tukan (143 titles). The publishers with the largest reductions to the number of



Diagram 1. Children’s and Young Adult Books published in Sweden 1993–2019. Source: *Bokproduktion på Svenska barnboksinstitutet: En dokumentation. Årgång 2019, 2020, p. 35.*

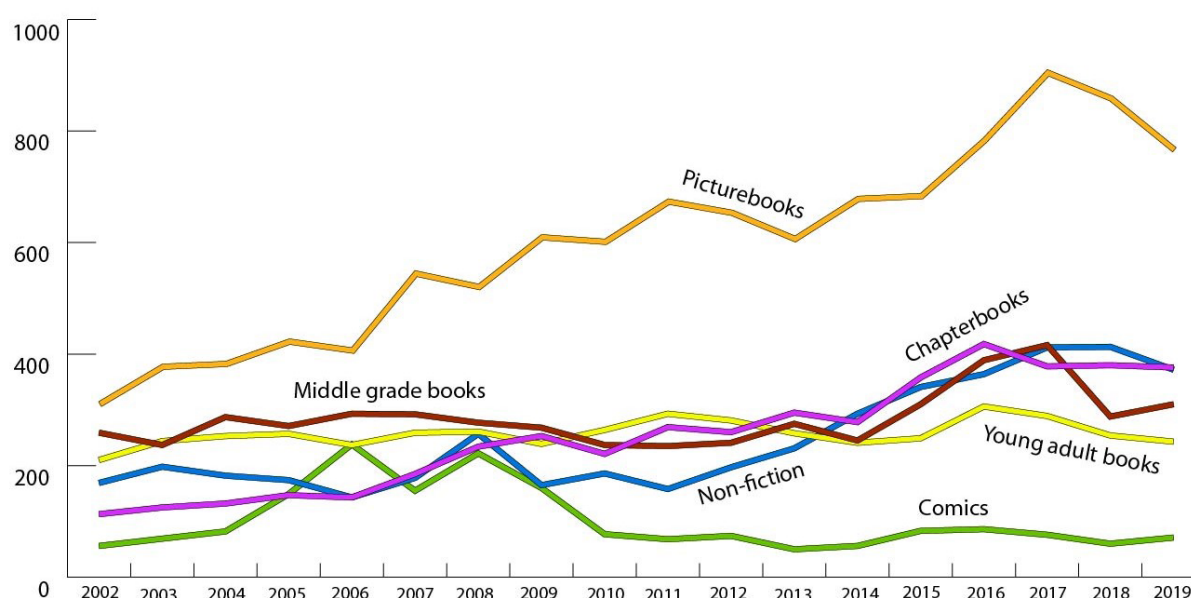


Diagram 2. Children's and Young Adult Books in Categories, 2002–2019. Source: *Bokprovnin på Svenska barnboks-institutet: En dokumentation. Årgång 2019, 2020, p. 35.*

their publications in comparison to the previous year were Bonnier Carlsen, Egmont Publishing, IKEA and B. Wahlströms. Rabén & Sjögren is among those companies who increased their numbers of published titles, as did Stabenfeldt, Natur & Kultur, Lilla Piratförlaget and Hegas.

According to statistics from Svenska Förläggareföreningen (the Swedish Publishers' Association) and Svenska Bokhandlareföreningen (the Swedish Booksellers' Association), the sales of books for children and young adults decreased from the previous year. The decrease was minimal, 2 percent in terms of kronor (SEK) and less than 1 percent in terms of titles, and this happened after several years where there was a significant increase in sales. The age categories that decreased were from six years old and up. In general, the principle seems to be that sales decreased more the older the target group was, while sales of books for children between 0 and 6 years old increased somewhat (see Wikberg 24, 26–28).

We cannot discern an equivalent change in terms of the number of titles published, as picturebooks and non-fiction books were the categories that decreased the most in terms of titles, from 413 to 372 titles (10 percent). It should, however, be noted that picturebooks and non-fiction books were the two categories that expanded the most during the 2010s, which is why a shift in the other direction is not at all surprising. The category that had the most signif-

icant increase in terms of the number of titles was middle-grade books, which increased from 288 to 310 titles (8 percent). And even if it is a little category, it is also worth mentioning that the number of poetry collections published increased significantly, from 5 to 12 titles (see diagram 2).

There are approximately 200 publishers plus a number of self-publishers responsible for the publication of children's books and young adult literature in Swedish. The Swedish children's books market is accordingly large. Besides publications from the typical publishers, which are behind the absolute majority of the titles published, there are also publications from, for example, associations, businesses, and schools. These last-mentioned ones often distribute their books in ways other than via regular bookshops. Self-publication has decreased steadily over the past four years, from 170 titles in 2016 to approximately 120 titles in 2019. Some self-publication occurs via publishing services where the author pays for publication. This sort of publication has increased somewhat during this period, which suggests that a portion of self-publication has moved to these services. In sum, though, it appears that the self-publication of works for children and young adults, paid for by the author, is less appealing than it was a few years ago (see diagram 3).

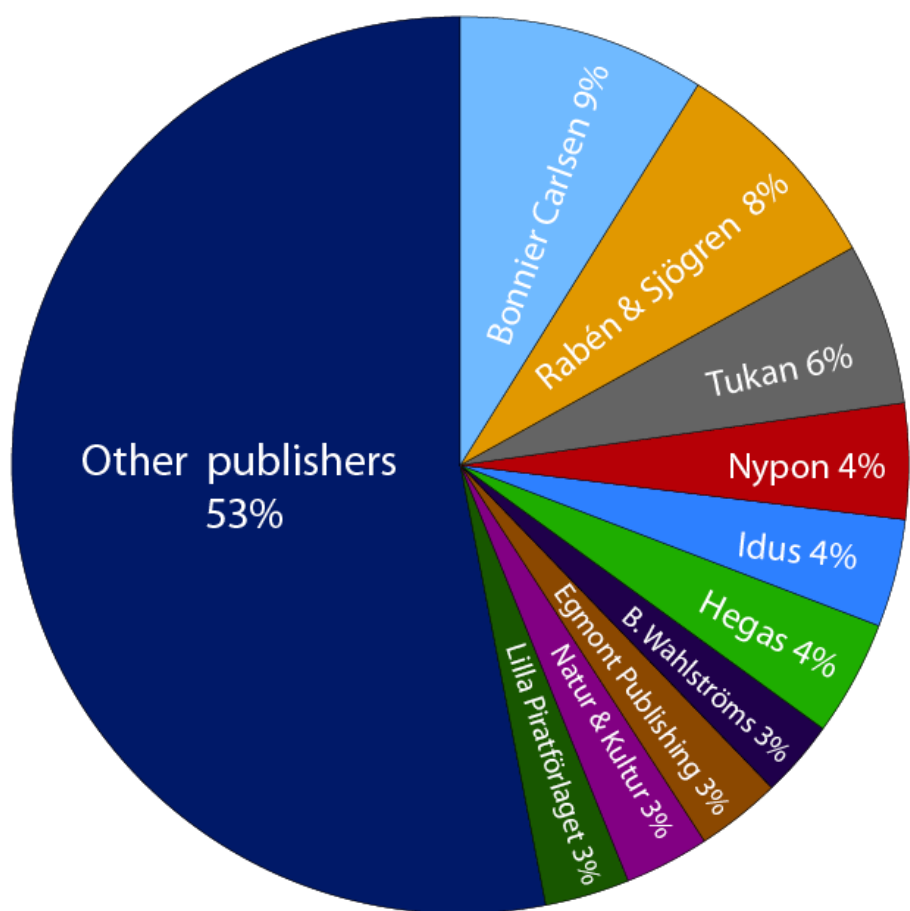


Diagram 3. ”The ten largest publishers in comparison to the other publishers.
Source: *Bokprovning på Sveriges barnboksinstitutet: En dokumentation. Årgång 2019, 2020*, p. 52.

