

## Introduction Volume 46

The forty-sixth volume of *Barnboken: Journal of Children's Literature Research* includes sixteen articles. Many belong to the three themes of this year: "Aesthetics and Pedagogy", "The Children's Library Saga and the Swedish Teachers' Magazine's Publishing House", and "Motherhood and Mothering". Moreover, twelve reviews of recent Nordic and international theoretical literature were published.

Two of the themes were initiated in 2022. The first is "Aesthetics and Pedagogy" edited by Maria Jönsson (Professor, Umeå University) and Olle Widhe (Professor, University of Gothenburg). In their introduction, the theme editors note that the relationship between aesthetics and pedagogy has had great impact on the historical development of children's and young adult literature, but for a long time the relation has also been conflicted. Hence, the theme grew out of a wish to transcend various types of dichotomic thinking in order to explore how aesthetic and pedagogic aspects intertwine in individual works as well as in how they are read and interpreted. The three articles published in this year's volume analyze Sweden's first children's book containing the gender-neutral pronoun "hen" (they), the use of swearwords as an aesthetic and pedagogic device in two children's novels by Ulf Stark and Oscar Kroon, and conceptions of time expressed by preschoolers in book talks on a picturebook by Lisen Adbåge.

While the theme "Aesthetics and Pedagogy" is concluded with the publication of these articles, "The Children's Library Saga and the Swedish Teachers' Magazine's Publishing House" will continue in 2024. Åsa Warnqvist (Docent, the Swedish Institute for Children's Books) is the editor of this theme which is connected to the research and digitization project on the Children's Library Saga that is being carried out at the Swedish Institute for Children's Books. The first of the two articles published this year examines Ungdomens bibliotek (the Library of Youth) – one of the more short-lived book series of the publishing house – and the marketing strategies used to address different target audiences. The other article focuses on the editorial work on the book series Barnbiblioteket Saga (the Children's

Library Saga) and the article writer defines two theoretical models to describe the publisher's manuscript practices. The project has received financial support by Lärarstiftelsen (the Teacher's Foundation) and Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation).

The third theme "Motherhood and Mothering" will also continue next year. Tuva Haglund (PhD, Linnaeus University) and Malin Nauwerck (PhD, the Swedish Institute for Children's Books/Uppsala University) are the theme editors. Five articles were published within the theme in 2023, several of which critically explore the ideal of the good mother. They show that the concept is challenged in modern children's books about mothers turning into animals, daydreaming of a different life, or expressing desires that may be in conflict with their children's needs. Other articles examine mothering as a social practice, which includes practices of care that have traditionally been carried out by but need not be restricted to biological mothers. Among the analyzed works are Scandinavian picturebooks by Jöns Mellgren, Kim Fupz Aakeson and Mette-Kirstine Bak, and Kari Saanum and Gry Moursund. The articles in this theme are published with support from Stiftelsen Konung Gustaf VI Adolfs fond för svensk kultur (the Foundation King Gustaf VI Adolf's Fund for Swedish Culture) and Stiftelsen Lars Hiertas Minne (the Foundation Lars Hierta's Memory).

The forty-sixth volume of *Barnboken* is rounded off with six independent articles, which illustrate the theoretical and methodological variety in contemporary research on children's and young adult literature. Anna Sahlée investigates textual and visual choices in the picturebook *Cars*, based on the animated movie with the same name. She shows how the plot of the picturebook is rather difficult to grasp without prior knowledge of the movie. With inspiration from critical plant studies, Beatrice G. Reed analyzes the depiction of plants in Swedish and Norwegian picturebooks published in the early twentieth century. The survey confirms that the forest and cultural landscapes are common topoi in literature of the period, but it also reveals a remarkably diverse flora. Waste studies, another emerging theoretical field, constitutes the starting point in Lydia Wistisen's article on collage technique and environmental motifs in Inger and Lasse Sandberg's picturebooks from the 1960s. She points out that these works, through both content and form, challenge the logic of the capitalist system and advocate an alternative view of value and beauty.

Hilde Dybvik and Inga Henriette Undheim highlight the function of humour in Scandinavian facts-of-life books from the 1970s until today. They argue that comical aspects are used strategically to handle a challenging subject and they map different types of humour used within the genre. In Annbritt Palo, Lena Manderstedt, and Lydia Kokkola's article critical race theory is utilized to explore literary representation of Sámi people, who are one of Sweden's five national minorities. Through an analysis of text and illustrations in three Swedish works for young readers, they show how the narratives both affirm and expose stereotypical ideas about the Sámi and their way of life. Finally, Ann Steiner carries out a genre study of children's audio fiction, which is defined as literary works created to be recorded for audio and consumed through listening. She discusses different definitions of audio fiction, surveys the prehistory of the genre in Sweden, and examines the characteristics of two modern examples through an analysis of *IJustWantToBeCool's* and Camilla Brinck's works.

*Barnboken* is an Open Access journal, which means that all articles and reviews are published online and are freely available on the journal's website and in full text through several international databases. Article submissions are subjected to double-blind peer review, ensuring that all articles published in *Barnboken* have been reviewed by at least two external reviewers outside of the journal's editorial board. When members of the editorial board or theme editors contribute with submissions of their own, they are not involved in the editorial work or the peer review process of their article in any capacity. *Barnboken's* focus is mainly Swedish and Nordic, but the journal has readers all over the world.

The editorial board consists of Nina Goga (Professor, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway), Maria Jönsson (Professor, Umeå University, Sweden), Peter Kostenniemi, (PhD, Umeå University, Sweden), Anne Skaret (Professor, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway), Olle Widhe (Professor, University of Gothenburg, Sweden), and Mia Österlund (Docent, Åbo Akademi University, Finland). Review editors during 2023 were Hanna Liljeqvist (research assistant, the Swedish Institute for Children's Books) and Malin Nauwerck (PhD, the Swedish Institute for Children's Books/Uppsala University). Åsa Warnqvist (Docent, the Swedish Institute for Children's Books) functions as consulting senior editor and responsible editor. The journal's international advisory board includes fifteen prominent Swedish, Nordic, and

international researchers. The journal is published with support from Vetenskapsrådet (the Swedish Research Council).

*Barnboken* welcomes both new and old readers to take part of the exciting and inspiring research presented in this year's volume.

*Maria Andersson*

*Editor-in-chief of Barnboken: Journal of Children's Literature Research*  
*Docent, Stockholm University, Sweden*