Digital Publication of Children’s Books

As of this writing, the Swedish Institute for Children’s Books does not collect digital publications, but it does follow developments in this area. The publications are primarily e-books, audiobooks, digital literature, apps and novels based on video games. Other things that can be added here include hybrid forms, such as interactive teaching platforms and books with accompanying apps. In the Book Tasting of 2017, researcher and guest lecturer Ann Steiner presented digital publications in more depth and claimed, among other things, that the definitions are unclear and also that there currently are no thorough statistics about the field. In other words, it is not possible to say with complete certainty how many publications/releases there are. In a later study, Steiner found that the most significant increase to digital children’s books and young adult literature was in audio books and e-books (see Steiner, and also the Book Tastings from 2017 and 2018).

In terms of sales of digital books for children and young adults, the annual sales statistics from the Swedish Publishers’ Association and the Swedish Booksellers’ Association show that subscription services are gaining more market shares over printed children’s books and young adult literature (see Wikberg 37, 40, 43, 46). At the same time that total sales decreased between 2018 and 2019, there was a significant increase to digital subscription services. Sales increased by 25 percent and the primary format within this category is audiobooks (see Wikberg 46-7). For this reason, Sbi has again asked Ann Steiner to review the publication of audiobooks for this year’s Book Tasting in more detail (see below).

The Publication of Audiobooks for Children and Young Adults

Guest author Ann Steiner, Lund University

Subscription services for e-books and audiobooks have led to a new interest in audiobooks for children and young people. The number of audiobooks has increased significantly and there is a wide variety of republications, new works that are released at the same time as a printed version, originals in audio format, and hybrid books that combine audio with a printed version or an e-book version.

Audiobooks for children are nothing new; they have been published in Sweden since the 1940s and have gone through many technical adaptations. Sag-oton, Barnparaden and Snurr-skivan dominated the market early on with 78 records and EPs with both classics and new titles such as Gösta Knutsson’s *Pelle Svanslös i skolan* [Peter-No-Tail in School] (1948) and Astrid Lindgren’s *Pippi Långstrump får besök av tjuvar* [Pippi Longstocking is Visited by Thieves] (1949). There were also original audiobooks early on, such as Thomas Funck’s popular series about Kalle Stropp and Grodan Boll (1954-). During the following decades, there were new formats – LPs in the 1970s, cassettes in the 1980s, and CDs in the 1990s – but primarily these were old titles republished in new packaging, such as Walt Disney titles or works by authors such as Astrid Lindgren and Tove Jansson. However, today’s interest in audiobooks has led to publication on a totally different scale, in terms of both the number of titles and the variety of the offerings.

There is no complete list of audiobooks for children. The Swedish Media Database categorises most things that are published in physical form on disc or cassette but is not a thorough source. There is no national registry of audiobooks in digital files. The Swedish Publishers’ Association collects data for their members and since 2013 has included the category of streaming audiobooks in their yearly statistics. The statistics for 2019 cover a total of 61 publishers, of which 23 had digital releases for children and young adults; this includes most of the large publishers, but not, for example, Saga Egmont, Nypon and Hegas. During the period of 2017–2019, these three were responsible for between a fourth and a half of the releases for children and young

adults in downloadable audio format, which means that a large proportion of the publications was missing from the statistics from the Swedish Publishers’ Association (cf. tables 1 and 2).

Another way of pinpointing numbers of media releases is to use the internet bookshop Adlibris as a database (see table 2). Spot-checks reveal that Adlibris too is missing information about individual titles released for a particular book club or for sale in another way, but it is nonetheless still more comprehensive than the data from the Swedish Publishers’ Association.

Table 1. The publication of audiobooks for children and young adults 2013–2019, the Swedish Publishers’ Association

Year	Digital files	CDs
2019	418	24
2018	325	36
2017	429	30
2016	229	11
2015	102	16
2014	151	14
2013	32	18

Source: *Publication Statistics 2019*, the Swedish Publishers’ Association, 2020, p. 15.

Table 2. The publication of audiobooks for children and young adults 2017–2019, registered in Adlibris online bookstore

Year	2019	2018	2017
Publisher			
Rabén & Sjögren	138	81	76
Saga Egmont	97	208	105
Bonnier Audio	80	113	106
B. Wahlströms	49	23	31
Nypon	37	170	–
Hegas	24	40	40
Storyside	12	36	70
Other publishers	92	214	148
Total releases as digital files	529	885	576

In sum, this suggests an extensive number of releases during 2018 but many publishers published significantly fewer audiobook titles during 2019, and this is particularly the case for Saga Egmont and Nypon. Perhaps this suggests a certain overproduction in 2018 in order to secure market shares.

The current situation for audiobooks for children and young adults shows several clear tendencies: releases are dominated by recordings of older titles, though there is also a small but increasing number of releases of newly written works for audio, often called audiobook originals. It is also notable that it is hard to differentiate between audiobooks and, for instance, radio readings or pods.

Recorded readings of older titles dominate the releases. This is true for established publishers such as Rabén & Sjögren and Bonnier Carlsen but also the upstart publisher Saga Egmont. For a publisher such as Saga Egmont, the majority of their approximately 400 audiobook titles for children published between 2017–2019 are recordings of older titles. In other cases, such as Rabén & Sjögren, the release of new titles in audiobook format takes place in parallel with the publication of the printed book.

Audiobook originals for children have primarily been released by Storytel. A number of these books are written to order and are by several authors working together. An example is the comedy group IJust-WantToBeCool, with many young followers from YouTube, which reinterprets classics, such as *Victor i underlandet* [Victor in Wonderland] (2019) and *Sherlock och Holmes* [Sherlock and Holmes] (2019).

It can be hard to differentiate between audiobooks and other forms of media because the apps that many use are similar, regardless of whether they are pods, radio or audiobook services. For the average user, the difference is not clear, which means that, for example, radio dramatizations are similar to audiobooks. Sveriges Radio [Swedish Radio] (SR) is therefore an important producer of audiobooks for children, but these are not distributed via book marketing channels, but rather by ethernet and app. For instance, in 2019, SR produced works such as Astrid Lindgren's *Bröderna Lejonhjärta* [The Brothers Lionheart] (directed by Eva Staaf) and *Bobo & Gileaus – jakten på föräldrarna* [Bobo & Gileaus – the Hunt for Parents] (Rasmus Persson, Simon Hansson and Björn Nilsson), which can also be viewed as audiobooks for children.

Environmental Issues in Children's Books and Young Adult Literature 2019

Guest author Lydia Wistisen, Stockholm University

Since the 1960s, the topic of the environment has been a theme in Swedish books for children and young adults, and today this is more current than ever. In last year's Book Tasting, climate change was seen as a pressing issue, and the same can be said about 2019's publications. Changes to the climate, taking care of the environment, endangered animals, and extreme weather are the prominent themes, and they can be found in everything from picturebooks and young adult novels to poetry collections and non-fiction works. Athena Farrokhzad and Kristofer Folkhammar's new poetry collection for young people, *Berör och förstör. Dikter för unga* [Touch and Destroy: Poems for the Young] includes, for example, a section of ecocritical poetry, and Jenny Jägerfeld's advice book *Fråga Jenny. Om kroppen, själen och allt runtomkring* [Ask Jenny: About the Body, the Soul, and Everything Around Us] contains advice about how to handle climate anxiety. Both the non-fiction work *Det brinner!* [It's Burning!] by Charlotte Cederlund and the chapter book *Stallet i fara* [Stable in Danger] by Erika Eklund Wilson were inspired by the forest fires in Sweden in 2019. In a middle-grade book by Christina Wahldén, *Expedition rädda revet* [Expedition Save the Reef], the main character is engaged in saving the coral reef, and in the middle-grade dystopia, *Till Vial. 8400 dagar kvar* [To Vial: 8400 Days Left] by Henrik Ståhl, the earth has already been ravaged by environmental destruction and war.

On the whole, the desire for a more ecologically sustainable life is a dominating theme. Children's literature is filled with tips about what you as an individual person can do, and sorting rubbish, eating more vegetarian food and bike-riding are recurrent suggestions. In books such as Jörn Spolander and Stina Wirsén's chapter book *Heja jorden!* [Go Earth, Go!] and Oliver Jeffer's picturebook *Här är vi. Sak-er du behöver veta för att leva på jorden* [Here We Are: Notes for Living on Planet Earth], translated from English by Marcus Olsson, the reader is encouraged to take better care of the planet. The overconsumption of plastic is criticised in several texts, such as Per Straarup Søndergaard's easy-to-read non-fiction

work *Fakta om plast i havet* [Facts About Plastic in the Sea], translated from Danish by Tomas Dömstedt. Even if the child reader of many of these books is encouraged to engage by demonstrating or writing to politicians, the threat to the climate is related in only a few cases to the global economy and politics. An example is Sami Said and Sven Nordqvist's picture book *Äta gräs* [Eating Grass], which takes place in an Eritrean village. There, one man profits from the severe drought caused by climate change by selling worthless goods to the evermore desperate villagers.

Interestingly, around half of the ecocritical works were self-published or published by micro or hybrid publishers. There are several titles about drought and the lack of snow, food waste, and endangered animals. In Anne-Christine Liinanki and Elisabet Linna Persson's picturebook *Mångrus* [Moon Gravel], the climate is saved by magical gravel from the moon. In their picture book, *Alfred Upptäckaren & metallmonstren* [Alfred the Discoverer & the Metal Monsters], Sonja Rundgren and Johanna Arpiainen depict a boy who overcomes his fear of the rubbish bins at the recycling station, and in *Smaka & lukta* [Taste & Smell], Therese Otterhäll encourages the reader to explore whether food can be eaten before it is thrown away. This sort of production suggests a lag in what the established publishers are producing, but also says something about the adult world's worries and hopes for the future. There are apparently many who want to see more children's books about the environment.

The activist Greta Thunberg, who in 2018 started a school strike that came to be developed into a worldwide movement, has an obvious place here. Her speeches to the United Nations were published, for instance, in the anthology *Vad håller ni på med?* [What Are You Doing?], a collection of short stories, comics and opinion pieces for young people. She is also included in non-fiction works such as Björn Höglund's *Sveriges historia. Från stenåra till smartphone* [Sweden's History: From the Stone Age to the Smart Phone] and Per Straarup Søndergaard's *Fakta om klimatförändringar* [Facts About Climate Change], translated from English by Marcus Olsson, and is the main character in *Gretas historia. Ingen är för liten för att göra något stort* [Greta's Story: No One is Too Little to Do Something Big] by Valentina Camerini, trans-

lated from Italian by Margareta Zetterström, and in the non-fiction book *Fakta om Greta Thunberg* [Facts About Greta Thunberg] by Tomas Dömstedt. Her spirit can also be glimpsed in other characters, who, like her, speak up and take action. Young environmental activists feature in, among other works, Elin Ek's latest middle-age book about Athena, *Athena. Strålkastare, tack!* [Athena: Spotlights, Please!] and Flora Majdalawi and Ola Gustafsson's bilingual picturebook *Havets skatt/Hikayat mahārah* [The Sea's Treasures], which has text in both Swedish and Arabic.

Besides books that explicitly engage with different environmental issues, there have also been a number of publications that more indirectly encourage readers to live more in tune with nature. Several books depict survivalists or so-called preppers, people who are preparing for an approaching societal crisis. For example, in Therese Henriksson's young adult novel *Kyla* [Cold], Linda Jones' young adult novel *Bete sig* [Behave], and Annalena Hedman's middle-grade book *Vittran* [Nature spirits], protagonists have to learn to survive in primitive circumstances in the wilds of Norrland in north Sweden or in situations with power cuts and winter weather. An interesting detail is that the main characters in *Kyla* use for advice the informational brochure about living through a crisis that all Swedish homes received in recent years. Two picturebooks about death, Annika Sandelin and Linda Bondestam's *Silkesapans skratt* [The Marmoset's Laugh] and Sofia Hedman and Emelie Gårdeler's *Den långa resan* [The Long Journey], have wild animals as protagonists and can be said to depict extinction, a topic discussed in current news reports.

In her poetic non-fiction book, *Vad är en flod?* [What is a River?], Monika Vaicenavičiene offers the reader the opportunity to reflect over humans' relationship to the river, and in Oskar Kroon's middle-grade work, *Vänta på vind* [Waiting for Wind], which received the August Prize in 2019 for children's books and young adult literature, the extreme drought of 2018 is an important element in the depiction of the protagonist's emotional life. It is also important to mention Shaun Tan's *Berättelser från innerstaden* [Tales from the Inner City], translated from English by Ulla Roseen, a young adult work in the social-criticist vein about the difficult-to-capture liminality between na-

ture and culture. Non-fiction works such as Camilla De la Bédoyère's *Wow! Kolla in våra viktiga småkryp* [Wow! Bugs], translated from English by Marianne Lindfors and Maria Skymne, and Jen Green's *Trädens liv. Skogens magi och mysterium* [The Magic and Mystery of Trees], translated from English by Louise Lundman, can be said to belong to the same category. The focus of these works are biological cycles and they show that both humans and the smallest bugs in the forest are equally as important.

Fantasy 2019

Guest author Malin Alkestrand, Linnaeus University

Among the fantasy publications from 2019, there was everything from both traditional fantastical elements such as dragons and magicians to enchanted books and two cats who save the world. There are therefore books for those who want to read traditional fantasy in the style of J.R.R. Tolkien, and those who want to read feminist fantasy with strong female characters of different ages, as in the middle-grade book *Max & miniriddarna* [Max and the Midknights] by Lincoln Peirce, translated from English by Caroline Bruce.

In fantasy works, it is often made clear that humans are dependent on one another for our survival. Thereby, the traditional image of the lone, usually male hero who conquers evil is challenged. Another recurrent element is that the books tend to have multiple protagonists, who, in current fantasy, are often one girl and one boy, or one main character of one gender who works together with a main character of another gender. There are also examples of groups of girls who work together in the fight against evil. Fantasy, that is, has a collective view of how evil can best be fought. On the other hand, fantasy publications have basically been conservative and are, for example, overwhelmingly heteronormative, but in more recent years, various norms have begun to be stretched. For instance, in 2019's releases, there is queer love in young adult books, such as in Mattias Lönnqvist's *Konflikternas tid* [The Time of the Conflicts], which shows same-sex love between both girls and boys. In Linda Andersson's *Livstjuvarna* [The Life Thieves], there is even a trans person, whereas otherwise trans characters usually mainly feature in realistic literature.

Typical themes in fantasy both generally and in 2019 specifically are the fight against evil, the threshold between good and evil, magical elements, friendship, love, rebellion against oppression, the meaning of the family, finding your place in a new and different world, and finding yourself. There are fantasy titles for all ages, but there were especially many publications in the categories of middle-grade books and young adult literature.

There are three main tendencies when it comes to how the supernatural is depicted: as a part of a magical world that the protagonist is used to, as a part of a new and fantastical world, or as a threat. There are also some pronounced Christian elements represented in 2019's releases, as in *Sanningslöpare* [Truth Runner] by Jerel Law, translated from English by Joseph A. Davis, which advocates for a creator instead of evolutionary theory.

The variety of fantasy publications encourages the question of what fantasy really is. There have been many attempts to define fantasy and to separate it into different sub-categories. Researcher Farah Mendlesohn's *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008) can be used as a tool for understanding the breadth of the fantasy genre.

One type of fantasy is what Mendlesohn calls *immersive fantasy*, which is where there is a complete magical world that the reader is introduced to through the main character or side characters' knowledge about it. Three examples from 2019 are Zelda Falköga's chapter book *Klipptrollen* [The Mountain Trolls], the middle-grade book *Hilda och det dolda folket* [Hilda and the Hidden People] by Stephen Davies, translated from English by Carina Jansson, and *Blynätter* [Lead Nights] by Anna Jakobsson Lund, which is aimed at young adults. Falköga depicts a world where there are different magical beings, such as unicorns, trolls and a stone dragon. When Jonar meets Karma, whose family is in a feud with his own, they start working together to stop the mountain trolls from stealing the stone dragon's so-called star-glow. In this way, the reader gradually gets to know the world's creatures and the relationships between people there. In Davies and Jakobsson Lund's books, the reader is introduced in a similar way to worlds with magical elements, such as elves, magical relics, and relic tamers.

In *portal-quest fantasy*, beings move between different worlds through portals. The main character has a quest that usually has to do with conquering evil. The picturebook *Älgen Leif och musen Lola i Trollskogen* [The Moose Leif and the Mouse Lola in the Troll Forest] by Marcus Lind and Yvonne Karlsson, the chapter book *Hemligheternas bok* [The Book of Secrets] by Maria Nygren and Staffan Larsson, and the young adult work *Glasrösten* [The Glass Voice] by Ann Lindh Klang are examples of this. In *Hemligheternas bok* [The Book of Secrets], Fia is given an enchanted book by a sailor, which transports her to a sea adventure in 1945. Her quest is to find out who the boy is that she meets during her adventure and to find her way home. In Lind and Karlsson's picturebook, the portal is a boat journey from Lysekil in western Sweden to a troll island that suddenly appears instead of the island they were travelling to, and in Lindh Klang's young adult book, the portal is a statue that transports the female protagonist to a magical world where she must conquer evil.

Intrusion fantasy presents the supernatural as a threat that has managed to slip into the regular world. Examples from 2019 are the middle-grade book *Änglamakerskans barn* [The Angel-Maker's Child] by Johannes Pinter, Ingelin Angerborn's middle-grade book *Hjärta av sten* [Heart of Stone], and Gustav Tegby's young adult work *Beröringen* [The Touch]. In Tegby's book, the protagonist Elin herself represents what is supernatural and frightening. If she touches a person and the person moves more than 50 metres from her, then the touched person dies. Throughout the book, the touch is a threat that Elin has to learn to handle. In both *Änglamakerskans barn* [The Angel-Maker's Child] and *Hjärta av sten* [Heart of Stone], it is instead spirits or ghosts who intrude upon the regular world, but while they are life-threatening in the former work, they are confused and in need of help in the latter.

Besides immersive fantasy, portal-quest fantasy and intrusion fantasy, there are also books that combine categories. For instance, Hans Olsson's middle-grade work *Katterna och Stora Djupets hemlighet* [The Cats and the Secret of the Big Deep] combines portal-quest fantasy and intrusion fantasy. Two cats find a portal on a house roof and are transported to a mag-

ical world. The portal is also used by spies of evil in order to figure out how best to take over the human world. Thereby magic is portrayed as both a fantastic new world and as a threat against the city of Uppsala, where the cats live. This particular combination of Mendlesohn's two categories is common among the 2019 publications. Other than that, the most common denominator among the works, regardless of the audience age, is that the young protagonists have a quest that usually is about conquering evil. In general, then, 2019's fantasy publications are pretty similar to how they usually are.

Finally, there are a number of power issues that are common themes throughout the publications from 2019. Power is in general an issue that is always current within fantasy in one way or another. In the releases from 2019, power comes up in everything from children's power and influence in relation to their parents, to the power that different magical forces have and the responsibility of that. Power also comes up in terms of gender and the right to be oneself, whether it is a queer girl with magical powers who wants to be herself, as in J. C. Svensson's young adult work *De onormala* [The Abnormals], or a story creature who is totally misunderstood, as is the wolf in Mats Strandberg and Sofia Falkenheim's chapter book *Den helt sanna julsagan om kentauren som ville hem* [The Totally True Christmas Tale about the Centaur Who Wanted to Go Home]. The fantasy works from 2019 offer thoughtful considerations of existential and power-related questions in a way that sometimes follows in Tolkien's footsteps but also sometimes introduces new, creative approaches to what power and identity is and can be.

Sex, Sexual Assault and #metoo

Over the last decade, Sbi has noted an increased number of depictions of girls and young women who are in charge of their sexuality on their own terms. In 2019, this tendency is still strong and there are several sex scenes in young adult works where girls are depicted as enjoying sexual activity and taking the initiative to sex in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships, such as in Anna Ahlund's easy-to-read works *Väntat så länge* [Waited For So Long] and *Lättare i mörkret* [Easier in the Dark] and Hanna

Jedvik's *Sommarplåga* [Summer Torment]. At the same time, there are numerous books that are about sexual assault, often with a focus on the victims' drive to come to terms with it and a desire to take back control over their lives, either by reporting the crime or by taking revenge. Both of these trends likely can be connected to the #metoo movement from the autumn of 2017, which was about strengthening women's voices and paying attention to the harassment of women, and which went global.

The sexual assault of girls and women is the basis for the plot in several young adult novels. For example, in Emma Johansson's *Sönderlagen* [Broken], Juliet has experienced a violent sexual assault, which affects her life and relationships, and in Per Nilsson's *Vill inte, vill* [Don't Want, Want], the first-person narrator Nora experiences an unwanted advance on the tube, and her friend Nadin experiences an assault by her boyfriend. In both cases, the victims are decisive and take action. Juliet reports the assault to the police, which makes it possible for her to move on with her life. Nora uses a sharp key to stab the scrotum of the person who touches her, and Nadin's friends plan revenge on her boyfriend. Even if the latter plan is called off, it is clear that the will to take action is a prominent theme in these books about assault. Another example of this is Åsa Hellberg's young adult book *Sexstrejken* [The Sex Strike], in which three high school girls start a sex strike to protest against assaults. They carry out actions such as putting up so-called dick pics and print-outs of internet bullying on the walls of the school. This results in both young people and adults opening their eyes to the problem.

The message in these books is that it is worth it to be open and that it is possible to influence others. Individual people's actions can have an impact not just on a group but even on a whole societal structure. In terms of the latter, Johanna Schreiber and Ida Ömalm Ronvall's young adult book *Inte som du* [Not Like You] is an example. Here, the connection to #metoo is made very clear, but it is not girls who experience sexual assault but rather boys. The narrative takes place in a society where the gender roles are the opposite in comparison to our current reality. Women and girls have all the power, all the advantages, and higher status. They are the ones who control

things sexually, while boys and men are diminished and used. In this society, Vincent, who has just started secondary school, is pressured into having sex with Amanda, who then spreads a naked picture of him all over the school. Vincent and his friends start a movement in social media, #openup, where boys talk about what they have gone through. The movement has a big breakthrough and makes society see how differently boys and girls are treated and valued.

Sexual assault against boys is an extremely unusual theme in Swedish books for children and young adults, but in 2019 there was an additional young adult book about it, Niclas Christoffer's *Sebba sa nej* [Sebba Said No]. During a party, Sebba was raped by a girl, and he struggles to decide whether he should dare to tell about it or not. Despite the lack of understanding from those around them, Sebba eventually reports it to the police and this leads to a trial. According to the marketing material from the publisher, the book was intended to give a voice to assaulted boys in the #metoo debate.

Even if the power to take action and to fight back are common themes in many of the depictions of sexual harassment and bullying, there are also some works with different approaches to the subject. In the young adult novel *Helt seriöst* [Totally Serious] by Hanna de Canesie, the issue is how involved a person is who witnesses an assault but does not do anything or tell anyone about it. The middle-grade book *Inte säker någonstans* [Not Safe Anywhere] by Lena Lilleste is also about the responsibility of others. Here, the headmaster's lack of action in response to the harassment that a girl experiences has devastating consequences. It is very unusual for sexual harassment to feature in a book marketed for children under 12 years old, but Lilleste's book is an exception.

The Naked Body

In several Book Tastings over the last years, Sbi has discussed how different norms connected to the body are thematised and problematised in children's and young adult literature, for example, in relation to gender expression and ethnicity. This tendency is apparent in 2019's publications too and we see continuing diversity among the releases. Last year, the Book Tasting also noted body positivism in picturebooks.

This has recurred in 2019 and manifests above all in depictions of the naked or swimsuit-clad body.

Visible, naked bodies and different types of bodies appear in a number of picturebooks in 2019. The most obvious example is Annika Leone and Bettina Johansson's *Bara rumpor* [Bare Bottoms], the aim of which is to show different types of bodies from the express point of view of body positivism. The book is about Mira, who sees many naked bottoms of different colours and sizes when she is in the changing room at the swimming pool with her mother and father. Here, as in other picturebooks that depict naked bodies, there is a difference between the genders in terms of what it is considered appropriate to show. There is a general tendency to hide male genitals with steam and towels in the changing room, whereas women's bodies are shown uncovered.

Other examples of swimming pool depictions with apparent body-positive perspectives are the picturebooks *Hoppa från kanten* [Jump from the Edge] by Mattias Edvardsson and Matilda Salmén and *Aysa i simballen* [Aysa in the Swimming Pool] by Therese Alshammar and Jonas Burman. These books also affirm individuality and differences and depict naked bodies in the illustrations, in both the men's and the women's changing rooms.

Christina Wahldén's middle-grade book *Tack för allt* [Thanks for Everything] adds a cultural perspective to the topic of covering one's body, and here too the swimming pool plays a central role. Several events there, such as an unplanned and startling meeting between a group of Muslim women and a group of nudists, makes protagonist Hawa consider differences among different cultures in regard to covering oneself.

Variations to Ability and Disabilities

Over the latest few years, Sbi has seen an increase to the number of titles that show people with different abilities and disabilities. This can include, for example, people in a wheelchair, people who are highly sensitive or who have ADHD, autism, cerebral palsy or Down's syndrome. In 2019, too, a number of such books were published. One example is Jacqueline Woodson's middle-grade book *Fjädrar* [Feathers], translated from English by Alva Dahl, where one

of the side characters has a hearing impairment and communicates through sign language.

Surprisingly often, it is the person with the different ability or disability who is the protagonist, so the focus is seldom only on this particular aspect but instead on the person's whole being. For example, in Tom Fletcher's middle-grade book *Julosaurusen* [The Christmasaurus], translated from English by Hanna Svensson, William is in a wheelchair due to an accident when he was little. The story is about William's desire to get a real dinosaur for Christmas. Sofia in Annelie Strömberg's middle-grade book *Sofia med knuff – på väg ut i livet* [Sofia with a Push – On Her Way Out Into Life] has ADHD. She has decided to start horseback-riding and registers for a beginner's course. In 2019, Ann Gomér published five easy-to-read young adult books about Moa and Linus, two young people with Down's syndrome. The books are about life's big questions, such as friendship, sorrow and love. In *Molly är död* [Molly is Dead], Moa and Linus work through their grief when a friend dies, and in *Ska vi ha sex?* [Should We Have Sex?], they explore their sexuality and what it means to be together.

The dis/abilities can at times be the focus of the work, as in the young adult work and graphic novel *Detta är mitt liv* [This is My Life] by Rose Lagercrantz and Anneli Furmark. Fourteen-year-old Sophia has autism and has a strong sense of outsidership and does not feel she fits in. She longs to go to children's camp, but does not know how it will work out. The story is about the importance of getting people around you to understand how a person with autism works, but also about the importance of others adapting and putting in the effort to be inclusive.

Camilla Lagerqvist also adds in a historical perspective to the theme in her middle-grade book *Pojken i graven* [The Boy in the Grave]. It takes place in the 1960s, when siblings Malin and Bosse find out that their maternal grandmother was forced to give away a son, Lukas, in the 1930s. He never developed beyond the mental age of five years old and was sent to a mental hospital, where horrible methods were used to "cure" the patients and keep them calm.

Migration, Integration and Culture Clashes

Since the refugee crisis of 2015, Sbi has seen a large increase to the number of works that depict migration and escape from armed conflicts. In 2019, however, there are almost no depictions of migration in and of itself. Instead, we find narratives about integration and children's experiences in new countries after migration, and Sbi noted an increase to such works in last year's Book Tasting as well. An example from 2019 is Monika Zak and Gunna Gråh's chapter book *Ceva och skridskorna* [Ceva and the Skates], which is about Ceva, who does not like skating. Since fleeing from Syria, she has been scared of water, and she worries that the ice in the ice-skating rink will crack. Ceva gets help working through and handling her fears.

After the refugee crisis, there have been a number of works published about culture clashes, including in 2019. Many of them are works for young people, written by people with experience of living in a culture they were not born in. The main character is often a young person in an immigrant family who falls in love with someone who, from their parents' perspective, is from the "wrong" cultural background. In *Pojken som följer sin skugga* [The Boy Who Follows His Shadow] by the Swedish-Turkish author Kadir Meral, for example, Memo and his family have moved from a Kurdish village to a suburb outside Gothenburg. When Memo begins to adapt to Swedish norms and values and gets a Swedish girlfriend, his parents feel that he is letting down his own culture. There is a similar experience for the protagonist in the Danish-Palestinian author Kristina Aamand's work *Under ditt finger* [Under Your Finger], translated from Danish by Helena Hansson. Sheherazade has moved with her parents from the Middle East and lives in an immigrant area in Copenhagen. She is a religious Muslim and wears a veil, and her parents expect her to become a doctor and marry someone from the same culture. However, Sheherazade falls in love with Thea, and her mother will not accept this, because not only is Thea from another culture, but she is also female. In Korean-American author David Yoon's *Planeten Frank* [Frankly in Love], translated from English by Carina Jansson, Frank also has difficulties with his family when he falls in love with

an American girl and not one from a Korean background. His solution to this problem is to pretend to date a Korean girl who is the daughter of his parents' friends, and this has consequences that he could not predict. Racism and prejudice are also themes in these stories. Iranian-American writer Tahereh Mafi's *En ocean av kärlek* [An Ocean of Love], translated from English by Carina Jansson, takes place in 2002, in a United States impacted by the World Trade Center attacks. With 9/11 having set the scene, the Muslim character Shirin, who wears a veil, has to handle racism and prejudice at her new school. The situation turns more complicated when she starts seeing the star of the basketball team, Ocean, who comes from a typical American background.

Culture clashes can also be depicted in a more positive and humorous way, especially in works aimed at younger readers. In the picturebook *Morfar flyttar in* [Grandpa Moves In] by Jali Madi Susso, Eva Susso and Marcus-Gunnar Pettersson, Grandpa comes from Gambia to visit his family in Stockholm. Many humorous situations occur when Grandpa, who only speaks Mandinka, and who is used to lighting fires inside the home, attempts to get to know the people around him. The book shows how social differences can be bridged, ideally over a cup of tea.

The Return of the Collective

In last year's Book Tasting, Sbi noticed a tendency towards a new collectivism and a belief that people together can make a change. It was noticeable not least in all the books that were about activism and being engaged in society. This collectivism and sense of we-feeling is apparent in 2019's publications too, but now there is a larger focus on humans' dependence on one another. This is particularly prominent as a theme in picturebooks, but also, as noted above, is a common subject in fantasy works, where collaboration and collective efforts are often the requirements for, among other things, overthrowing corrupt leaders.

If the collective in 2018 primarily was working towards resistance, actions, and protests, and showed a strong will to change society, in 2019, it is in part the softer values that are the focus. This is particularly the case with picturebooks, which often have a

message that both the individual and the collective are important, and they suggest that above all the relationship between the individual and the collective is the most important. These books are often interesting in terms of the techniques the authors use, as they tend not to have a single protagonist, regardless of whether the books are in first or third person. In other words, in regard to narrative voice, the collective too is the focus.

In Kristin Roskifte's *Alla räknas* [Everybody Counts], translated from Norwegian by Johanna Thydell, which won the 2019 Nordic Council Children and Young People's Literature Prize, humans are depicted as individuals, working towards their own goals, at the same time that they are part of a collective on Earth. The picturebook is a wimmelbilderbuch, with many hidden details, and it portrays a large variety of people, increasing in number from one on the first page to 1000 on the penultimate, and 7.5 billion on the last. The message is that everyone counts. In Ylva Karlsson and Sara Lundberg's picturebook *Jag och alla* [I and Everyone], the reader meets ten first-person protagonists. All of them are connected by a narrative chain, where each section ends with the question of how it would feel to be the person that the one telling the story sees at a distance. In the next section, it is the latter person's perspective that is depicted. The book expresses the importance of empathy, compassion, and imagination.

The importance of empathising with how others feel also extends to understanding adults. Annica Hedin and Hanna Klinthage's picturebook *Dom som kallas vuxna* [Those Who Are Called Adults] is a book about grown-ups for children. It describes adults as a collective group, but also shows that grown-ups are individuals and that inside, they have different ideas and thoughts that individuate them. The reasons for adults doing strange things, like going for walks, eating disgusting food, and not buying sweets can, therefore, be as numerous as the adults themselves are. The individual within the collective is also depicted in the picturebook *Tänk om alla* [Imagine If Everyone] by Grethe Rottböll and Marcus-Gunnar Pettersson, where an omniscient narrator turns to the reader and asks how it would be for everyone to hold each other's hands. The pictures and text il-

lustrate hand-holding taken to the limits through a chain of children and adults who, no matter what the situation, hold one another's hands. The narrative thereby shows both the pros and the cons of always being part of a collective, but even if it is tricky when everyone must sleep at the same time and walk in the same direction, in the end, togetherness is still shown as preferable.

All of the titles mentioned above are without a single overarching protagonist, which affects both the text and the pictures in that many different individuals are depicted at the same time and on the same terms. There are also similar narrative techniques in text-based books, but in them what is most common is for there to be several first-person narrators that together contribute different perspectives. In literary theory, having a variety of independent voices and points of view is called a polyphony. In the publications from 2019, there are several polyphonic young-adult novels, such as Nic Stone's *Triangle* [Odd One Out], translated from English by Anna Thuresson, and Per Nilsson's *Vill inte, vill* [Don't Want, Want], which is named elsewhere in this report. Among the many first-person narrators in the latter book, there is even the author, who comes into the story himself as a narrator.

In terms of interesting narrative perspectives, there is also Karin Cyrén's wordless picturebook *Maraton* [Marathon], which portrays a group of people running a marathon. The participants run through the book and experience a variety of violent events and attempts at murder during their journey, but the entire series of events is told in pictures. Perhaps there is more of a focus on the individual here, since there is a winner at the end, but then all the participants are on the podium, which has an unusual number of places. Even if they are ranked by skill, they are still all worth paying attention to.

The descriptions of the collective can also be based on politics and ideology. In the graphic novel *Flocken* [The Flock] by Matilda Ruta and Rasmus Malm, girls are transformed into hyenas who live together as a group in nature, an existence that can be interpreted as a feminist sanctuary. There are also several non-fiction works connected to this theme, especially in regard to political struggles. In Marta Breen and

Jenny Jordahl's *Kvinnor i kamp. 150 års kamp för frihet, jämställdhet, systerskap!* [Women in Battle! 150 Years of Fighting for Freedom, Equality, Sisterhood!], translated from Norwegian by Hanna Hellquist, women and women's collectives from around the world that have in some way fought for women's rights are depicted, such as Ad Tahiri in Iran, Malala Yousafzai in Pakistan and the suffragettes in Great Britain. The book is in graphic format.

Horror, Thrillers and Ghost Stories

Sbi has had reason to discuss horror, thrillers and ghost stories in several Book Tastings the past few years. It has been a major theme for some years and in 2019, the number of stories meant to scare was perhaps larger than ever before. We found such works in all literature categories and in tales for all ages, even if they are most common in middle-grade books.

As in earlier years, the level of scariness and creepy elements increases along with the reader's age, but even in books for younger readers, sometimes there are publications where monsters and supernatural beings can be shown in all their gruesomeness. An example is Jenny Bergman and Alexander Jansson's picturebook *Hej alla monster!* [Hi, All You Monsters!], where a boy decides that his mother is going to be evil, have yellow eyes, sharp teeth, and flowing blue hair, and show him "everything terrible in the world". They walk through a forest with ghosts, monsters and blood dripping from hollow-eyed trees. When the mother no longer wants her child and is going to give him to a witch, the game has reached its climax and they return home. This picturebook depicts a thought experiment through the most terrible thing a boy can imagine, and what is frightening is in this way therapeutic. Another example is the chapter book *Mardrömsällskapet* [The Nightmare Society], in which a society of the same name meets in an old hospital and tells really unpleasant ghost stories to one another. Lena Ollmark's scary stories together with Johan Egerkrans' creepy cover and illustrations made the publisher add a warning text to the cover, to warn sensitive adults.

The most usual way to frighten in books for children and young adults is to introduce supernatural beings. The absolute most common are ghosts, but

there are also a variety of monsters and other creatures, such as wolves, vampires, werewolves, zombies, mummies and witches. There are sea monsters, yetis, and boy scouts who turn into monsters in *Katten Looi flyr* [Beware the Kitten Holy] and *Vänskap till max* [Friendship to the Max], the first two parts in the easy-to-read illustrated series about the Lumberjanes, by Noelle Stevenson, Grace Ellis and Brooke Allen, translated from English by Marie Helleday Ek-wurtzel. Those are the sorts of things that Jo, April, Molly, Mal and Ripley encounter at Miss Qiunzella Thiskwin Penniquiquil Thistle Crumpet's Camp for Hardcore Lady Types.

The threatening and frightening can sometimes even be closer than that. In the chapter book *Skuggan* [The Shadow] by Petrus Dahlin and Johanna Kristiansson, what is threatening in the story is the protagonist's own shadow, and in the middle-grade book *Ondskan inom mig* [The Evil Within], translated from English by Helena Olsson, the evil inside a person is the subject. Here, Catherine MacPhail was inspired by Robert Louis Stevenson's classic tale, and tells how the young Henry Jekyll became Mr Hyde. When there is a threat in things rather than beings, it can often be about getting stuck in computer games or getting caught by evil dolls, stuffed toys or scarecrows. We find an unusual angle on non-human threats in the easy-to-read young adult novel *Det som lever under oss* [What Lives Under Us] by Kerstin Lundberg Hahn, where something that lives in the sewers gets out and kills everything in its way. The book was inspired by the fatberg found in the London sewers some years ago.

There are also a number of recurring themes in the horror or thriller texts. One is a child who gets in trouble, perhaps even being murdered, as in the young adult work *Sakramentet* [The Sacrament] by Ann-Sofi Forsmark, in which a 30-year-old murder of a confidant is woven together with contemporary frightening events. Another typical motif is the haunted house, which is found in multiple works published in 2019. In many cases, the building itself is so central to the story that it is even named in the title of the work. Some examples are the middle-grade works *Mysteriet på Ödeborgen* [The Mystery of Fate Castle] by Kristina Ohlsson, *Präst-*

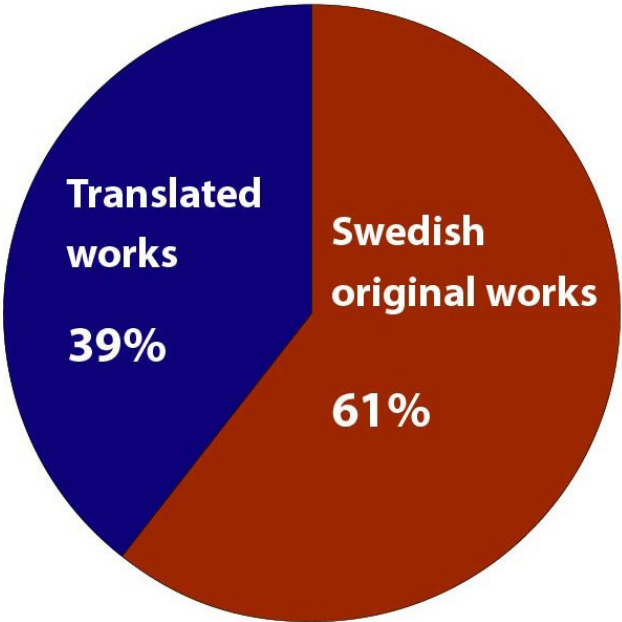


Diagram 4. Comparison between Swedish originals and translated children’s and young adult books published in Sweden 2019. Source: *Bokprovning på Svenska barnboksinstitutet: En dokumentation. Årgång 2019, 2020, p. 37.*

gårdens hemlighet [The Secret of the Rectory] by Tobias Söderlund, and *Husets hjärta* [The House’s Heart] by Mårten Melin. In the latter text, it is not ghosts or spirits who are the scary element, but rather the house itself. Signe and Ninni get caught in a storm and find shelter in an abandoned house. When the house locks the girls in, Signe understands that it is alive and that they cannot get out unless she kills the house’s heart.

The authors often use classic motifs to scare readers, such as fog and birds. Some examples are the middle-grade works *Dimman* [The Fog] by Ewa Christina Johansson, *Flaskpostens hemlighet* [The Secret of the Message in the Bottle] by Ann Olerot, and *Dimbäxan* [Shadow Witch] by Linda Hjerth Axelsson, where crows and jackdaws can serve as guides or protectors, or they can foreshadow that something is going to happen. They might fall from the sky or be hung up in trees to protect against evil, while the fog is thick.

Translations and Depictions of Other Cultures

Books translated to Swedish from other languages comprised 39 percent of the total number of books for children and young adults in 2019, 868 books in total. The number of translations has in principle de-

creased in successive years since 2010, but the number in 2019 was the smallest it has ever been since Sbi’s first Book Tasting in 1993. Historical statistics of publications of children’s literature show that it is probably the lowest share of translated literature for children and young adults since the middle of the twentieth century (Warnqvist 341). A number of the books that thematised environmental issues were translations, which shows how Swedish publishers are concerned about the environment that they also looked beyond Sweden for texts to offer children and young adults on this subject (see diagram 4) When the decreased number of translations has previously been commented upon by publishers, they have given several reasons why they are focusing more on Swedish original texts than on translations, such as that consumers are more interested in Swedish originals, that there are such talented Swedish authors and illustrators, that it is easier to have a close relationship with the Swedish originators of texts, and that the costs for translating thick books are very high and thereby involve large financial risks (Schmidt and Strömberg). Another factor could be that young people who know English themselves prefer to read English books in the original language (Hedemark 27), which would influence the sale of translated young adult literature.

It is translations that are responsible for the overall decreased number of publications. The number of Swedish original works published was basically the same as the previous year (1349 titles, 61 percent). The only categories that are dominated by translations are non-fiction works and comics. In the other big categories, the number of original Swedish publications is markedly larger. 62 percent of the translations come from English, which therefore continues to dominate. Otherwise, translations, as in previous years, primarily come from the larger European languages and our Nordic neighbours. Very few titles come from parts of the world other than the West (see diagram 5).

As Swedish original works strengthen their dominance over translations, we risk getting fewer and fewer depictions of other cultures, especially works that take place in non-Western countries. There are, however, some exceptions, and as in previous years,

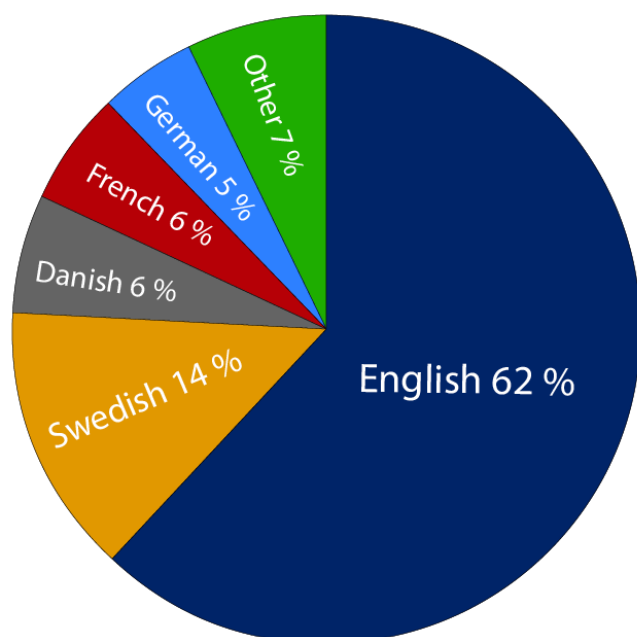


Diagram 5. The six largest source languages for children's and young adult books published in Sweden in 2019. Source: *Bokprovning på Sveriges barnboks-institutet: En dokumentation. Årgång 2019, 2020*, p. 42.

it is often specialised publishers such as Hjulet and Trasten that are responsible for these publications. An example is the picturebook *Fåglarnas herre* [Lord of the Birds] by Rogério Andrade Barbosa and Salmo Dansa, translated from Portuguese by Birgitta Alm, which is about the brave bird Katete. Both creators of the work are from Brazil and the book is translated from Portuguese, but it was inspired by an African oral tale. The pictures, too, are inspired by African art. Books from South America are generally underrepresented, but in 2019, there were several examples. Ana Paula Ojedas and Juan Palamino's picturebook *Eldtjuven* [The Fire Thief], translated from Spanish by Britta Dreborg, is based on the Mexican myth about how fire came to humans. The Fire Thief in the myth and in the book is Tlacuache, the Mexican marsupial. Asia is also underrepresented, but one from there is 2020's Alma prize-winner Baek Heena's picturebook *Molnbullar* [Cloud Bread], translated from Korean by Jonas Thelander and Joo-hee Kim. The story is about two cats whose mother bakes bread from clouds. When the cats eat them, they begin to float and they can, thanks to that, help their father, who is stuck in traffic, get to work on time. The picturebook is composed of photographed miniatures and is therefore unusual not just because it is a translation from Asia but also because of the choice

of technique. Photographic picturebooks are generally unusual in the Swedish children's book market.

The Swedish original market includes perspectives other than the Western to a small extent and when this happens, it is usually from the perspective of immigrant children or Swedish children.

One exception is Sara Olausson's chapter book *Jordgubbsbarnen* [The Strawberry Children], which depicts a poor family in an eastern European country, probably Romania. "Strawberry children" is a term that is used in Romania for children who are left at home when their parents go to other countries to work. In this case, the parents have moved to Sweden – officially to pick strawberries, but the reader understands gradually that they are beggars – while the children Maria and Gabriel stay home with their paternal grandmother. The story is told from Maria's perspective. Another example is the photographic picture book *Miradora och den försvunna stenen* [Miradora and the Lost Stone] by Yamile Lindgren, which was the result of a volunteer trip to the village of Katanzama in Colombia. The story takes place in the Colombian rain forest and is about a girl named Miradora, who is looking for a stone that she believes is magical.

translated by B.J. Epstein

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